

producing oil from coal in Western Australia. Some years ago the Bunbury Municipality discovered that their plant for generating electric current was about at the end of its tether. Its load was then as much as it could carry, and it was likely to break down at any time. It was then thought that a national scheme might be brought about, in fact an Act of Parliament was passed giving certain powers in that direction. Unfortunately that scheme has fallen through and so the Bunbury Municipality has been thrown back on their own resources and to-day are in a very difficult position. All they ask under the Bill is how to raise another £10,000 which will enable them to carry on. Some time ago they made certain investigations and in their letter to me they point out that those investigations brought forth two alternatives, namely, either to increase the present steam plant, replacing worn-out units, and continuing to use Collie coal, or to instal an up-to-date crude oil plant. The whole subject was most thoroughly investigated and some remarkable results as to generating costs came to light. It was found that by continuing to use steam as the prime mover, very little reduction, if any, could be made in the cost of generating current. On the contrary, by installing crude oil engines of a type suitable for the work the present cost of production could be reduced by more than 60 per cent., thus enabling the municipality to sell current for lighting and power purposes at practically Perth prices. The council had no doubt as to which prime mover to adopt. A crude oil plant was unanimously decided upon. By its adoption the municipality will be able to provide power at a considerably reduced cost to the consumer and, in addition, make sufficient profit to liquidate all liabilities on the new and the old plants well within the life of the former. There is a lot of sound reason in their proposal. We have before the House a motion for a great national scheme. Most members are agreed upon that, but Bunbury cannot wait till that is brought into being. Even if the motion is passed, the chances are it will be five or six years before we shall have that scheme in operation. Personally, I do not think we shall have it inside of ten years. So it would be rather hard on the Bunbury Municipality if we were to refuse to assist them out of their present difficulties. The proposition is

thoroughly sound and they have to do something. While the grass is growing, the stock are dying. In this case they do not know from one day to another when their machinery will break down and they will be placed in a very awkward position. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 31st October, 1928.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (2)—FRUIT TRADE.

Exports.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Having in mind the increasing competition for the overseas fruit trade and the importance of producing the best export varieties of apples and other fruit for those markets, will the Government take steps to prepare a census of all fruit-trees in the State, together with names of owners, thereby enabling a survey to be made respecting the production of varieties most suitable for export?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: The export of fruit vitally concerns the Commonwealth Government, and this State will be prepared to co-operate in any steps considered necessary to foster the trade.

Imports.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, It is a fact that Italian and Sicilian fruits, principally lemons, are being imported into Western Australia? 2, If so, can the Minister state the varieties and quantities of fruit received? 3, Is every precaution taken to ensure that fruit so imported is free from disease?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, No Italian or Sicilian citrus fruit has been imported into this State during the year. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—ELECTRO-CULTURE.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What action has the Department of Agriculture taken to ascertain the advantages of electroculture? 2, Can the Minister give evidence of benefits resulting from the practice?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, The Department of Agriculture keeps in touch with the work being carried out in this connection. 2, From the evidence to hand the only useful application of electricity to stimulate the growth of plants is the use of electric illumination to extend the length of day in order to force certain crops of special value.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, COMET VALE STATION.

Mr. PANTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it intended to remove the loop and station at Comet Vale? 2, If so, what is the reason? 3, Is he aware that the removal of either will cause considerable inconvenience to the people of the township?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Not at present. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.37]: I suppose this is the first occasion which a Bill of this sort will have been brought down to the House and received with criticism not very hostile to the Government who introduced it. I do not know why I am so considerate as to let the Government off on this occasion, but I think we should consider the matter calmly. We all realise that there is very great need for a redistribution; in fact it is long overdue. The Premier yesterday referred rather scathingly, I thought, to the Act of 1911. Well, that Act has served us for a very long time. One or two attempts have been made to alter it, but without success. At any rate, it has outlived its usefulness, because there has been a tremendous transfer of population as well as a tremendous increase in the number of electors in the State during the intervening 17 years. Members are apt to believe that the boundaries of districts have a very much greater influence on the result of an election than is really the case. The people do not vote in groups; there is no doubt about that. The workers no more vote for the Labour Party because they happen to be workers than do the other section of the people vote for us because they happen to be in business or practising law, medicine, or something else. If we could definitely see the votes cast, I think we should be rather astonished. That is as it should be. I admit there are a number of people who are pledged voters, rightly or wrongly. Wrongly, I think, they determine beforehand that they belong to this party or that party, and they cast their votes accordingly. In a democratic country every elector should be perfectly free to vote as he thinks is right, and he should vote always in the best interests of the country. It is impossible for any group of electors to return the representation that can serve them quite satisfactorily. If they separate themselves from other people and adopt the attitude, "These are our representatives or delegates or whatever they may be called; we shall be represented by them and by them alone," the result right down history will be

found to have been unsatisfactory. So, while we believe the boundaries do make some difference to the result of an election, they do not mean everything. "Everything" is, after all, a way of thinking, and if the electors think wisely, they will vote our way. If they think unwisely, as they sometimes do, they are misguided enough to vote against us. For my part, I am always willing to take my chance at the hands of the electors. It may be very easy to say that, because we have to do it whether we like it or not. In considering electoral boundaries, many of us, no matter how parochial we might be, are apt to be too solicitous about certain people who live in this area or in that area. Under the Bill introduced by the Premier yesterday, the boundaries are to be fixed by the Commission appointed under the Act of 1922. The Premier proposes to make a very small alteration to that Act, but though it is a very small alteration, it is a mighty important one. There are to be four areas—the North-West, goldfields, agricultural and metropolitan. Under the Act of 1922 there were five areas including the North-West. The quota in each of the areas determines the representation in numbers, at any rate, in this House. Under my Act, as the Premier pointed out, the metropolitan area would have had a much larger quota than it will have under this measure. Under the Premier's proposal, the 108,866 electors in the metropolitan area will be provided with a quota of 6,404, and there will be 17 seats, or an increase of five seats. In the agricultural area the 86,749 electors will have a quota of 4,131 and will return 21 representatives. The mining and pastoral areas are now to be lumped and the 15,836 electors there will have a quota of 1,979 and will return eight representatives, a decrease of five. It is proposed to transfer five of the goldfields seats to the metropolitan area. In the North-West there will still be four seats for the 3,238 electors with a quota of 809. If the 1922 Act that we are seeking to amend were retained, the quota for the metropolitan area would be 7,150 and the number of seats 15. For the agricultural area the quota would be 3,575 and the number of seats 24. For the goldfields central area the quota would be 3,575 and the number of seats three, while the mining area would have a quota of 1,787 and four seats.

The Premier: You make it seven seats altogether for the goldfields.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is what it would be on the present number of electors if the Act of 1922 were retained.

The Premier: I make the number of goldfields seats six.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Premier works it out, he will find that the fractions would give the central goldfields area an extra seat. The 1922 Act provides that where the fraction is greatest, the extra seat shall be provided.

The Premier: That is, if it is under a half or over a half.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes.

The Premier: If it is over a half, it gets a seat, and if it is under a half, it does not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so, and the fraction would have given the goldfields seven seats altogether. Anyhow there is not very much difference. Here there is an advantage to the central mining area, as the Premier will realise, because the quota will be less than that provided under the Act. Under the Premier's Bill 1,979 is to be the quota as against 1,787 under the Act we are amending. The central area will have a lower quota by just 1,600 than would have been the case under my Act. That does not seem quite fair to the outer area, but still it is all within the goldfields area. The thing that has been forgotten is the fact that while this is called a mining and pastoral area, there are a good many agricultural votes in Yilgarn and Kanoona, probably more than on the stations within the area. Those votes will grow in number. I do not know why the Premier has thought it necessary to make the amendment, because it will be seen that under the Bill the metropolitan area will get two more seats than it would have got under the Act—17 instead of 15—while the agricultural area will get three less. The goldfields area, I have explained, will get one more. Under my Act, the metropolitan area quota was to be as two to one compared with the agricultural area; under the Bill that quota is to be as six to four, which makes the difference in the representation.

The Premier: And similarly as between mining and agricultural.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Certainly. The central goldfields were regarded as on the same footing with the agricultural area. That is right, because Kalgoorlie and

Boulder are concentrated areas, and just as easily accessible as the agricultural areas. Agriculture is extremely widespread, starting at the Murchison River, ending at the Stirling Ranges, and extending east as far as Esperance. That represents a big field to cover, and representation of it is not as easy as that of the goldfields. However, numbers are increasing in the agricultural area, and notwithstanding this provision agricultural representation may be increased. The Act provides that there shall be redistribution when a change happens in connection with a minority of the seats; five is the number. So as the agricultural districts grow, they will obtain greater representation. It does not seem right to transfer five seats from the goldfields to the metropolitan area. That is a weakness in the Bill which I should like to see rectified. The metropolitan area is supposed to be largely concerned in doing one thing. It is the outlet for all the goods produced over a great part of the back country; and then there is the intake of goods, and the distribution of goods. More or less, all the people within the metropolitan area are engaged upon the same thing; and among them there is community of interest such as is hardly to be found in any other industry. In the mining area there are great differences in the work of the people, pastoral, gold mining, other forms of mining—

The Premier: There is great community of interest among the agriculturists.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But I am referring to the goldfields. There is not the same community of interest inside the mining area as there is inside the metropolitan area. We have our ports, the timber industry, the tin mining industry such as it is, the pastoral industry—a diversity of interests in the agricultural districts such as is not to be found in the metropolitan area. I have already referred to the agricultural voters in Yilgarn and Kanowna. Unfortunately in Yilgarn there is a day very little mining.

The Minister for Mines: Not much.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is not too much anywhere.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope there may be a revival of mining. In Kanowna, I am afraid, there is still less mining than in Yilgarn; so those two are really agricultural seats. I suppose there are some dryblowers searching for gold. I do not

think mines are working in the Kanowna district.

The Minister for Mines: Yes; three mines are working at Norseman.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I had forgotten that Norseman is in that district. The proposals of the Bill do not do justice to agriculture. On looking up the timetable, I found that one can get from Kalgoorlie to Perth in 16 hours 32 minutes, whereas one can get from Kununoppin to Perth on two days a week in 12 hours 6 minutes. From Kununoppin round by Merredin to Perth would take as long as the journey from Kalgoorlie to Perth.

The Premier: But one can motor quickly from Kununoppin.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and one can fly to Kalgoorlie. Soon there will be an aeroplane service to Kalgoorlie. There is not much in that contention, though a good deal is made of it. When one is in a centre that gets the daily papers and daily mails, centres where one frequently sees people who move about, it is much the same thing whether one is 300 miles from Perth or 200 miles from Perth. But it is a different matter when one gets to the North-West, or into the outer agricultural districts with an inconvenient and infrequent train service. Kondinin is an instance of what I mean. The central goldfields are much more closely in touch with the capital than some places which are much nearer to it. The outer goldfields are on quite a different footing. They are in as bad a position as some of the outer agricultural districts.

The Premier: The cost of transit is also a factor to be considered.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but the central goldfields have their representatives frequently with them. I admit that a man who represents Kanowna or Kalgoorlie or Geraldton or Albany must find it difficult to live in his electorate, at any rate during the meeting of Parliament. I myself find it enough of an undertaking to get to Northam every week, and that takes but little time as compared with the other places I have mentioned. Moreover, some of these electorates are very large indeed. If one lives at one end of the electorate of York, one is a long way from the other end of it, and the same remark applies to Avon and Toodyay. As regards the Bill, our job is to provide a fair opportu-

ity for the representation of all the people. If we do that, we shall have achieved something. On this side of the Chamber we regret extremely that the mining area must lose seats because it has lost electors. All of us are sorry that the metropolitan area must gain seats because it has gained electors, who probably would be much more useful to the State if they were engaged in the mining industry. Some of the additional representation, therefore, might well go to the agricultural districts instead of to Perth. There is great disparity in the number of electors in each of these districts, and we shall be doing some measure of justice in correcting the anomalies.

The Premier: There is as great a difference, in some cases, between electorates as between one area and another.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. In Canning there are 18,762 electors as against 3,983 in Fremantle.

The Premier: Take the central gold-fields.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. We get Leederville with 12,841 electors, Guildford with 11,170, Subiaco with 11,880 and Claremont with 10,609 when the quota for the seats is to be 6,400. Those are great disparities, even under our rough and ready methods. I do not know that it is a very wise way of providing for the representation of the people in this House, but it has always been the way, and we shall continue it.

The Premier: The metropolitan area has four times as many electors in one district as in another.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In the metropolitan area representation could be provided without using the 20 per cent. above and below margins. We could make very nearly an even number of electors in each division. Then when it comes to the agricultural districts, we have Nelson with 5,730 electors, Albany with 5,522 electors, Beverley with 2,461, Geraldton with 2,657 and Northam with 3,392. Here we have a drop from 5,522 to 2,641. Again, it is clear that it is wrong. Albany may be entitled to a larger number of electors than Beverley because Albany is a very important town, and there we get electors concentrated in a small area. If the question of distance from the capital city is to be considered, then Albany must have a larger number.

The Premier: Of the electorates in the agricultural areas, Albany is the furthest away and has the largest number of electors.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a town of considerable size and we should expect to see a greater number of electors there than in electorates where the population is scattered, as it is in Beverley or Avon. At the same time, this disparity is altogether too great, and it is unfair. Then again, there is the Forrest electorate with 2,901 electors, and they are largely in a closely settled area. Thus it will be seen that there are a great many anomalies to be corrected in the agricultural areas. The right to vary a quota by 20 per cent. above or below, is provided only in case it is inconvenient or unwise to stick to the even number.

The Premier: The Electoral Commissioners should stick to the even number of the quota whenever it can reasonably be done.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Most certainly, but it cannot always be done. Therefore we made provision for the variation above or below so that the commissioners may, in the exercise of their judgment, vary the quota. At the same time, it is not intended that they will make use of that right unless it is necessary.

The Premier: Of course distance from the capital will affect the position too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and the scattered nature of the population of an electorate, together with the possibility of that population expanding.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, that is one point that should be considered—the possibility of expansion.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Quite so, and the possibility of that expansion taking place fairly soon. Thus it is that we provide the latitude I have indicated in order that the necessary provision may be made. The commissioners, however, should adhere as closely as they possibly can to the quotas fixed for the metropolitan, agricultural and mining and pastoral districts. Of course we are quite aware that it will not be possible to do that in every instance. In the agricultural groups it will be particularly difficult. For instance, if we take the various agricultural seats north of Wongan Hills we will realise that there is a large area that is rather cut off. Then if we go south from

here to Bridgetown, there is a barrier that is not bridged very often between the Great Southern railway and the South-Western railway. Boyup Brook is a long way from Katanning and there is not a great deal of settlement between those towns. So it is from Bridgetown to Katanning, and from Lake Muir to Cranbrook. In these territories, as well as in other parts, much of the country is sparsely settled. Thus it will not be possible for the Electoral Commissioners to fix the electors absolutely in accordance with the quotas, but we ask that they shall fix them as near to 4,100 as possible. Then when we come to the mining areas we find that Kalgoorlie has 3,536 electors, as against Hannans with 575 electors. I have already said that probably this will not make much difference to the actual results of the elections, but I am hopeful that on the next occasion Kalgoorlie will see fit to send at least one representative to Parliament to sit among members opposed to the present Government. Then we have a drop from Kalgoorlie's 3,536 electors to 270 electors at Menzies.

Mr. Pantou: I hope you do not expect the same thing from Menzies.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would welcome the hon. member on this side of the House! The difference in these figures is considerable, and is quite wrong. It is not right that we who have the right to make the laws and have the right to alter the Constitution, who are responsible to see that the Parliamentary representation is on a fair basis, should allow the existing state of affairs to continue. We are not justified in allowing these anomalies to exist. So it is that I am glad we have this proposal before us. Then we come to the northern districts and we find that Gascoyne has 1,217 electors as against Pilbara's 486 electors. In that part of the State where the electorates cover enormous areas, it may be difficult to fix the electoral boundaries so that each electorate will have 800 voters. At the same time I think it will be easy to fix electorates that will contain more like 800 electors than is evidenced in the two instances I have quoted.

The Premier: The North-West is very liberally treated.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it is.

Mr. Teesdale: Then it is the first time it has ever been liberally treated.

The Premier: Unfortunately the population there is declining too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so, but that is not due to the decline of the pastoral industry, but rather to the decline of the mining industry. We have always had four representatives from the North, because it is such an enormous area. At the same time, some of the people up North think that their Parliamentary representation in this House is not quite so satisfactory as is the representation of the Northern Territory in the Federal House, although the member representing the Territory in the House of Representatives has a voice but no vote! Some of the people in the North would be perfectly willing to join the Northern Territory even without that representation, just because they consider they are not adequately represented in the State Parliament where there are 50 members. For my part, I think they should consider their representation very satisfactory. It is quite certain that if we ever agree to transfer any of our territory to the Commonwealth, the people in the transferred part of the North would not have any such representation in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. Coverley: The people in the Kimberley electorate do not want to join up with the Northern Territory.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some of them do; but if they had their wishes granted to them, they would not secure as satisfactory representation in any other Parliament. Their representation has always been granted because of the distance the people in the North are from the seat of Government, and also because of the casual nature of the industries in that part of the State. We agree that their representation ought to be continued.

Mr. Coverley: The people in the North will remain as electors of this State all right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope that the electors in the northern constituencies will rapidly increase in numbers. If we succeed in finding oil up there, it will make a great difference. I hope oil will be discovered before long. Should it be discovered, in all probability it will lead to the discovery of gold and deposits of other minerals as well, because of the increased population that will be there.

Mr. Teesdale: Then you will all take an interest in the North!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I shall not take any more than I do now or have done in the past. We could not be more interested than we are in the North.

We are waiting anxiously for a chance to develop that part of the State, and the very fact that we provide for four members to represent that part of the State should satisfy the residents that we are interested in their welfare.

The Premier: They would not get that number of Parliamentary representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so, and that is why we are prepared to listen to them, particularly because they deal with parts of the State that are so distant from the city.

The Premier: Yes, because we are not altogether acquainted with the subjects upon which they speak, and cannot contradict them!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are always anxious to help them, and I entirely approve of the retention of the Parliamentary representation for the northern electorates. I hope there will be no further suggestion of handing over any part of our territory to the Commonwealth.

The Premier: There will be a motion before us dealing with that matter prior to the closing of the session.

Mr. Teesdale: I shall be ready for it with a referendum.

The Premier: The motion will be one as to whether that proposal shall go through or not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Do not waste the time of Parliament with it! Wait until we know about the oil.

The Premier: Will you let the Government settle it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. They might decide to hand over some part of the North.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We had better continue as at present. There is not much more that I need say. While I do not approve of all the provisions of the Bill, and while I object to giving five seats to the metropolitan area, instead of, as I suggested, two to the metropolitan area and three to the country districts, I will not oppose the Bill. I will support it because it is the best we can get, and because it will at least improve the representation of the people by dealing with some of the anomalies that exist at present. Those anomalies should not be allowed to continue any longer. Nothing could be more unfair

to the electors than the present position. So, to the extent that the Bill will improve the present situation, it should be supported, although I think the Bill could be better and fairer. Of that there is no doubt. It would be much better to allow the divisions to be marked in accordance with the provisions of the present Act. However, the Government have the majority and have determined that it shall be done in the way they suggest. I shall not endeavour to defeat the Bill merely because it does not contain all that I want. I will support it because it will represent an improvement.

The Premier: Even if the Bill is not perfect, it represents a big improvement.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. It does not represent all that ought to be done or the best that could be done, but it does represent an improvement. Whereas every other proposal to deal with the redistribution of seats has been received with a shower of abuse, so far as I am concerned the Bill before us will not receive that treatment. If it were possible to defeat the Bill and thus retain the present Act, I would endeavour to defeat it, but it is useless attempting to do that, and so, in the interests of the people, I propose to support it. Its great defect is that greater representation is not being given to the agricultural districts. They are important, not only because of the number of electors they carry, but also because of the work the electors in those districts do. They produce much of the wealth of the State and pay much of the taxes that are collected, and are generally important to the life of the whole community. But if members will consider they will realise that the extent to which the agricultural industry would be provided for under the lower quota might be fairer than the present one. I will help the Premier carry the second reading of the Bill, although what may be done in Committee is another matter. I will help him with the second reading and, if we can do no better, I will help him to carry the Bill into law.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.17]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Tuesday.

The Premier: Till to-morrow, not till Tuesday.

Mr. THOMSON: I cannot be here to-morrow; I have to go to a show.

The Premier: I will give you till to-morrow, but if you make it Tuesday I will have to oppose it.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. THOMSON: I move—

That the debate be adjourned till to-morrow.

Motion put and passed.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it insisted upon its amendment to which the Assembly had disagreed.

MOTION—NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.18]: I move—

That, in order that a more comprehensive policy for the development of the North and North-West portions of this State might be formulated, it is, in the opinion of this House, desirable that the Government should engage an expert irrigation engineer to make inquiries as to the suitability of the rivers of those divisions for irrigation and closer settlement.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, copies of a small map of Western Australia will be distributed among members. On that map will be found a line drawn across at approximately the 26th parallel. The remarks I intend to make concern that portion of the State north of that line. Every member of the House, including Ministers themselves, must feel disappointed in that, whilst the State as a whole is progressing in the most favourable manner, the North-West shows a steady decline. The State is now becoming known throughout the world as one of the most progressive in Australia. Our wheat lands are spreading in all directions, railways are being pushed out to meet the demands of the farmer, our population is increasing, and our export trade is steadily expanding. But when we turn to the North we find a very different story. I have here a few figures which will support what I have just said. These figures show the population and the stock in 1917 as compared with 1927, the latest figures obtainable. In 1917 the population of the State was 306,328, whereas in 1927 it was

392,292, showing a very satisfactory increase of 30 per cent. During the same period the population of the North-West decreased from 5,869 to 5,143, or a decrease of 12½ per cent. That, I think, should be a matter of anxiety to the Government as well as to the people of the State. For, after all, probably it is the North that requires population more than does any other part of the State, I mean from a defence point of view. In 1917 the cattle in the State numbered 957,086 and in 1927 the number was 846,735, or a decrease of over 100,000. But during that period the cattle south of the Murchison increased from 172,707 to 216,454, while the cattle north of the Murchison were reduced from 784,379 to 630,281, or a reduction of nearly 20 per cent. in 10 years.

The Minister for Railways: But a lot of the stations have been going in for sheep. The sheep have been increasing rapidly.

Mr. ANGELO: Still, I think I shall be able to indicate that there is plenty more land with which to keep the cattle industry up to the standard of 1917. The sheep in the State show a very satisfactory increase indeed. For the whole State there has been an increase from 6,384,191 in 1917 to 8,447,480 last year. But during that period the sheep north of the Murchison show a decrease from 2,451,904 to 2,266,533. The whole of the increase has been south of the Murchison, where the figures have risen from 3,932,287 to 6,180,947. So, while the sheep in the South show a substantial gain of 2,248,660 in the decade, those in the North show a loss of 185,371. That, of course, is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. Certainly some at least of the losses may have been due to bad seasons. The motion I am moving, if acted upon and carried out to a logical conclusion, may mean the saving of a lot of those losses from year to year. I am not going to delay the House with arguments as to the desirability of populating and developing the North from a defence point of view. Already we have had a number of speeches on that question and I think members are satisfied that if the North can be populated, it should be done. But I have here a handbook issued by the Government and entitled the "North and North-West of Western Australia." From this little work I propose to quote two brief extracts, one by Sir Hal Colebatch, who was Minister for the North-

West in 1922, and another by the Hon. J. M. Drew, who was the Minister two years later. Sir Hal Colebatch says—

Our conception of its possibilities has been widened as a result of the expedition recently undertaken by Surveyor Easton and his party. This land of big mountain ranges, extensive tablelands, heavy and reliable rainfall, noble rivers and fertile soils, cannot fail to appeal to the imagination of people in the Old Land, whilst its emptiness and its close proximity to teeming millions of coloured populations elevates to a position of first-class importance the question of whether in the years to come it shall be to the Empire an occasion of anxiety and danger, or a source of boundless wealth and unlimited opportunity.

Two years later the Hon. J. M. Drew wrote—

I share the anxiety of my predecessor in office as to the ultimate fate of this wonderful tract of country should we fail to take advantage of the great opportunity given us in making every endeavour to fill its empty spaces with people of our own kind.

The Premier: Both are journalists and so both the quotations are well written.

Mr. ANGELO: But I am looking at it from another viewpoint, namely, both were Ministers in their time, one from this side of the House and one from the other, and they are giving the views of their respective parties. Therefore there is no need to dwell on the question any longer. Considerations of national safety demand a well-balanced population throughout the State. Now the question comes as to who shall do this work of developing and peopling the great North-West; should it be a State matter, a Federal matter, an Empire matter, or a matter for a combination of those authorities, possibly all three. We are all agreed that it is going to be a very big and costly job, a Herculean job, quite beyond the resources of our State for the time being. Therefore, naturally, we look to the Federal Government who, of course, have to attend to the defence of Australia. As has been pointed out by the two gentlemen I have quoted, we are so close to teeming millions that the question of defence becomes one of the utmost importance. I understand the Federal Government lately have made certain new proposals to our State Government as to the taking over of our North.

The Premier: Not new proposals; the same old proposals.

Mr. ANGELO: I was talking to Sir George Pearce to-day, and he told me he had

made new proposals very different from the old ones that we have already discussed in the House.

The Premier: Probably what he had in mind was the different parallels. We discussed in the House the question of the 26th parallel.

Mr. ANGELO: He assured me to-day that whilst a change is to be made to the 20th parallel, the Federal Government are prepared to undertake the development of the North until that territory reaches a certain population, after which it will automatically become a State. That is a different thing altogether.

Mr. Marshall: Did you see what Mr. Bruce had to say about the Northern Territory?

Mr. ANGELO: I shall not discuss that question to-night, for I believe we shall have an opportunity to say something further upon it before the session closes.

Mr. Kennelly: It would automatically become a State as time went on.

Mr. ANGELO: The number of people stipulated, about 20,000, would meet with the approval of a good many. I was surprised that the figure suggested by Sir George Pearce was so low. Whatever the administration, whether it be the State and the Federal together, or the State, Federal and Imperial Governments together, the authorities who undertook the development and peopling of the North would find this motion equally useful. The investigation is required. This will be useful whether it be for the State, the Federal or the Imperial Government. I do not want to lose the North-West, but I want to see it developed and peopled for the protection of the whole of Australia. If we can do that with the help of the Federal and Imperial Governments, let us do so and retain it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course!

The Premier: Even if we cannot do it ourselves, we have to be assured that the other fellow can, before we hand it over.

Mr. ANGELO: We must see that certain conditions are attached to any transfer. The development must be properly done, and we must see to it that the North does not become a Federal territory for all time.

The Premier: The authorities are giving free passes to the unemployed residents of Darwin, either to Melbourne or Perth, and

are stopping their sustenance if they do not go. I do not know why they have picked on Perth. I suppose they will be coming to me for employment.

Mr. ANGELO: Apart from the question of defence, is the North worth developing? The Kimberleys contain 56,000,000 acres of country, of which only half is leased. The North-West contains 130,000,000 acres, of which 25,000,000 acres are still available.

The Premier: What do you mean by the North-West?

Mr. ANGELO: The Gascoyne, Ashburton and Pilbarra districts, between the 20th and 26th parallel. Most of the land is taken up in pastoral leases in the North-West, but a considerable amount is still vacant. My figures are from Government sources. Then we have to consider the value of the tropical products brought into the Commonwealth every year. That exceeds £12,000,000. Products which could probably be grown in the North come into Western Australia annually to the value of 2½ million pounds. Experts who have visited the North consider that nearly all these products could be grown there.

Mr. Latham: To what do you refer?

Mr. ANGELO: To sugar, rice, and to the pig-raising industry, and many other products. How many members know that the rainfall in some parts of the far North averages each year 60 inches? There are immense areas of abundantly watered country that are capable of growing tropical fruits and valuable vegetation, but which would require a certain amount of irrigation to make that possible. There are millions of acres of good agricultural land upon which there is no settlement. Even with this huge rainfall, irrigation is required for the growth of certain tropical fruits and vegetation. I am told by experts that if our cattle industry is to compete with the Argentine, we must have available for the cattle large quantities of green fodder. For the growth of this, irrigation also is necessary. From the Gascoyne River, which empties into the sea at Carnarvon, to the Ord River in East Kimberley, there are more than 20 large rivers flowing into the sea. Members will see the names of those rivers on the map. The rivers carry away the flood waters during the rainy season. The Fitzroy River, which has its outlet in King's Sound, near Derby, drains an area of 50,

000 square miles of country. Over the whole of that the average rainfall is said to be about 20 inches. There are also other great rivers in the Kimberleys. The Ord River drains approximately 20,000 square miles of country, and empties itself into the Cambridge Gulf, near Wyndham. The Drysdale River, which flows into Napier Broome Bay is another important river. Napier Broome Bay, I am told, is 19 times as big as Sydney Harbour, and absolutely landlocked. In addition there are other rivers such as the Margaret, which junctions with the Fitzroy River, some 200 miles inland, the Lenard, the Meda, the Prince Regent and the King Edward. Some of those rivers, contain fresh water throughout the year, and this could be made available for many millions of acres of first-class agricultural country. Much of this country is eminently suitable, particularly along the river banks, for the growth of tropical and sub-tropical products, and for the production of lucerne and other fodders. In the North-West division, comprising Gascoyne, Ashburton and Roebourne districts, there is a wonderful river system, where the following rivers are the most important, the Gascoyne, the Ashburton, the Fortescue and the de Grey. These drain respectively some 20,000 to 30,000 square miles of country. Whilst these last-mentioned rivers, with the exception of large pools here and there, are mostly dry during portion of the year, in the wet season they bring down a great volume of water, forming permanent underground storage supplies.

Mr. Sampson: Would it be possible to conserve the water?

Mr. ANGELO: That is what I am asking the Government to find out. I have lately read a good deal of what has been done in India with rivers of the same kind as we have here, that flow during the rainy season, but are called "dry rivers" at certain times of the year, because then they no longer flow. These rivers have, in many instances, been dammed and the water conserved and used for irrigation upon the adjoining country. Dry arid provinces are said to have become very fertile, to carry huge populations, and to produce tremendous wealth. We know what was done on the Nile by the establishment of dams. In the United States many large territories of arid country have been rendered extremely fertile by the dam-

ming of rivers and the application of the water to the adjoining land. Every member must have read the pamphlet written by the late Mr. Despeissis. That gentleman was sent to various tropical countries to gain experience in tropical agriculture. He urged strongly that something in the way of tropical culture should be done to settle the North.

Mr. Teesdale: Not 15 per cent. of the members ever saw the pamphlet.

Mr. ANGELLO: Everyone had the opportunity to do so, but unfortunately it has now gone out of print. In Mr. Moody we had another expert, who visited the Gascoyne district. He was so impressed by its conditions and possibilities that he wrote a long report to the Government and suggested that it was capable of carrying a quarter of a million people. Mr. Hampshire, dairy expert, visited the Gascoyne River, and strongly urged that a dairy settlement should be established there. Every expert has pointed out the necessity for conserving water, and suggested the advisability of appointing an engineer with practical knowledge to see whether it was feasible to conserve the water in the rivers, and urged that this should be done before anything further was undertaken. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) gave us some information the other evening concerning the cattle industry, as a result of what he had learned whilst in England. That confirms what Mr. J. B. Cramsie told me in Sydney about 18 months ago. Mr. Cramsie is probably well known to many members as one who has made a life study of meat preservation and of freezing works. For two years he travelled throughout the world gaining information as to the latest methods employed, and inquiring into the various cattle industries. Upon his return he was asked by the New South Wales Government to accept the chairmanship of the Metropolitan Meat Board. Mr. Cramsie is of opinion that we can compete with the Argentine for the cattle trade, if we can grow sufficient lucerne and other products to provide holding paddocks adjacent to our meat works and fattening paddocks on which to keep the stock in good condition. He told me that the world is now gradually taking to baby beef, that is, young cattle fattened quickly and sold at about two years of age. People now show

a preference for lambs as against mutton, and in the same way baby beef is coming into vogue. It is nearly all baby beef that is shipped from the Argentine. The reason why that country can so successfully compete with Australia and other parts of the world is that it has huge areas of land under alfalfa, which is lucerne, and can therefore fatten cattle upon these pastures and keep them in the pink of condition until they are ready for the meat works and killed for chilling. Mr. Cramsie showed me letters from the United States and from Canada declaring that there was a growing shortage of beef, and that before long the United States would have to draw a considerable portion of the beef supplies from the Argentine. He said also it would be impossible for the Argentine to supply both the United States and Great Britain. He said, too, it was not only our opportunity but our duty to endeavour to encourage the beef industry in Australia. With our huge areas of suitable country, watered by these wonderful rivers, and with magnificent plains through which these rivers were running, all capable of growing fodders, we should do something to make up the shortage which must eventually occur in Great Britain. I am not asking the Government, in this motion, to do anything of that kind, I am simply asking for an investigation. We know that our own State is becoming short of beef. The Government are now being asked to lift the embargo to enable cattle to come from the other States. That seems to me to be an extraordinary thing, remembering the huge areas we have in the North that are capable of growing good stock. Another thing I would like to point out is that before long the people in the North-West will experience a difficulty in selling their sheep. I have already pointed out that the numbers of sheep to the south of the Murchison River are increasing. Up to the present time, owing to the big demand for sheep being made by farmers—so many of them now are engaging in mixed farming—the demand is almost equal to the supply, but when farmers are all stocked up what is going to become of the sheep in the North? The answer is, freeze and export them. Unfortunately, however, there are regulations coming into force in Great Britain that will prohibit carcasses of sheep with nodules being taken into that country. I am afraid that a large percentage of our

grown sheep in the North have nodules. Mr. Cramsie cannot give an explanation of the cause of the nodules except that it may be by little seeds working their way through the skin into the flesh.

The Minister for Railways: How long is it since nodules have been discovered?

Mr. ANGELO: I think our sheep have always had nodules. The strange part of it is that Mr. Cramsie says lambs are free from nodules. Thus our export of lambs should not be affected. Whatever export trade we may have in the future will be confined to lambs, the flesh of which is very acceptable to the people of Great Britain. We must therefore see to it that we keep our lambs in the North-West in a fat condition. Unfortunately we cannot be sure of a regular supply of fat lambs in the North-West unless we have fattening and holding paddocks. Those paddocks can only be established by means of irrigation and a regular supply of water. If we had such paddocks, lambs could be drafted down to wherever the freezing works were and kept there until they were ready for freezing. We could then compete with any part of the world. We grow splendid sheep in the North-West and our lambs cannot be excelled so long as they get green feed, but without holding and fattening paddocks, I am afraid we cannot look for an export trade. I repeat that I am asking merely for an investigation by a competent authority so that if his report should be favourable, the Federal Government, and perhaps the Imperial Government also, might be induced to assist to people the huge and unoccupied territory of the North. I would remind the House that the Federal Government are already doing work of this description. They are assisting New South Wales and Victoria in their big irrigation works and now they propose to do something similar in Queensland. It is a sort of three-cornered partnership on the River Murray.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And we are paying for a good deal of it.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, and we are not getting our share of the benefit. Therefore, why not try to get our share of similar expenditure. If we could satisfy the people at Home that we have these areas, that it is possible to dam our rivers and provide irrigation and holding paddocks, I am convinced that we should have no serious difficulty in getting British capital. I have here a copy

of a pamphlet that I received a year or two ago. It is entitled, "Memorandum of a Scheme for producing and marketing Australian chilled beef and other products; prepared by the Committee of Initiative and presented to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies." This deals with Western Australia, but unfortunately when they learned of the difficulty with regard to holding and fattening stock and also that our stock were not up to the standard in respect of breeding, nothing further was done. I am pleased to see by a telegram that has been quoted here from our Premier that this scheme was going to have his support. If the investigation I am advocating is of the nature I suggest, I am certain there will be a good deal of capital available for investment. I am convinced also that the Premier would again do what he did on the previous occasion. I was told by Sir George Pearce only to-day that there are people at Home with any amount of money making inquiries about the possibilities of investing that money in the Northern Territory. If that is the case, there is no reason why those people should not also turn their attention to the North-West of our State. Already we have had an opinion expressed by one of our own engineers regarding the rivers of the north. Mr. Drake Brockman was for many years Commissioner for the North-West and in the discharge of his duties he had to travel over a considerable area of the North-West. Last year he read a paper before the Institute of Engineers of Australia, the title of the paper being, "The application of engineering to the development of the North-West of Western Australia." I should like to refer to one or two paragraphs of the paper that Mr. Brockman read. In what he called the first stage of development, he pointed out what had already been done in the direction of developing the North-West; next he suggested that the second stage should be the building of roads wherever necessary. North-West members will agree with him on that point. I should like, however, to read what he has to say about his third stage of development. He says—

Having formed the opinion that the problems necessary to increase population and production can best be solved by considering the development of the river basins, it is first necessary to summarise what is already known about

them. Such knowledge is very limited, indeed, there is no very definite information except (a) that large areas will carry stock; (b) that a huge volume of water periodically runs to waste; and (c) that there are big areas of rich alluvial plain which, in many cases, are flooded in the wet season. The basins of the Ord, Fitzroy, Fortescue, Ashburton, and Gascoyne Rivers are likely to prove the most responsive to developmental schemes.

I wish to emphasise this because it is the opinion that I have always held. He goes on—

It would thus be wise to confine early investigation to these. The De Grey-Onkover basin has already been partly served by a railway, and further pastoral expansion will undoubtedly follow increased mining activity. Because this basin offers great opportunity for the prospector and investor, it might be added to the list. But investigation here should be centred primarily on mining. Although it is not advisable to put large construction works in hand at once, the author considers it nevertheless essential that the engineer, pastoralist, agricultural scientist and geologist should now commence investigation after investigation, and experiment after experiment, within the selected basins.

Further on Mr. Drake Brockman says—

The author would say that the result of his researches would prove—(1) That irrigation is an essential aid to further marked increase in population and production; (2) that enough water flows to waste in good seasons to make possible the conservation of a sufficient supply to meet the requirements of all years; (c) that sites for such conservation are available.

He concludes his paper by saying—

In conclusion, the author wishes to stress his own opinion. The North-West should not be considered as a whole, but as individual river basins; and he believes that the correct formula for the proper development of each basin can only be determined after careful investigation and experiment. By no other means will the North-West be quickly, efficiently and economically brought to its full state of development.

Thus we see what our own engineer has to say about the North-West and I would like to stress the fact that Mr. Drake Brockman only made a cursory inspection of that part of the State whilst carrying out his other numerous duties. He was not able to give that undivided attention to the subject that he would have done if he had been put on to that job alone. What I consider is required is the report of an engineer of world-wide reputation upon whose recommendations, not only our own Government, but the Federal Government and the Imperial Government would act. His reports would

be taken as coming from a reliable source, and I have no doubt those Governments would go heartily into the project if the opinions of such an engineer were available. Once again I should like to stress the fact that I am asking for nothing more than an investigation. Of course the investigation might prove disappointing. If it should prove disappointing, no great cost would have been incurred, and at any rate we would then know where we stood. We have been told by many so-called experts that the North-West possesses great possibilities and potentialities. If an expert convinced us that those possibilities did not exist—

Mr. Teesdale: We would know what to call him.

Mr. ANGELO: I am glad to have that interjection. I have resided for nearly 40 years in the North-West, excepting of course the odd years that I have spent in Perth. I have visited every part of the North-West on several occasions and I am convinced that no authority can ever present an unsatisfactory report about that part of the State. I think an expert would report that with respect to several of the northern rivers—I do not say all—there are possibilities in respect of irrigation that are beyond doubt. A report from an authority would help the Government and Parliament to formulate a comprehensive policy of how the North-West is to be developed, and by the North-West I mean the Kimberleys as well. It may result in steady development of the wonderful resources we have been told about and a gradual increase in population to the extent that will make that huge portion of our great State safe for all time for the British people. I earnestly commend my motion to the sympathetic consideration of the Government and members of the House.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1928-29.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Department of Public Works and Labour, continued (Hon. A. McCallum, Minister).

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £113,001:

Item—Main road construction, construction main roads, £38,000:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: How is it we spent only £18,964 out of the £36,000 main road contribution last year? Did that cover the total amount that the Government were committed to find from revenue?

The Premier: The £36,000 would have been spent if we had carried out the full programme.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Surely we did more than half of it.

The Premier: I do not think we did; there was a big delay in the change over.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If it has accumulated, we have the right to expend it later. I suppose when we get better machinery and experience, we shall get better value for the money.

The Premier: There is no doubt about the value of some of the labour-saving machinery.

Item—Dredging plant not in use, depreciation and maintenance, £116:

Mr. DAVY: I should like some explanation of the item. Is it for plant needed periodically at Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some of the plant is not continuously in use. We took the machinery out of one of the old dredges, and put it into a new hull that we built. Practically all the time the new hull was being built, the old dredger was out of commission because it was not fit for work.

Mr. Davy: It strikes me as being a quaint item. You might as well say that when a motor car is not in use depreciation should be allowed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With that one exception, all the dredges are in use at present. A couple of the grab dredges were not being used, but they are now being employed on the reclamation work near the Causeway.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Has this item anything to do with the private dredges on the river?

The Minister for Works: No; they are used for getting shell for the cement works.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The company is working its dredges under a contract from the Government.

The Minister for Works: Under a lease.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We tried to get a Bill through Parliament to give that power, but the Bill was knocked out. Now you have entered into a lease.

Item—Rottnest Jetty, repairs and strengthening, £50:

Mr. SLEEMAN: Rottnest Jetty is the rottenest I have seen.

The Premier: It will be fixed up this time with the £50!

Mr. SLEEMAN: Some years ago a good deal of money was spent on dredging, and a new jetty was to be erected. Later when I made inquiries I was informed the Government were waiting to see whether that portion of the bay was silting up before the work was proceeded with. What is likely to be done? From the vote of £50 last year £9 was spent. Is there any possibility of getting a new jetty for Rottnest?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The question of providing a new jetty for Rottnest will be dealt with under the Loan Estimates. It will not be built out of revenue.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Suppose nothing is provided on the Loan Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: We cannot discuss that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I wish to know whether something is going to be done this year. If nothing is likely to be done, let the Minister say so straight out, and not fool with the question.

Mr. Davy: What is wrong with the jetty?

Mr. SLEEMAN: There is nothing right with it; it is on the swing.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The item seems to be misleading. Last year £50 was voted for repairs and strengthening, and only £9 was spent. How much strengthening could be done for £9?

Mr. Marshall: Nine pounds' worth.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This year the Government are asking for £50.

The Premier: The £9 was spent, not on strengthening, but on repairs!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Perhaps it was for a light.

The Premier: It may have been the cost of an inspector to go to Rottnest to inspect it!

Mr. SAMPSON: The present condition of Rottnest Jetty lends a spice of adventure to the island. The Tourist Bureau must find its difficulties increased owing to the bad state of the jetty.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We do not desire to spend any more money than we can help on the old jetty, pending a determination to provide a new jetty. To provide approaches to the jetty the channel has been dredged. We cannot say when the money for a new jetty will be available. That will be considered when the Loan Estimates are discussed.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is wrong with the present jetty?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is in very bad condition. At the beginning of last season McIlwraith's notified the Rott-nest Board that they would not take the "Zephyr" alongside the jetty unless something was done to permit of the vessel being tied up safely. The £9 was spent to provide another bollard. The jetty is really not safe. I do not know whether McIlwraith's will run the "Zephyr" there this year, but it took a good deal of persuasion to get them to run the vessel last year. We are providing £50 in case small repairs are necessary pending the construction of a new jetty.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the estimate for putting the jetty in good order or for a new jetty?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would be useless to attempt to put the old jetty in good order.

The Premier: A new jetty would cost about £10,000.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Labour, £14,432—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of the Minister for Public Works and Labour.

Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister—Hon. J. Cunningham in charge of the votes).

Vote—Chief Secretary, £16,207:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. J. Cunningham—Kalgoorlie) [6.12]: The total expenditure for the several departments under the Chief Secretary and the Honorary Minister is estimated this year at £207,362 exclusive of the Child Welfare Department controlled by the Minister for Agriculture. The estimate this year shows an increase of £9,126 as compared with the expenditure of £198,236 last year. The increase is largely due to the usual salary increments

granted from year to year, and it is partly due to provision for carrying on the operations of the Pardelup Prison Farm and the mental home at Point Heathcote. One matter affecting aborigines may be of interest to members. The number of indigent natives is increasing year by year, especially in the coastal areas. That is due to the change over of properties from one owner to another. Whereas in days gone by the old owners contributed fairly substantially to the upkeep of natives, the new owners do not regard this duty favourably and, as a result, we now have 300 additional natives to provide for out of this vote. The department has to find sustenance for 1,600 indigent natives monthly.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is that over the whole of the State?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Yes. The Pardelup Prison Farm is fulfilling its promise as a valuable aid to the reformatory treatment of prisoners. At the farm the men receive instruction in various occupations, mainly clearing and agriculture. The men are taking an interest in the work and the prison farm is developing on successful lines.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.30]: It is most gratifying to find that the prison farm at Pardelup is progressing so satisfactorily. During my trip abroad I had an opportunity of visiting one of the largest prisons in the world, the second largest in the United States—San Quentin, near San Francisco. I need hardly say that in the Superintendent of the Fremantle Prison the State has a most capable officer, one who is keen and kindly, and well qualified for the work required of him. The same may be said of the Controller of Prisons, Mr. Trethowan. In our prisons the difficulty is to find work for the inmates, or that was the case some time ago. The same difficulty existed in Queensland, but there objections of the nature urged here were not raised by the people outside. It has always been a puzzle to me that those who are free should be so anxious to limit work on behalf of those who are held in prison. It is not considerate, it is not sympathetic, and it is not wise. However, there is evidently no objection taken to the farm operation at Pardelup, and accord-

ingly I hope they will be extended as far as possible. Indeed, there should be no objection to the carrying on of work in prison. The agriculturists do not object to the work done on the prison farm, and do not think there is any justification for tradesmen or other industrialists objecting to work being done in the prisons. The men who are at Pardelup should be encouraged to a reasonable and proper extent; and when their time is up they should, subject to their behaviour having been good, be given an opportunity of taking up land. Otherwise they may easily find themselves out in the world without the opportunity of earning a living. The right of ex-prisoners to take up land exists in some other countries, and we might usefully consider its application here, since we want to bring prisoners back into society as useful citizens at the earliest possible opportunity. I realise that the object of imprisonment is reformation as well as punishment, and the reformatory aspect should receive the fullest consideration. There are other prisoners besides those sent to Pardelup. To that farm, I understand, only good conduct prisoners are sent, and moreover prisoners who have been convicted of offences other than sex offences and certain other offences which would render their removal to Pardelup undesirable. In California there are two prisons, one at San Quentin, and one at Folsom. The biennial report shows that the population of these two prisons increased in the two years from 4,074 to 5,065, an increase of 991. That fact certainly places California in not too favourable a light. The increase of crime is remarkable.

Mr. North: It is a populous State.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, but an increase of nearly 1,000 prisoners in two years is somewhat alarming. In Fremantle it is customary to hold one prisoner only in each cell, but so over-crowded has the San Quentin prison become that two, and in some cases three, prisoners are held in each cell. In those circumstances discipline is difficult and segregation practically impossible. A remarkable room at San Quentin is the dining-room, which has a seating capacity of 3,500. It is peculiar to find provision made for an orchestra, its work being to discourse sweet music—I presume the music is sweet—during dinner. From a utilitarian standpoint the San Quentin prison is interesting. In connection with it there is a road-building

section. At the time of my visit 800 prisoners, known as honour prisoners, or prisoners on parole, were out working on the roads. There is also a farm, and another feature is a furniture branch where a large quantity of furniture is produced for Government requirements. Moreover there is a printing works, though why printing should be picked out as a suitable occupation for prisoners is not apparent to me. Among the works turned out by the prison printery there is a volume of 234 pages executed in good style. The main industry at San Quentin—I want hon. members to note this particularly—is a spinning and weaving jute mill. Here about 1,000 prisoners are employed. They receive some consideration in the form of wages, an amount of up to 75 cents, practically 3s., per day being paid. Part of this small amount is sent to dependants of a prisoner, if necessary. Thus the prisoners have the privilege of knowing that they are in some measure contributing to the maintenance of those connected with them. To one who has had no experience of prisons, it is amusing to read in the biennial report that during the two years there were no outbreaks of any consequence, and that there was no strike in the prison. It is a subject for congratulation that the strike disease did not manifest itself during the period. Evidently the fact was of sufficient note for the report to mention it specially. We know that occasionally trouble does arise in prisons, and it says a good deal for those in charge that no disturbances arose during that period. Disturbances are not unknown even in Fremantle gaol.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: There has been none during the past 12 months.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is highly gratifying. Reverting to the jute mill in the San Quentin prison, I suggest that our prison authorities might give consideration to the establishment of similar works in the Fremantle prison. Such works would not compete with outside. The Minister for Agriculture knows that at times it is difficult to ensure a regular supply of jute. To have a jute mill working at Fremantle would mean a benefit to the prisoners, and a benefit to the State in the utilisation of labour otherwise wasted, and also a great saving. The San Quentin works have been put on a paying basis. There is a State parole officer whose work it is to look after prisoners released on parole. That work has been car-

ried out efficiently. Great help is rendered to hundreds of men and boys upon their release from prison. They are encouraged to see the parole officer when necessity arises. He helps them in the dark hours which follow release from prison. That may sound paradoxical, but it is not so. The released prisoner has a hard world to face, and a little help is of the greatest possible value to him when he is trying to get his feet on the rungs of the ladder, as it were, and climb back into society and hold his own. The parole system has proved to be satisfactory. The cost of supervision per individual per year amounts approximately to £2 as against an approximate cost of £52 12s. for maintaining an individual in prison. There was a saving over two years of practically £106,000 because of the introduction of the parole system. The economic and business aspects of the scheme speak for themselves and I need not stress the point further. That proposition can be put forward without any hesitation and I believe the scope of the parole system could be increased and thus effect a saving to the State in respect of money and restored man power.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you know how many of those men go back to prison?

Mr. SAMPSON: Only first offenders are received at San Quentin prison.

Hon. G. Taylor: What happens to the others?

Mr. SAMPSON: They go to Folsom prison, where the prisoners are engaged in quarrying and other laborious work. I hope the Premier will discuss with the Chief Secretary the proposal to establish a jute mill. Large numbers of bags are required for potatoes, onions, lime and wheat. Of course I can quite understand that with the added area that is likely to be brought under crop, bulk handling is almost certain to be introduced. I believe in that system, but irrespective of whether it is introduced or not it will pay the Government to manufacture jute goods. If the Premier looks into the matter, I feel sure he will decide upon establishing the industry in this State.

The Premier: Another State enterprise!

Mr. SAMPSON: The most unfortunate thing prisoners have to face is lack of work. However, I will not pursue that subject further, but I hope the Premier will look into it.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you think prisoners go to gaol to work?

Mr. SAMPSON: I was surprised to note that the Minister in charge of the vote made no reference to the reduction in the provision for chaplains. If that means that there is one chaplain less at the gaol, I think it is a matter for regret. There is also the small grant provided for the Prison Gate Committee. The amount is only £50, but the money provided is used to assist prisoners on release, just at a time when it is a great help to them. When men leave the prison, they may have £2 or £3 in their possession, but work is not always readily obtainable by them, hence the value of this assistance to them. If it could be found possible to increase the grant next year, I am sure the money would be put to good use.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Aborigines £23,827:

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [7.53]: There is an aborigines mission station at old Mt. Margaret. There is a small reserve that is surrounded by sheep stations. I have received a letter from the road board at Laverton suggesting that I should ask the Government to close the reserve and provide a new reserve some distance away in the back country where the natives would not be surrounded by sheep stations. Their argument is that all the aborigines have from one to four dogs and that the animals constitute a grave menace to the sheep people. When the depression on the gold-fields was becoming manifest some years ago, it was easy to buy iron and wooden houses and those in charge of the mission station bought up a number at Morgans for the purpose of providing housing for the aborigines. Of course those buildings would have to be shifted to the new reserve, wherever it might be situated. I desire to mention this matter now, and I shall probably discuss it with the Minister later on. I do not know what to suggest for I know it is a very difficult thing to take aborigines from their natural surroundings and to transfer them 200 or 300 miles from their own country. I would not advocate such an action. I am expressing the views of the road board, but I wish the Minister to use all the discretion possible before he decides to shift any section of aborigines away from their own country.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There are other hon members who may have had some experience of aborigines. I have had a lot of experience with them. I came in contact with many of them in New South Wales 55 years ago, and I also learned much about their habits when I was in the Gulf of Carpentaria districts of Queensland, some hundreds of miles out from Burketown, in the early eighties. I have also had a lot of experience while prospecting in the back country of Western Australia, so I speak with a good deal of knowledge and experience of the natives. I know the Minister himself has had considerable experience with them hundreds of miles out from Menzies. I hope he will do what he can to meet the wishes of the road board and the sheep men of the district, without doing anything that will work harm to the aborigines.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [7.57]: The Government have done excellent work in promoting the welfare of the aborigines and I give them every credit for having done so. What money has been available has been spent wisely and in the best interests of these unfortunate people. There are many aborigines and half-castes scattered throughout the various parts of the State. In the Great Southern district the Government wisely provided a reserve of 30 acres outside a town in the Great Southern district. I am sorry the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) is not present. This evening I received a letter, which I hope the Government will not mind my mentioning to members. If it is possible to agree to the request of a prominent man in that district, it will mean keeping together a large number of aborigines who, during the week, are engaged upon shearing, road work or clearing contracts, and who return to spend their week ends on the reserve. But there is no provision down there for water, and they are desirous of getting a 2,000-gallon tank. They also have religious services every Saturday.

Member: And a two-up school.

Mr. STUBBS: No two-up school. I am serious on the point I desire to make to the Minister who represents the Chief Secretary. There are in Katanning several people who go out and endeavour to broaden the minds of the younger people in that compound on Sundays. Time after time in winter they go there and get

drenched through. All the natives and half-castes in the compound are glad to meet those people. But there is no building for the purpose, and it is desired that a single-room place should be provided where they could congregate. I do not think the cost will be more than £50 or £60, but I am sure the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) will agree with me that it would be a very good thing to keep those people together and prevent them from wandering round the town and getting into mischief as some of them do. If the Minister controlling the department could possibly see his way to provide a water supply and a small building that would not cost very much, it would be of great advantage to those natives and the means of making their lives happier. They have every reason to be grateful to the present and previous Governments for what has been done in their interests.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [8.3]: Two years ago I had occasion to discuss the purchase of the Avon Valley station. At that time I was rather hostile to the idea of adding to the Government ventures in respect of the natives. I have been keeping myself in touch with the position up there ever since, and I now want publicly to admit that the venture is being justified. There is some very good work being done there by the present manager. He understands a good deal about the natives. He was originally at Moola Bulla, and he is making a really good job of straightening out a very difficult position. Some 300 or 400 natives swooped down upon him within a month of his taking charge, and of course he was not then prepared for them. However, he is getting through without any serious trouble and has maintained friendly relations with the natives. He is getting good work out of them, and I would commend to the attention of the Minister the report I read the other day. He will see that although it is in the North, about which so little is known, there are up there men in the Government service who are doing very good work indeed, despite the fact that they have not much occasion to be really content with the screw paid to them. It would be as well if the Minister were to make inquiries and see what men he has up there filling positions that are not of much chop. Those men up there are living isolated lives, totally cut off from everything that makes life decent

and comfortable, and I think a little extra consideration should be paid to them as compared with what is paid to those living in the city, where every advantage is offered and a pot of cool beer can be secured in every street. One cannot get any pots of cool beer up there, where I am speaking of; indeed there is no beer obtainable at all, and very little screw, considering the lives those men lead and the danger they are in pretty often. The men in charge of stations up there, particularly in districts where the wild natives come in, never know when they are going to get up in the morning. There have been several examples of that, and it needs no emphasis from me. The work of the men in charge of those places ought to be carefully noted by the Minister and due regard given it in respect of salary. We are perfectly satisfied with what the present and the previous Government have done in regard to the natives. It is recognised that through a little pressure on the part of members representing the North and the North-West we have now a different class of blanket for the natives and a little more consideration given to their clothing. For that I am duly grateful. But there is one other thing: We might well authorise the Protector of Aborigines to issue another little item. We have a Biblical injunction for seeing to it that we are cleanly in our person, and I think we might add a little soap to the monthly issue to the natives. It would serve to take some of the solid dirt off them and their clothes once a week, and in consequence their clothes would have a longer life.

Mr. Stubbs: Would they use the soap?

Mr. TEESDALE: Yes, they are very strong on soap. They will put the whole issue on to a pair of pants if they are not watched. There is nothing they prize more than soap. They do not put it on their hides it is true, but they put it on their clothes, which is the next best thing. I should like the Minister to remember that item and instruct the Protector of Aborigines to give a little soap to the natives when they get their periodical issue of clothes.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: I have taken a note of it.

Mr. TEESDALE: I have a great interest in these natives. I do not put them on pedestals, but I want to see a fair thing done for them. I can never forget that we pinched

all the country from them. We drove them back from the water holes, drove them from the coast where they could live in full and plenty without difficulty. Now there are hundreds and hundreds of those men who have to give up all their time to getting a little game. Nowadays they have to walk miles for a turkey, whereas at one time they could get a turkey by going a few yards into the bush. We have given them very few advantages; on the other hand we have imposed upon them a number of disadvantages including disease. It must be remembered that they were clean before we went up the coast—I am not speaking personally. There is a good deal of syphilis up there at the present time. I think it is within the recollection of Ministers and members that I took part in a very interesting trip through the North. It extended over four months, during which time we saw a large number of natives. I was pleased when we were able to come back with a good report of the health of the natives, speaking generally. There was no bigger proportion of cases than one could get in Hay-street tonight, having regard to the difference in population. It was wonderful to go to a station where there were 30 or 40 natives and get only two per cent. of illness, and not a very serious illness either. The sort of thing that members may have in their minds was conspicuous by its absence. Still, we have a very vulnerable part of the North in the coastline extending from Broome to Wyndham. Unfortunately that expedition to which I have alluded had no opportunity to visit that part of the coast. We had only horseback transport, and you require a strong party to keep on the coast; because the moment the natives see a horse they are off into the bush like possums and there is no chance to pick them up. There is there a crowd of natives that is quite loose and there are amongst them plenty of cases of V.D. that ought to be seen to. With all due respect to the police, I would not have a police party go there; rather would I have a party of really good bushmen and stockmen who have a fair idea of the natives and are not particularly rough on them. We do not want any more Gribble cases.

Mr. Stubbs: Would they not have to go on horseback?

Mr. TEESDALE: Of course; there is no other way.

Mr. Coverley: A lot of those natives would be picked up much easier by the beachcombers, who are known to them.

Mr. TEESDALE: That is right. Those beachcombers know the coast, know every one of the creeks and are acquainted with the habits of the natives, many of whom are known personally to them. They know the class of native that goes on to the beach fishing and waiting about for the pearling boats to come in—not to any good purpose, either. If we could stop those damnable boats from touching there, there would not be half the trouble that there is. It is not the white people who cause the trouble, but the coloured men from the pearling boats who have been landing there periodically. It is not the fault of the Government. They cannot keep constables waiting there against the time that a pearling lugger may come in. Every time a pearling lugger comes in on that coast, her crew leave a trail of trouble behind them that may never be eradicated. More than half the trouble has come from those pearling luggers. I hope the Minister will not forget that soap. I have to publicly withdraw the comments I made in regard to the Avon Valley Station, which I now consider will be very remunerative. We have a man in charge there who, given a free hand, is likely to show that although it is a Government institution, it can be run at a profit. I hope that when the report is out, it will be found that those Government stations can very nearly pay their way. They are doing really good work up there. It would surprise members to know the number of cattle killed at Government stations every year for the natives. The meat is not wasted. Whilst up there I took particular care to see whether it was wasted, but I found that a careful scrutiny was made of the natives' camps to see whether there were any shins of beef hanging up in the trees before a new issue was made. There could easily be a great loss if the natives were allowed to come in every week and take as much beef as they liked when, perhaps, half of what they had the previous week was hanging in a putrid state in the trees. It is pleasing to note that the managers at the various stations are doing really good work.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.15]: I am glad the member for Roebourne has advocated that the Government should do more for the aborigines. I wish to express my appreciation of the remarks of Mr. Stubbs who spoke in favour of the Katanning natives. The Government made a mistake when they closed the Carrolopp Aborigines' Reserve. A good deal of money had been spent in erecting buildings there, and the area was looked upon by the natives as their home.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: When was it closed?

Mr. THOMSON: It was closed in the interests of economy. It is estimated that the Government saved £1,500 a year. The department will probably find that this was false economy. I am sorry the Government closed the reserve and sent so many of the natives to the Moore River settlement. I am not reflecting upon the Government, for no doubt they acted upon advice submitted to them, but they made a mistake.

Mr. Teesdale: I think so, too.

Mr. THOMSON: I was interviewed by the gentleman who wrote the letter referred to by Mr. Stubbs. I told him he had my entire sympathy. Mr. Neville informed me he was in rather a difficult position, but that he was going to Katanning within a fortnight and would discuss the matter with these people. He asked me what would be the position of the road board if the Government erected a small hall there. I must commend the ladies and gentlemen who are giving the natives religious and educational instruction. They are doing this work voluntarily, and doing it well. I am sorry Mr. Neville has not yet visited the district. He expressed the fear that if a hall was erected and a water supply given, the natives would congregate adjacent to the town. They are entitled to a water supply, for at present they have to get what they need from waterholes. They have erected decent shacks for themselves and their families. It is our duty to see that these people have reasonable means of obtaining a certain amount of comfort. No doubt the Government have been as generous as they can afford to be. These particular natives go out shearing and clearing. We should encourage them to do that, and give them an opportunity to make a decent livelihood and have their own homes. I support the request that has been put forward that at least some temporary provision should be made for a water supply, and that

the Government should erect a small building of a portable nature so that later on it might be removed to the reserve. It would pay the Government to repurchase the old reserve, where many fine buildings were erected, and re-establish it for its old purpose.

Mr. Teesdale: Was it sold?

Mr. THOMSON: It was sold and subdivided for agricultural purposes. It was a great boon to the natives. For many miles around they looked upon the Carrollup reserve as their home, where they could leave their wives and children while they went out to work. We have driven the natives from pillar to post, and taken their country from them. Many of them are doing excellent work in the district, and some of the small farmers could not do without them. I hope the Government will provide a decent resting place for these people.

MR. FERGUSON (Moore) [8.22]: Some time ago the Government established a native settlement at Moore River, west of Mogumber. The buildings were made of old material drawn from a hospital on one of the islands along the North-West coast. Over 300 natives are now in that settlement. The place has been a great boon to the natives and half-castes. When the Carrollup reserve was closed, the natives were transferred to Moore River, on the score of economy. Those that were sent to Mogumber from the far northern districts have caused a certain amount of trouble, but those that came from Katanning are satisfied with their lot, and are getting along well with the other natives. No great harm has been done to the Katanning natives by the transfer. The climatic conditions are not very different from what they have been accustomed to. It was not in the best interests of the northern natives that they should be transferred to Mogumber, because they were not used to that climate. Good work is being done at this settlement. The institution, however, should be made more self-supporting. Some time ago I induced the Premier to supply a sum of money for the purchase of a tractor, so that the manager might grow fodder for stock. The land is rather poor. The meat for the institution has been costing a good deal. It is quite practicable for the institution to be self-supporting. With the aid of a tractor and other machinery, oats, barley, rye and lupins could be grown in sufficient quantities to feed

a thousand sheep. It will also be necessary to purchase wire so that the land may be properly fenced. Labour is plentiful, and should be utilised, and could be utilised if the property were subdivided, fenced and stocked. When sufficient land has been brought under cultivation, all the stock required for the settlement can be run on the 11,000 acres comprised in it. The custom to-day is to purchase sheep from Midland Junction, or some adjoining farm, and kill them after they have been shepherded for a few weeks. Sheep from the Murchison or elsewhere have generally been running in paddocks, and when they are shepherded they fall away in condition. A wether that may be worth 35s. when purchased will be worth only 15s. when killed. A considerable loss occurs in this direction. If the country were fenced and sufficient fodder grown for the stock, they could be kept in good condition until required. Enough lambs could be reared to supply the meat requirements of the settlement, and it would be possible to sell a few bales of wool each year.

Hon. G. Taylor: What are the natural pastures like?

Mr. FERGUSON: The country is scrubby and sandy. That is why it was available for the natives. There is an abundance of water in the Moore River, and one pool near the homestead is big enough to float a dreadnought. It is one of the best watered places in the State. Useful work is being done. The member for Roebourne said there had been an improvement in the clothing of the northern natives. That is due to the work of the native girls at the Moore River settlement, at which place all the clothes for the northern natives are made. In the workroom at the Moore River settlement 15 half-caste girls can be seen at any time working 15 large sewing machines. Their work is a credit to the institution. They are the means of effecting considerable economies in the supply of clothing to a large number of the natives in the North. Recently at the Moora show there was an exhibit of the fancy work and general sewing done by the native girls at the Moore River settlement. That exhibit excited the admiration of everyone at the show. It was a credit to the institution and I am in hopes that at the next Royal Show there will be an exhibit there from that institution. Many more people will thus be able to see what the native

members of the settlement are capable of doing. Great credit is due to the superintendent of the institution and to the matron and staff for the interest they take in the inmates. All are contented and they look upon the settlement as their home, which they are not anxious to leave. If something could be done to more fully utilise the labour that is available, economies could be effected and it would be better for men of the institution to be employed than to waste their time as they do now to a great extent. The member for Wagin asked that some expenditure should be incurred in supplying conveniences at a reserve close to Katanning. I warn the Minister that it is not in the best interests of the natives that they should be encouraged to camp on reserves close to a town. We had such a reserve at Moora and we found the natives and half-castes were becoming such a nuisance that they had to be removed to the settlement at Moore River. It is not in the interests of the natives, and particularly the girls, that they should be encouraged to hang around a town where there are hotels and where there is a possibility of liquor being supplied by some mongrel white man. Thus it is not in the best interests of the natives and half-castes at Katanning that expenditure should be incurred in the direction suggested by the member for Wagin.

[*Mr. Lambert took the Chair.*]

MR. ANGELO (Gasecoyne) [8.34]: The Government should make an effort to collect the few natives that are to be seen at several stations along the Transcontinental railway.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you think they would like to be shifted?

Mr. ANGELO: For their own sakes they should be removed. I am told that they are supplied with clothing, but I have known a native to be given a new coat and to swop it the next day for half a stick of tobacco. They are mostly poor-looking specimens of women and they are certainly not a good advertisement for Australia. I have heard it frequently said by visitors from other parts of the world that these natives are not a good advertisement for our country.

Hon. G. Taylor: Our treatment of them is not a good advertisement.

Mr. ANGELO: Exactly. If these poor creatures were gathered together and taken away, they could be well fed and properly clothed.

Mr. Stubbs: Would they remain where they might be taken?

Mr. ANGELO: Others remain at the various settlements. At any rate, it would be desirable to collect them all and remove them from the railway stations along the Transcontinental line, where they do nothing but beg for pennies. We do not know what they do with the money, but I am told that frequently some of them have been found drunk.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Fisheries, £5,839:

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.38]: I desire to bring under the notice of the Minister controlling this department the absolute farce of permitting the Fisheries Department to control the opossum industry in the South-West. It is a well-known fact that the close season is in existence. The Premier while in the South-West at one time had it brought under his notice by a prominent man that skins were being exported during the close season and that the State was deriving no revenue by way of royalty. The Premier promised to see that an inspector was sent down to make an investigation. The promise was kept all right but these illegal acts have continued and the Government have been robbed of a great deal of revenue. It has been said, and I believe it to be fairly true, that since the last opossum season closed, no fewer than 100,000 dozen skins have left Western Australia and that not one penny piece of royalty has been paid on them. These figures are a conservative estimate of the number of skins that have been taken out of the bush in the South-West. A royalty of 1s. 6d. per skin is imposed by the State and so it can be imagined the amount of revenue that has been lost. I am going to make the suggestion, that instead of the control of the opossums being permitted to remain with the Fisheries Department, the officers of which department are not by any means expert hushmen, the Minister should transfer the control to the Police Department. The officers of the police in that part of the State know the country from A to Z, and will certainly be more energetic in

watching the interests of the Government than the inspectors of the Fisheries Department. I believe also that 50,000 skins were held waiting for the last season to open. I suggest that the season should be thrown open immediately.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: How do you know that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What I have related was brought under the notice of the Premier and he promised to see that inspectors were sent down immediately. I believe that when bushmen down there offered to take the inspectors to where the camps were, the inspectors would not go. Rarely are the individuals to whom I have referred caught in that part of the State. It is a well-known fact that buyers go round through the South-West and that the trappers have to accept what they are offered because they know they are doing something that is illegal. Instead of receiving £5 or £6 per dozen and paying royalties to the State, they accept £2 and £2 10s. a dozen. In New South Wales the skins are worth £12 a dozen. Thus it will be seen what a wonderful business the buyers are engaged in. All that they have to do is to get the skins away. There must be collusion somewhere to enable them to do this, and in making this statement, I do not desire it to be thought that I am casting any reflection on the department. The men in the bush have told me—I could mention names, but I have no intention of doing so—that they know when inspectors will be on the road, and then naturally they are away. This is a very serious matter and I hope some notice will be taken of what I have said, especially the suggestion that the control of opossums should be transferred from the Fisheries to the Police Department.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [8.42]: This is a vote in regard to which I generally inflict a few opinions on the House. I shall continue to do so while I am a member of the House, if only to call attention to the scandalous waste of good food that takes place on our northern coast. Several experiments have been tried and I know the cause of the failure of those experiments: it is purely inexperience, a total lack of knowledge with regard to the fishing industry. I use the word "scandalous" advisedly. I may tell the House that last week a fishmonger in the suburb in which I live served

me with a class of fresh fish—and bear in mind I could not recognise it. I said to him, "Where did you get this fish?" and to my surprise he replied that it came from South Africa.

Mr. Sleeman: Fresh fish, did you say?

Mr. TEESDALE: Yes, fresh ling fish from South Africa, fresh fish that had been in a chilling chamber here in Western Australia and sold to me for 1s. 4d. a lb.! If there is anything more disgraceful than that I would like to hear of it. To think that with all the wealth we possess on our coast we are forced to pay 1s. 4d. a lb. for fish that comes from South Africa! There is no excuse in the world for that. Moreover, it is a coarse, tasteless fish. At the same time we have unemployed here. I ask, what is wrong with the country?

Mr. Sleeman: We shall have to start State fish shops.

Mr. Brown: We want a few more Italians to start fishing.

Mr. TEESDALE: That fish came from a country that is likely to be a serious competitor of ours before many years are over. They are already competing with us with wool; they have the citrus business in their hands.

Mr. Sleeman: They have taken the wattle bark industry from us.

Mr. TEESDALE: Three months ago I had six tons of the finest schnapper and mullet it was possible to see in cold storage at Fremantle, eating its head off at the rate of £3 10s. a week for the rent of the cool chamber. We could not sell that fish for 6d. a lb.—prime chilled schnapper from Shark Bay! Yet last week I paid 1s. 4d. a lb. for chilled fish from South Africa.

Mr. Sleeman: We have to pay 1s. 6d. per lb. for schnapper at Fremantle.

Mr. TEESDALE: It is scandalous. I was so annoyed about it that, but for the expense, I would have opened a retail shop in Perth and members would then have seen the member for Roebourne retailing fish.

Mr. Sleeman: When you start, open one at Fremantle also.

Mr. TEESDALE: I would have opened one at Fremantle also. I would have opened a shop in order to give the workers and their families full and plenty of a food of which they get very little when it costs 1s. 4d. and 1s. 6d. a lb. Considering the amount of fish we have in our waters, it is scandalous that people of the middle class and

the workers who have to toil hard cannot get a little fish now and then without having to pay 1s. 4d. or 1s. 6d. a lb. for it.

Mr. Brown: How would you catch the fish?

Mr. TEESDALE: By putting salt on their tails. We know that the fish market is positively monopolised by a horde of aliens who just work it as they like. If they think there is likely to be a glut of fish, they send out word to the boats to dump their catch overboard. Thus good fish is dumped that those men, if they were in their own country, would be glad to get to provide them with a feed. They dump tons of fish outside rather than flood the market and cause the price to come down. What sort of people are we to allow those aliens to come here and rob us at their own sweet will of one of the finest industries we have? It is useless for white people to tackle them. We went to two or three shops in Barrack-street at that time and were told there was not a pound of schnapper on the market and that none was to be had. Yet there was plenty of it in cool store at Fremantle available at 6d. per lb for anybody who cared to take a quantity. The aliens knew that that fish was owned by white men at Shark Bay. Sometimes, through the vicissitudes of the weather, we are unable to get the fish down to Perth, and at other times when it does come there is a glut of fish from other parts. Unless support is given to these fishermen by Government institutions that at present are patronising coloured men, it will not be long before the only little industry we have and the only attempt made in a businesslike way to compete with the autocratic fish ring will go by the board.

Mr. Sleeman: Is that fish still available at 6d. per lb.?

Mr. TEESDALE: I have already said it was in the chilling room, and we were unable to sell it because those people would not buy it. There was no other means of selling it except through that channel. I would have opened a retail shop, but what could one do when it costs £300 to fit up a shop to satisfy the requirements of the Health Act. That would have meant half a year's screw gone for a week's fishing. I made inquiries about the expense of fitting up a shop. I would have advertised it and given the public a splendid illustration of the produce of the North-West coast that

heretofore has been wasted, by selling schnapper at 6d. per lb. I want the public to realise that this matter is no joke and that there are people who take it seriously. We do not want to pass this vote year after years as if the fish to be taken in our waters was not fit to eat. It is very good to eat, and my only regret is that we have not more of it to eat. It represents wonderful wealth. I am not blaming the department because, with the money at its disposal, it is doing all that is possible, but I want the people to realise that a tremendous wealth of fish is available week in and week out. I have seen eight tons of fish driven ashore in a 120-yard seine net, and the man operating the net had afterwards to pay £1 a load to cart the surplus fish inland to be buried. He was much upset about it, too. He was summoned for creating a nuisance to the town and was ordered to cart away all the fish that remained after the steamers had filled up their chilling chambers and even their coal baskets for the trip to Singapore. Such a quantity of fish was left on the beach that it became a nuisance and had to be carted inland and buried. That will give members some idea of the immense quantities of fish to be taken in those waters. I recognise that Australians do not care about the water—unless there is a drop of something else in it. They do not care to tackle the fishing industry and, if we have to depend upon Australians, it will be a long time before there is any amelioration of the present dearth* of fish. I wish the Government would go to the shire from which I hail and bring out 12 of those huge strapping North Sea fishermen who, month after month during the war, were trawling for the deadly mines sown in the North Sea. Those men were put in charge of little bits of steamers that half the time were submerged by the huge northern seas. They would think it heaven to come to our North-West coast and be able to catch fish as they can be caught there. They would bring out their families—I hope the Premier is listening to this—and establish a fish settlement on the coast, provided the Government supplied them with reasonably comfortable shacks. There is a school for the kiddies and before long there would be a splendid supply of fish not only for the metropolis but for the inland towns. There would be no dearth of fish if we had established on our North-West coast a dozen of those men

who in home waters are accustomed to fish night after night and catch very little. With the tremendous fish wealth off our coast, fish could be sold much cheaper than meat. In the shire I come from every boy goes to sea. It is natural for him to do so. Consequently those fishermen have very little fear and they are very fine men at their work. They would laugh at our coast, as far as willy-willies were concerned. We have water smooth as a lake for nine-tenths of the year, and even the remaining three months would be unlike the conditions on the Dogger Bank and in the Baltic where at present they earn a precarious livelihood. To give an idea of the money in the fishing industry, every year about 4,000 Scottish lassies go down to my shire to prepare and pack the herring—just one fish. Four thousand of them remain there from four to six weeks, make a good living and some of them take back a nice cheque. That will give an idea of the importance of the industry if only it is properly organised. I would commend to the consideration of the Government the suggestion that they make a point of seeing that the charitable institutions, which are good customers, purchase their supply of fish from white people. That is not much to ask. It would be a splendid account for one chilling plant to have. If I could guarantee that the Government would take all the fish required by their various charitable departments, it would enable us to put on a couple more men and get the fish down regularly by every steamer, instead of our having to advise the North time after time that there is a glut in Perth and it would be inadvisable to send down any fish. We could put the fish on the boat at a cost as low as 2d. per lb.

The Premier: For what could you sell it in Perth?

Mr. TEESDALE: I am directing attention to the splendid account that the Government institutions would afford. It would be a fine thing if the Government arranged to take the fish supply from white people instead of from coloured people, as is being done now. I do not think there would be the slightest difficulty in supplying Government institutions with fish at 6½ to 7d. per lb., whereas at present they are paying 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. per lb. It is a scandalous shame that we are not availing ourselves of this wonderful food that God has sent us. Apparently we are totally indifferent to it.

I do not know that I can enthuse any more about the fishing industry. I have done this now for about 11 consecutive years, and one gets rather stale on the subject. I am afraid my remarks make little impression upon members, except for the time being.

Mr. Sleeman: If at first you don't succeed, etc.

Mr. TEESDALE: Every year it is usual for members to listen to remarks about that extraordinary territory of ours, the North-West, of which so little is known by them. I wish some members, instead of going to the Eastern States for their holidays, would take a trip to the North and see that part of the country.

Mr. Brown: Why not organise a tour?

Mr. TEESDALE: It would be an eye-opener to them, if only to see the huge distances, and we might be able to give them a week on some of the beaches. If we did that and they failed to return as enthusiastic as I am, they would be very poor judges of what constitutes a very important industry. I do not know whether we shall ever get out of the hands of the coloured men who have the fish market completely nobbled. It seems to me they have too strong a hold on it, and it discourages one almost from saying anything about it. If I had my way, I could offer a very easy solution. I should like to be let loose in the Fisheries Department for about a month, and I would straighten some of them up when they dumped outside fish that should be available for the workers. If I caught them dumping good food overboard, I would put them inside for such a stretch that fishing would not trouble them for a while. Of course I cannot expect the department to do that, but it is more than a shame—it is a crime and a tragedy—to see the way in which fish is wasted in Western Australia.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [8.57]: I wish to say a few words on the important vote now before the Committee. Thirty years ago it was quite easy for any person to take a rod and line, go to any part of the Swan River and, in an hour or two, catch 20 to 30 lbs. of one of the most beautiful fish to be had anywhere, namely, flounder. To-day, if a man sat waiting for a bite, he would be a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. During the last year or two I have tried scores of times without getting a nibble.

Hon. G. Taylor: What did you say should be the fate of such a man?

Mr. STUBBS: I should like to know the reason why the Swan River and all the rivers round the coast to Albany are depleted of fish. I think that illegal netting is one reason, and that the enormous number of birds—cormorants—that congregate along the banks of the rivers are also partly responsible. Those birds destroy thousands of fish every day. I ask the Minister controlling the department why he does not take steps to destroy cormorants, which eat from one to two pounds of fish per head per day. If the Minister, aided by the Treasurer, could see his way to provide a little more than £5,839 on the Estimates for this department, he would be rendering a service to our people who are on the basic wage.

Mr. Marshall: Is it not a fact that another Government department protects these birds?

Mr. STUBBS: I am not sure. Only a few months ago, when in company with a friend on the Murray River, I saw two or three thousand cormorants circling overhead, and they made the noise of a huge aeroplane. The seriousness of the position warrants the putting of a little pressure on the Government, especially in view of the importance of fish as an item in a healthy diet. I agree that the fish trade of Perth is entirely in the hands of foreigners. In Barrack-street one sees skate and stingaree priced at 1s. 3d. per lb.

Mr. Teesdale: Likewise young shark.

Mr. STUBBS: Schnapper costs up to 1s. 6d. per lb. Fish can be put on board ship in the North-West at about 3d. per lb. How is it that the industry has fallen into the hands of foreigners? A stop should be put to illegal netting in the rivers. The inspectors do all in their power, but they are not in a position to police all the waters adjacent to the coast. Every family should eat fish two or three times a week, but present prices are prohibitive. The Government might secure a trawler, or else assist a company to secure one; the advance would be returned in two or three years. Moreover, the people would be behind the Government in an endeavour to secure a cheaper supply of fish. To children especially fish is an essential.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.5]: I endorse all the member for Roebourne has said about the huge quantity of fish going to waste along the northern coast of this State. I also agree that in the metropolitan area fish should not be a luxury, but a regular article of diet. What is preventing us from obtaining fish at a reasonable cost? The member for Roebourne blames the foreigners, who he says have secured a monopoly; but surely if the fish were available, our own people could go in for retailing them. It is not a trade that can be monopolised by any particular nationality. The trouble lies in not having proper means of transport for bringing fish to market. I do not suggest that another State trading concern in the shape of fish shops should be established: but somebody, and failing anyone else the Government, should arrange the necessary transport. The member for Roebourne mentioned fish freezing works at Shark Bay. I saw the works established, and know of every shipment made by them. Ninety per cent. of their troubles were due to inability to get fish to the markets. After one or two consignments by the "Koolinda" there was an accident to the steamer, and seven or eight tons of fish were hung up. The condemning of the channel prevented the "Koolinda" from going into Denham Anchorage for several months, and the position was the same in regard to the Singapore boats. The steamers pulled up instead at Brown's Landing, which means a voyage of 21 miles by sailing boat. The condition of the fish after such a boat voyage can be imagined. Nearly all the schnapper and few fish sold in the metropolitan area is brought down from Shark Bay. The Geraldton fishing boats run up to Shark Bay, a distance of 280 or 290 miles, carrying ice and after spending a few days on the fishing grounds to fill up with fish, they beat down, frequently against a southerly buster, to get their fish to Geraldton. If a small steamer were put on between Fremantle and Shark Bay to pick up the fish, these men would catch three times the number of fish caught at present; and I guarantee that some of the pearlers at Shark Bay, who just now are doing anything but well at their own industry, would go in for the fish-catching industry, provided they knew that a steamer would call on a certain date to relieve them of their catches. The main requisite is adequate transport between the fishing grounds and the market. Fish should be a staple

dish in the same way as beef and mutton. Realising the immense quantity of fish available and how little reaches here, I consider that the Government would be well advised to appoint a small committee to inquire into the ramifications of the industry.

The Premier: We had one a few years ago.

Mr. ANGELO: What was their report? Have you acted on it?

The Premier: It is there.

The Minister for Railways: It was a committee of the Legislative Council.

Mr. ANGELO: Let us have one from this House, or rather let us have an inquiry by business men, who would find out what is the trouble. I make that recommendation in all seriousness. Perhaps the inquiry could be made by one man. Then there would be a chance for the commissioner under the Prevention of Profiteering Bill.

MR. THOMSON (Kaitiaki) [9.12]: The shortage of fish and the unsatisfactory position of the fishing industry are certainly not due to any lack of activity or enthusiasm on the part of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, Mr. Aldrich. That officer has done his utmost to popularise, if I may use that term, the fishing industry. From the annual report it seems that the Fisheries Department hardly receives sufficient encouragement. It is a pity the Government did not permit the Chief Inspector to attend the conference of Ministers and heads of departments controlling fisheries which was held in Melbourne during the year. Western Australia, unfortunately, was not represented at that conference. However, when the inquiries set on foot by the Federal Government have been completed and the reports are available, this State should derive some benefit from the deliberations on transport and distribution. I have much sympathy with the member for Roebourne's advocacy of the introduction from the Homeland of men who are bred to the sea and to fishing. When the Empire Parliamentary Association delegates sat in this Chamber I commended to their earnest consideration a scheme for the migration of fisher folk from the Old Country. Like the member for Roebourne, I come from England, and know that at Home there are families who for generations have followed the fishing industry. They know, and will follow, no other calling. During the war the fishermen of Great Britain played an important part in

preserving the freedom of the Empire, not only in mine sweeping, but in helping to scotch the submarine menace. Australia would gain a valuable asset if a number of British fishermen could be induced to establish themselves in the industry along our coast. I do not think Australians will ever take kindly to maritime industries.

Mr. Teesdale: Only to fishing from a jetty.

Mr. THOMSON: I commend to the Government the idea of encouraging the migration to these shores of English fishermen, who know their job so well, and could so readily instruct Australians how to fish, how to cure the fish, and how to market it in the best possible way. In South Africa we have a keen competitor in the fishing industry.

Mr. Teesdale: We will know it yet.

Mr. THOMSON: We shall miss a golden opportunity afforded by the migration scheme if we do not seize the opportunity to prepare a suitable plan for the settlement of fisherfolk along our shores. If we could do this we should soon be in a position to supply the people of the State with cheap fish. I would remind members that in 1922 I urged upon the Government to consider this very question, but nothing was done. I understand that a trawler will soon be operated by a company. It must be borne in mind, however, that there is not only the question of catching the fish, but the equally important question of distributing and marketing it.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Do you suggest that the Government should take some action in this matter?

Mr. THOMSON: I suggest they should bring fishermen out from the Old Country to educate Australians along the proper lines. In the Old Country the harvest from the sea is a valuable one, but here we are allowing a valuable harvest to be wasted. It should be possible to supply all the requirements of Australia in dried and smoked fish. We are now importing smoked fish, not only from England, but from South Africa and New Zealand.

Mr. Teesdale: South Africa is competing with Scotland now.

Mr. THOMSON: In that country the fish is caught by cheap native labour, with which we cannot well compete. On the 18th October, 1926, I placed before members and

the Government, as well as the Empire Parliamentary Delegation, a very profitable method of exploiting the markets of Australia, and showed how they could assist in increasing the population of the State and of the Commonwealth, not only to the advantage of the State, but of the Homeland.

Hon. G. Taylor: You could not move the Government.

Mr. THOMSON: We may move them some day. I endorse the remarks of the member for Wagin with respect to the netting in estuaries. Last Christmas I went to Albany and proceeded to the Nannerup Inlet. A resident there had been to a large extent dependent for his food upon the fish he caught in the estuary. Some two or three weeks before my arrival, some people went there with a boat and nets and practically fished out the estuary. The man in question was endeavouring to build up a seaside resort to which people would go for the fishing, but in view of what had happened, the estuary was practically fished out.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: The Nannerup Inlet is now closed against netting.

Mr. THOMSON: Because of the representations that were made to the department.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: By the member for the district.

Mr. THOMSON: Other inlets along the coast should also be closed against netting, as well as certain harbours and rivers. I commend the Chief Inspector for the excellent work he has done. He has been most diligent in extending the revenue activities of his department. He should be given more money with which to increase his staff, and thereby enable the department to cover a wider field. It has been said that the State has been losing royalty on opossum skins. If the statements of the member for Nelson can be accepted, it implies that the Treasury has lost about £90,000. I think there must be some miscalculation in the figures. If it be so, more inspectors should certainly be appointed.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [9.25]: Many people around Bunbury are making a meagre livelihood out of fishing in the

estuary that extends for 13 miles from that port. Representations have been made to me to have this estuary closed. It is impossible for the inspector in the district effectively to control the estuary with the means of transport at his disposal. He has been given a rowing boat and an area 10 miles wide to superintend. If he covers the area properly, it means a row of 40 miles each day.

Mr. Thomson: He should be given a motor launch.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes. He should also be given better means of travelling along the road than a push bike. People who fish in the estuary are allowed to do so from noon on Monday to noon on Tuesday, and from noon on Thursday to noon on Friday. If they are restricted to those hours, they cannot make a living. Thus a fair amount of poaching is going on. Whilst the inspector is going up the river, these fishermen move in the opposite direction, and by the time the inspector has returned they have secured a fair amount of fish. The Collie, Preston and Brunswick Rivers run into the estuary at different points, and thus it is a most difficult task for the inspector to carry out his job. If he goes to the Preston River, the men can slip across to the Brunswick River and go ahead with their fishing while the inspector is away. According to the Estimates, the revenue for 1927-28 was £15,038, and the estimated expenditure for the current year is £5,839. If the Fisheries Department represents such a good paying proposition, I do not think the position will be improved from the standpoint of supervision if we stint the assistance given to inspectors. The work of patrolling the estuary in order to carry out the game and fisheries laws is altogether too much for one inspector, particularly when he has to do his work under the conditions I have outlined. I hope the Government will extend a little more sympathetic consideration to the department by improving the conditions under which the work is done at Bunbury.

MR. FERGUSON (Moore) [9.32]: I would draw the attention of the Minister in charge of the Fisheries Department to the enormous waste that occurs through the depredations of kangaroos and emus. Those members who had the privilege of participating in the recent tour of the Midland district had the question of the enormous

damage done by these pests brought forcibly under their notice. While at Northampton we had an opportunity of meeting the farmer who is farming farthest north in this State. He has a large area under crop on the banks of the Murchison River. He pointed out to us that the kangaroos and the emus were his greatest enemies, and compared with them the rabbits were as nothing. I would point out to the Minister that if the Government could see their way clear to do away with the royalty imposed on kangaroo skins, it would have a marked effect upon the number of kangaroos that would be destroyed.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: But it would decrease the revenue of the State.

Mr. FERGUSON: Yes, but the small amount of revenue that would be lost would be more than balanced by the additional wealth created in the State. Enormous quantities of wheat and grass are consumed by kangaroos and emus every year. A practical man told me that a kangaroo would eat as much green feed as two sheep and knock down as much wheat as four sheep, while an emu would eat as much wheat as three sheep and knock down as much as six sheep. If thousands of emus and kangaroos were destroyed, it would mean that a great many more bags of wheat would be produced, and a great many more sheep could be depastured. I have been informed that beyond the Murchison River there are more kangaroos than sheep. It is impossible for pastoralists to cope with the pests, and the only way they can deal with them is to get hunters to go out on shooting expeditions. The only bar to that is the royalty that they have to pay on kangaroo skins. I recently suggested to the Minister in charge of the Labour Bureau that something might be done by sending some of the unemployed into the outer country districts where they could make from £5 to £10 a week at kangaroo shooting. All that would be necessary would be to provide a man with a camp, a rifle and sufficient tucker for a week. Such a man would be set up for many months. I am sorry to say that nothing came of my suggestion. Much good would have been done in the interests of the farmers in the districts I have in mind had it been adopted, and some of the unemployed would have been provided with remunerative jobs. I suggest to the Minister that serious

consideration be given to the requests forwarded by farmers and pastoralists in the Midland and northern districts, as well as by many vermin boards, that the royalty on kangaroo skins should be abolished.

Item—Chief Inspector, £600:

Mr. SAMPSON: Can the Minister give the Committee any information regarding opossum farm licenses? A few years ago there were a number of opossum farms in the South-West.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: So far as I know, there are no licenses for opossum farms at present. The member for Swan is already acquainted with the fact that there was an opossum farm established on Molloy Island on the Blackwood River. Rather than remain on the island, the opossums developed web feet and swam to the mainland, thus closing an interesting episode in the annals of opossum farming in this State! In fact, I am given to understand that the gentleman in charge of the farm saw fit to invest his money in a more profitable form of occupation!

Vote put and passed.

'Vote—Registry and Friendly Societies, £11,349:

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.37]: The Vote covers the activities of the Government Statistician, and that officer is rendering excellent service and provides through his department information that is most valuable. He supplies us with information regarding the number of stock in the State, the area under crop, the average returns per acre of various cereals, the value of wool and of other commodities produced, and so on. To my mind that is all very valuable information. During the Address-in-reply debate I dealt with the position of our boys after they leave school. I was anxious to ascertain if it was possible to find out the number of boys who entered the various callings and of those who were driven into dead-end occupations. When there is an unemployment trouble, the great majority of the men affected are unskilled labourers. I would like the Minister in charge of the department to confer with the Government Statistician with a view to ascertaining whether it is possible to institute some scheme of determining what becomes of our boys. Such information would be quite as

important as some of the valuable data that is supplied by the Statistical Department. I commend that suggestion to the serious consideration of the Government. It is desirable that we shall be in a position to know what trades our boys follow after leaving school, and how many are driven into dead-end occupations. If we could get that information we could take steps to remedy the deplorable conditions that obtain. Our boys, in my opinion, are more valuable to us than cattle and sheep. The Statistical Department furnishes us with information regarding cattle, and I would be pleased if the same information were available regarding the youths of Western Australia.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Gaols, £28,491:

Item—Superintendent Fremantle Prison, £552:

Mr. LATHAM: I am delighted that the Government have established a prison farm, but I think they could go a bit further. I suggest that the Government might consider the question of establishing farms in the agricultural areas. In other parts of the State prisoners could go in for pig-raising and poultry farming. It would be profitable from the standpoint of the men and would not tend to lower their dignity, seeing that they would be able to provide for their families. I was struck with what was being done in this direction in Canada. There is also the system of releasing prisoners on parole.

The Premier: While you were away a man who had been released on parole murdered a constable!

Mr. LATHAM: I would not suggest picking out that type of individual to be placed on parole.

The Premier: But he was on parole.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not suggest that every prisoner should be released on parole. I believe there are plenty of men in the Fremantle Gaol who are repentant following upon their conviction. If such men were released on parole, as in Canada, they could re-establish themselves in life and once more become breadwinners for their wives and families. To-day the Charities Department has to provide for the sustenance of their dependants. Great work has been done by a doctor in charge of the Dominions Office in Canada, and I am sure that if the authorities

here were to get in touch with him they would be able to secure valuable information. If the system I suggest were adopted, the gaols, as in Canada, would become self-supporting instead of being a charge upon the State. I commend the suggestion I have made to the officials of the Gaols Department, especially the work that is being done in Canada.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Is it not a fact that many of those people resent being placed upon parole, and want to get back home?

Mr. LATHAM: If the Minister would but investigate it, he would find that in many cases these people are lodging at home, living with their wives and families. Of course I am not referring to men who may be mentally deficient. Those whom I have in mind are men who would make good useful citizens. They are not hardened criminals, but men who have made a lapse, and who will regret it to the end of their lives. I do not desire that everybody should be released, but I say that with care many of those men would become useful citizens.

Item—Medical officer, £250:

Mr. SAMPSON: Is this officer a full-time medical officer or does he work in connection with other departments?

The Premier: The conditions are the same as before.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: This position was not a full-time one during the year 1927-28, but it is intended to provide for making it a full-time one during the present year.

Item—Chaplains, £200:

Mr. SAMPSON: There is here a reduction of £168. Will the Minister explain that?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The amount has been reduced to the sum of £100 each. We still have the same number of chaplains.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbour and Light and Jetties, £23,194—agreed to.

Vote—Lunacy and Inebriates, £106,605:

Mr. SAMPSON: Has the employment of female attendants been as thoroughly satisfactory as was expected?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: We have had no complaints. The position is quite satisfactory.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Observatory, £455:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is here a reduction of £1,300. Will the Minister tell the Committee the reason for that reduction?

The PREMIER: When the Estimates were prepared it was thought the Observatory would be transferred to the Commonwealth, and so the amount set down here is for only a portion of the year. This Vote will be exceeded and the full amount will be expended, for it has now been decided that the State shall retain the Observatory. The negotiations for the transfer of the Observatory from the State to the Commonwealth have fallen through, and we are continuing to maintain the institution.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am surprised at the Government's decision to continue this institution. I thought the Government would have been more mindful of their duty to the State and would have had a better appreciation of what they could expect from the Federal Government than to countenance the continuance of expenditure on the Observatory. I have never taken exception to the Observatory as an observatory, but I do take exception to the fact that year in and year out, ever since the inception of Federation, we have been saddled with the cost of this purely Federal institution.

Mr. Latham: A national work.

Mr. LAMBERT: When I noticed an amount on the Estimates to carry on this institution for another three months, I thought it was merely due to the fact that temporary negotiations were going on, and that they would be clinched within three months. It is most surprising to hear that we are to carry on the institution, after the uncompromising attitude of the Premier when he declared he was going to close this institution definitely and irrevocably. Now we get the admission that we are to carry it on as a State institution.

The Premier: It is the first time in my life that I have backed down.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is an absolute back down.

The Premier: Of the two evils, I prefer the lesser to having Federal control, and having Federal men on State property.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not a matter of having Federal men on State property. That property should never be alienated from the State. I had intended to ask earlier in the session whether the Government considered we should hand over this valuable site to the Federal Government, even if they were prepared to take from us this incubus. In a young State where there is so much useful work yet to be done, it is not right that we should be paying for an abstract matter like astronomy.

The Premier: It is one of the exact sciences.

Mr. LAMBERT: I wish the Premier had been as exact when he declared his intention irretrievably to finish with the Observatory in a few weeks. Now we find that he has backed down and that this institution will continue and the expenditure upon it will still go on.

Mr. Marshall: What is the function of the Government Astronomer?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know the actual function of the Astronomer, but I know the functions of some astronomers. This is an institution we could well do without. Long before I came here Parliament registered disapproval of the expenditure of money in the maintenance of an observatory, an establishment of practically no use whatever to the State.

Mr. Brown: Without it, how should we know when it was going to rain?

Mr. LAMBERT: The supplying of that information is a Commonwealth function and has nothing to do with the State Observatory. Years ago at a conference of world astronomers it was decided to catalogue the stars. The task was distributed over the various observatories, and I understand that when the work had continued for five or six years, it was discovered that our astronomer had been pointing his telescope in the wrong direction and cataloguing the other fellow's stars. However true that may be, it was given to me by the present President of the Legislative Council.

The Premier: You must remember that it was in Western Australia that the Einstein theory was verified.

Mr. LAMBERT: Not by the Government Astronomer.

The Premier: But it was largely due to him.

Mr. LAMBERT: No. The Government Astronomer did not go to Wallal to verify the Einstein theory or any other theory. His assistant went. Although we had some of the world's astronomers here at that time, I do not know that the knowledge the Government Astronomer conveyed to them influenced them very much. However, the less said about what the Government Astronomer did for the Wallal expedition the better.

Mr. Thomson: Why?

Mr. LAMBERT: I might as well content myself with that significant remark and let it go at that.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAMBERT: If the Government should come to any iron-clad decision to close down irretrievably, to stop this endless expenditure, to do away with a useless institution, I hope it will be put into effect.

The Premier: I was afraid that you would be my only supporter and that the rest of the House would be against me.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not think so. I see no difference between carrying on this institution and the Premier's providing a sum of money for a few letter carriers, or relieving the Federal Government of the expense of collecting some of their heavy direct taxation. The Government might even undertake some of the other little Federal functions from which there is no return. We do not mind carrying on the Observatory, but I have not heard of the Federal Government's suggesting that they will continue to incur expenditure year after year for the benefit of the State without getting any return for it. What a fine thing it would be if, instead of spending £3,000 a year on the Observatory, we catered for the farmers who are crying out for scientific guidance! Instead of cataloguing the stars we could have a scientific chemist cataloguing the needs of thousands of acres of land—

Mr. Latham: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAMBERT:—and telling the farmers what their land required in the way of fertilisers.

The Premier: That is a very cute bid for support.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not putting it forward as a cute bid for support; I am merely drawing a comparison.

Mr. Latham: You will get support on those remarks.

The Minister for Works: Move a motion!

Mr. LAMBERT: That is a matter for me to decide; it is not for the Minister for Works to direct me.

The Minister for Works: You are complaining of other people not coming to a decision and you yourself cannot come to one.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that much more need be said, apart from again expressing my strong disapproval of the Observatory. I hope other members will do likewise.

Hon. G. Taylor: No fear! You cannot draw us.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is to be hoped the Government will feel that they have, if not a direction, an expression of opinion from this Committee that at any time they hand over the Observatory to the Federal Government, they should not part with the Observatory site, which is State property. I was somewhat afraid that the State Government, in seeking to make the Commonwealth realise its obligation to carry on the Observatory, if such an institution is necessary, would not have shown a proper appreciation of what was right to the people of the State by handing over that beautiful piece of land overlooking the capital city. The site should be preserved for a park that will be an asset to the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would make a good site for a State hotel.

Mr. LAMBERT: I know of other purposes for which it would be more suitable. Apparently, for some reason, perhaps partly due to a bit of bluff on the part of the Federal Government, the State decided to carry on the institution. If the Government had decided to close it down, it would have been forgotten in 24 hours. Had they closed it down, a sum of £2,000 or £3,000 might have been made available for a very fine institution such as an agricultural laboratory, which would have been of material benefit to the State and would have assisted to reduce taxation, instead of piling it up with Government frills of this description. Had that course been adopted, the action of the

Government would have redounded much more to their credit.

Vote put and passed.

Note—State Labour Bureau, £2,846:

Item—Secretary, £384:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This is rather a small salary for a man holding a position that appears to me to be an important one. Can the Minister indicate whether it is as important as I consider it is.

The Premier: It is a classified salary over which we have no control.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of the Chief Secretary's Department.

Department of Education (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister; Hon. H. Millington in charge of the vote).

Vote—Education, £678,694:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Is the Minister in charge going to make any remarks?

The Premier: What can he say? It is the usual thing.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is an Education Bill before the House, too.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.7]: I wish to appeal to the Minister to give as favourable consideration as possible to our small country schools. I know the regulations stipulate that there shall be a certain number of children and a certain average attendance. The Minister is endeavouring as far as possible to stretch the regulations to their utmost. I want to urge the continuation of that policy. The children in the country districts are suffering a very great disability as compared with the children living in the towns. The town children generally live within easy walking distance of a school, and one of the greatest problems confronting parents in the country districts is that of the education of their children.

Mr. Panton: If there are eight children the department does not close a school. You cannot have much fewer than eight.

Mr. THOMSON: I am appealing for the parents who are in the unfortunate position of being able just to maintain that number.

Mr. Panton: Then there are the correspondence classes.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, but it is difficult for mothers on farms who have to take advantage of the correspondence classes for their children. We appreciate the excellent work being done by the correspondence classes, but if any woman in the State is over-worked, it is the woman on a farm, who, with a young family to rear, has more than her fair issue of work.

Mr. Panton: If eight children cannot be obtained for a school, not too many women in the district have large families.

Mr. THOMSON: The trouble is that the settlers are so far apart. It is on behalf of scattered settlers that I appeal for elasticity in administration. I know of schools in connection with which desperate efforts are being made to maintain the minimum attendance of eight. Unfortunately, children sometimes fall sick. Then the parents are notified that the attendance must be maintained. I admit that if there is any Government department that is sympathetically administered, it is the Education Department. My appeal is on behalf of people who are blazing the track. In various parts of my district I encounter the school difficulty, and I have no doubt other members are in the same position. If there is to be curtailment let it not be in connection with primary schools outback. I raise the point because in various districts attention has been officially drawn to schools which are not quite in accordance with the regulations. Schools in scattered districts should not be closed.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [10.14]: This vote has required close scrutiny for the past 10 or 12 years. No other department has increased its expenditure at the same rate. That is necessarily so, because our population has been increasing. A teacher is sent into the country where the school has an average daily attendance of eight children. This year's vote is £678,694, an increase of some £10,000 over last year's vote. It is very hard on people in a district where there are only six or seven children not to have a school, but I feel bound to remind the Committee of the enormous expense to which we are going in the education of our children.

Mr. Thomson: Is it not essential that country children should receive education?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No district suffers more than mine does because of want of schools. Mining has gone down, and the people with larger families have left the district. The families that remain have only one or two children.

The Premier: There must be some limit.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes. In the early days it was 18 or 20.

Mr. Withers: Will the department build a school if there are eight children?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr. Lindsay: No. The average attendance must be 10.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If a country school has a daily attendance of eight children, the department will not close it. No one can find fault with the vote on the score of illiberality.

The Premier: The vote has doubled in the last 13 years.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes. I remember when it was £200,000.

The Premier: £678,000 is an enormous sum of money for the population to find.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, for a population of 400,000. It is almost appalling. Are we getting real value for the expenditure?

Mr. Latham: It is part of the price we have to pay for developing the country.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: How much of this money is spent in developing districts?

Mr. Latham: Much of it, in the establishment of small schools.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Katanning thought the number of children required was too high.

Mr. Thomson: I said I hoped the greatest elasticity would be shown in administering the regulations.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In my district there are places where there are four or five children and no school within miles of them. Still, one must be reasonable. Western Australia is doing wonders in the matter of education.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [10.19]: Like other agricultural members, I am much concerned as to this Vote. There is not an agricultural member who has not received many applications for the erection of school buildings. I have several at the present time. In one instance, some years back, a school was applied for. Inquiries were made as to the number of children in the district, and it was not quite enough.

However, after the arrival of another settler the inspector recommended the building of a school. Then one farmer who had children sold out, and the position once more was that there were not enough children to meet the minimum requirement for the establishment of a school. That was two years ago. With the aid of another family, these people are now in a position to agitate for another school. Meanwhile some of the children have reached the age of 14 without having had any education. Their parents are the pioneers of the district, and have battled to make prosperity for the State. If we do expend a little more money on education and give these people better facilities, the money will be well spent. Even if the vote has gone up to nearly £700,000, the expenditure is well justified. I know of a man who was living five miles from a school. He canvassed the district with the object of engaging a motor bus. He failed in his object, and has now sent his two children away to board. That is very unsatisfactory. People like to have their young children about them. He was informed by the department that if the people put up their own school they would be allowed £12 a year for every scholar they could get. There was something like eight children involved, and this would have given them £96 a year. That sum was not sufficient for a qualified teacher, who must have £50 a year outside the board and lodging. These small districts are not given a qualified or certified teacher.

Mr. Marshall: You could not get one for that.

Mr. BROWN: A subsidised school does not get the same kind of teacher that other schools get, with the result that the children will not get the same kind of elementary education that others receive.

The Premier: They are getting a better elementary education than you or I got.

Mr. BROWN: In my day most scholars learnt their three R's better than children do to-day. We teach our children a lot of frills, but they are not good writers or good mathematicians.

The Premier: The writing has improved out of all knowledge. Never in the history of the State has the writing of children been as good as it is to-day.

Mr. BROWN: Take the handwriting of a girl of 14 or 15 and compare it with a

lady's of 30 or 40 years ago. One can easily recognise the difference.

The Premier: Because of the great improvement shown.

Mr. BROWN: Forty years ago a lady's handwriting was something to be admired. I defy anyone to-day to tell the handwriting of a girl of 15 from that of a boy of 15.

The Premier: That is quite right.

Mr. BROWN: The beautiful flowing hand of 40 years ago has gone. I have children going to a high school, and I am ashamed of their handwriting.

Mr. Ferguson: The schools do not teach them writing.

Mr. BROWN: The children know a lot about ancient history, but not about handwriting such as I like to see. The correspondence classes are doing good work. I come into contact with parents who have no time to conduct these classes; neither has the mother the ability to teach the children. There is no discipline amongst the young folk, who are allowed to run wild. They will grow up with a very low standard of education.

Hon. G. Taylor: It does not say much for our system if the mothers we have been teaching cannot educate their children.

Mr. BROWN: One of the first things that the State Government did was to bring in compulsory education. We must not relax that. We should do whatever we can to improve the system, and insist upon every child receiving a decent education.

The Premier: There is nothing to complain of now.

Mr. BROWN: The Government should not question too much the distance that children have to drive to a school, or the financial position of their parents. Before a driving allowance is given the parents have to put in their taxation returns to show what their farms are producing.

Hon. G. Taylor: The reason for that is that the department has been imposed upon in the past.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think so. I know of children who are driving six or seven miles to school, but not a penny is allowed to them for travelling.

The Premier: I had to walk five miles to school and milk cows before I left home.

Mr. BROWN: I know of a school that was closed. I believe it could be re-opened,

but the parents have decided to send their children seven or eight miles away to a better school. They are not allowed any driving allowance. The department could easily pay 6d. a day. If the school were kept open it would cost the department £15 or £20 a head, whereas it is now costing nothing. The parents are sending the children to another school at their own expense. Some boys ride to school five miles on a bicycle, but they are not allowed a penny for that.

The Premier: Did you ever hear anything like that?

Mr. BROWN: If a boy rides a horse to school he is allowed 6d. a day.

Mr. Latham: That is for the feed of the horse.

Mr. BROWN: A bicycle will wear out tyres, and lubricating oil is required for it. The treatment of these boys is unjust. The department could easily pay them 6d. a day.

The Premier: That amounts to coddling the race.

Mr. BROWN: They are the right sort of people to coddle.

The Premier: The foundations of the country were not laid by coddled people. Wrap them in cotton wool.

Mr. BROWN: We do not want to see any deterioration in our educational system.

Hon. G. Taylor: The vote does not indicate that.

Mr. BROWN: It would pay the department to erect a hostel in some central town so that parents could send their children there to live during the week. They could go home again during the week-end. The department would be in pocket if they did that. Such a system would also be satisfactory to the parents. I hope no member will quibble at this vote. We should do our utmost to see that children who are living in the backblocks are given a decent education.

MR. LATHAM (York) [10.30]: While there is much truth in the reference to the rapid growth of the Education Vote, we will probably have to agree to larger votes in future. In the departmental report for 1927, the Director of Education points out that the expenditure on schools amounted to £51,853, but the total amount available for increased salaries amounted to £52,000. The point that has to be considered by hon. members is as to whether we are getting a better class of teacher for the schools than in the past. The cost of maintaining schools

is less than it was 12 months ago, but additional money is being paid away in salaries.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course everyone else is getting more.

Mr. LATHAM: But the member for Mt. Margaret was complaining about the expenditure! I am aware that many difficulties confront the department, but if we do not follow up land settlement with the provision of schools, we will not get the most desirable type of people on the land. I refer to settlers who have their wives and families with them. I suggest to the Minister for Lands that the best anchors the settlers can have are their wives and families.

The Premier: But the State is providing the schools.

Mr. LATHAM: But we ought not to worry about the increased expenditure.

The Premier: We are not worrying.

Mr. LATHAM: There have been adverse comments to-night.

The Premier: Not on that phase, but as to whether we were getting the best results for the money expended. A mere increase in the vote itself does not mean that everything is well and that the money is being wisely expended.

Mr. LATHAM: The point I am making is that the increased expenditure is in salaries, and not in providing additional education for the children in the country areas. If there has been any increased expenditure on account of country schools, I can assure the Committee that in the course of the next two or three years we shall have to vote money in excess of the present total. I hope the 3,000 farms scheme will go ahead, and that will mean the provision of more money.

Hon. G. Taylor: And no one will complain.

Mr. LATHAM: But apparently fewer school buildings are being erected than formerly. That is, on the assumption that equal value is being obtained for the money expended. For instance, in 1922-23 schools were erected at a cost of £56,000 and in succeeding years the money spent in that direction was as follows:—in 1923-24, £72,000; in 1924-25, £63,000; in 1925-26, £59,000 and in 1926-27, £54,000.

The Premier: The fact is that in the years when the expenditure was higher, we were erecting schools in the group areas, but that expenditure will not be a recurring one.

Mr. LATHAM: But it will recur as new agricultural areas are opened up.

The Premier: Yes, but the expenditure you refer to is explained by the fact that we were erecting schools in the groups.

Mr. LATHAM: I was going to compliment the Government on getting a cheaper line of schools, but apparently I am wrong.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was in 1922 that we instituted the system of hall schools.

Mr. LATHAM: I am as anxious as any other member of the Committee to see that we get the best value for the money expended, but at the same time I know that if there is to be any curtailment of that expenditure, it will be at the expense of the country districts.

The Premier: If the hon. member knew the facts, he would not say that. Nearly all the schools in the larger centres are deplorably overcrowded and classes are larger than the regulations stipulate. Classes are being taught under verandahs and in sheds.

Mr. LATHAM: Probably that is so. In our city schools we take children over five years of age and up to 16 and 17 years of age. We should limit the ages at which children should be allowed to remain at school without payment. Then again, if some parents wish to make nurseries out of the schools, they should pay for the privilege.

The Premier: I would not allow a child to go to school under seven years of age. It is merely taking them from the cradle and putting them to the serious part of life.

Mr. LATHAM: The staple industry of the State is agriculture, and therefore as much education along those lines as possible should be provided in the country schools. Good work is being done by some teachers in interesting their children in the scientific side of agriculture, but there are only a few who interest themselves in that direction. I hope that the young teachers being trained at the Claremont Training College will be encouraged to interest in scientific agriculture the children they will have under their control in the country districts.

The Premier: One of the greatest problems confronting the Education Department is to secure male teachers. The great bulk of those who are being trained are girls, and they remain as teachers for a few years and then get married.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not blaming the teachers themselves.

The Premier: If we train a man as a teacher, he makes teaching his life's work. On the other hand, a girl goes out and after a while gets married.

Mr. LATHAM: And I understand that the State pays for the training of those girls for two years!

The Premier: It is a serious problem.

Mr. LATHAM: I know that the Director of Education and his officers are doing their very best.

The Premier: At any rate, we are providing a very fine class of wife for the young country farmers.

Mr. LATHAM: But I do not know that those girls know much about household economy.

The Premier: They got that on the farms.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not want the officials of the Education Department to think that we are niggardly regarding the Estimates, because we realise that they are doing their best.

The Premier: It is a good thing for the officials to know that the Committee keep their eyes on the expenditure. A large sum can be provided for in the Estimates but there can be extravagance in this department just as well as in any other department. There should be no idea of hands off this expenditure.

Mr. LATHAM: At any rate, if there is to be any curtailment of the expenditure on education, I hope it will not be at the expense of the children in the country districts.

Hon. G. Taylor: We shall buy bicycles for them.

Mr. LATHAM: That is a most stupid interjection. It makes me annoyed. I do not wish to see the people in the country areas pampered, and if children have to walk two or three miles to school it will probably be all the better for them. All I am advocating is that those children shall have the opportunity to secure a good education and if that is done I am convinced that the parents will solve the problem of how to get their children to school.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [10.40]: I have not been present during the whole course of the debate, but I gather some references have been made to the expenditure. In the country districts to-day we are get-

ting a far better type of teacher than was customary when I first entered Parliament in 1914. There are members of this House who can point to schools where scientific agricultural education, to which the member for York referred, is being taught on up-to-date lines. At Boyanup, Kojonup and other centres there are schools where teachers from the Perth Boys' School, men who possess their A1 certificates, are in charge, and are interesting the children in scientific agriculture. They are a credit to the department and are keenly interested in that phase of their work; that is to say, experimental plots and the imbuing of the youngsters with a love of country life and following up largely the ideas in that estimable little book in our library, the "Brown Mouse."

Hon. G. Taylor: What relation is that to the white mouse?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The brown mouse was a very particular kind of mouse who worked on unorthodox methods and set out to teach the children on practical lines. The Education Department are to be commended on the efforts they are making to improve the type of teacher being sent out to the country districts. It is due to them that an expression of opinion should be given in this House by those who know what is being done in the country schools. In my electorate the heads of the department have been most sympathetic and wherever it has been possible to grant schools they have been granted. A movement is on foot to cut out a good deal of the examinations and the home work. Altogether too much home work is put on the children.

The Premier: I do not think there should be any home work.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am with the Premier in that. Again, the children are sent too early to school. It is only making a nursery of a school. I have no more to say at this stage.

MR. A. WANSBROUGH (Albany) [10.43]: I congratulate the Education Department on the way they have been providing schools in country districts. But I am not sure that it would not be of advantage to amalgamate some of those schools. Too many small schools are being opened close together. Where we have two or more small schools in very close proximity, I think the children would benefit by the amal-

gamation of those schools. I wish to congratulate the Minister on his efforts in providing two assisted schools in my district. I would remind members that they can get assisted schools by the provision of £10 or £12 per annum per child. The Education Department provides all facilities such as books and desks, and all the settlers have to provide is a building for the department. Then the department will subsidise a teacher proportionately with the number of the children. If the settlers are not prepared to put in a few pounds to make up the salary to £150 per annum, they are not very much interested in the education of their children.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [10.45]: I regret that the Vote is so small, for money spent on education is money very well spent indeed. I agree that possibly the sending of children to school at five years of age is making a nursery of the school. In my view no child should go to school until it is seven years of age; and I would go further and say that, unless to go to a secondary school, no child should be allowed to leave school under 16 years of age. I suppose the Minister in charge is aware of the fact that we have parents and citizens' associations doing a great deal to assist the department in the way of providing playgrounds, tennis courts, cricket pitches and that sort of thing. I must say the Minister and his officials are very considerate and do the best they can with the miserly vote allowed by the Treasurer. I believe the Treasurer would meet the wishes of the community of Western Australia if he saw his way clear to double the Vote.

Hon. G. Taylor: Good gracious!

MR. J. H. SMITH: I believe that education is one of our greatest assets. In the group settlement areas the preceding Government made available for the people, not only schools, but halls where they could hold Saturday night entertainments. That concession to country districts was followed up by the present Minister, who is very sympathetic towards education. Of course we have our little grumbles on many occasions, more especially in the wet districts of the South-West. Every little country place has its parents and citizens' association to raise a considerable amount of money from year to year. But I think the Minister, knowing that, should go further and supply shelter sheds for the children so that when

it is raining they could eat their lunches in the sheds.

The Premier: The school I went to had no roof on it.

MR. J. H. SMITH: Many of us suffered under the same disability. Had we not done so, possibly we should not have been here to-day.

The Premier: There is nothing wrong with us.

MR. J. H. SMITH: I hope the Minister will not be niggardly with this Vote, and that he will impress on the Treasurer the absolute necessity for increasing it. We have great difficulty in maintaining our quotas in country schools and many children have to come out of their three-mile limit to keep the school going. Another difficulty is in regard to our lady teachers. I do not mind what salary is paid to the teacher, because he or she cannot be paid too much to educate the young mind. I am pleased to know that the teachers are receiving increased salaries. One of our difficulties is for parents in outback districts to board the teacher. Many of the parents do not want to be bothered looking after the teachers in their homes. How are we to get over that difficulty? If we could build quarters in every little place and have a male teacher, it would be all right. But we cannot get the male teachers. Surely we could offer sufficient inducement to young men to take up this avocation and go out into the country districts. I desire, if it is possible at all, that the Treasurer shall make a greater allowance for the education of the people.

The Premier: Yes, anything they want.

MR. J. H. SMITH: I do not know that you will. You have not done so in the past. The Minister for Education tells me he cannot receive any further increases.

The Premier: All the Ministers have that explanation.

MR. J. H. SMITH: I think the Premier must say to his Ministers. "When these members of Parliament come along with requests—"

The Premier: Do not allow Ministers to put that forward. It is one of their excuses.

MR. FERGUSON: Is it not true?

The Premier: No, it is only a tale.

MR. J. H. SMITH: The department does the best it can and I think we shall lay the full blame on the shoulders of the Premier.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.50] We are all proud of the Education Department. I wish to express the hope that the custom in vogue a while ago will be continued. To my district the department sent a young lady teacher—just the sort we wanted. She had been there only a few months when she was married. The department sent another lady teacher and she suffered a similar fate. Within 12 months a third lady teacher was sent and she also was married. I wish to see the department continue that practice. There is a shortage of young ladies in the country and the Education Department has been doing a very fine work in that way. Those ladies make splendid wives.

Hon. G. Taylor: How do you know?

MR. SAMPSON: We have had experience of several in my district. I congratulate the Minister on the work of his department.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [10.52]: I should like to know whether the amount of £5,200 shown for school fees is collected from students who sit for examinations.

The Premier: Technical schools, mostly.

MR. WITHERS: We boast of our free education system and say that all children should receive equal opportunities. Nowadays a boy has not much chance of getting a position in an office unless he holds the junior certificate. If his parents are poor, I do not see how he can get the certificate when he has to pay £1 12s. 6d. before he can sit for the junior examination. I do not mind if the Government get the fees as some return for the large amount of money they are providing for education each year, but I was wondering whether the fees are applied to the payment of those people who conduct the examinations. When I went to school my parents paid 3d. or 6d. a week for my education and books were found. I do not think my parents had to pay as much for education as parents have to pay nowadays, although it is now supposed to be free. Doubtless the staff is costing a good deal of money and the children are better housed, but when it comes to a question of free education, I am of opinion that a child cannot be educated as cheaply to-day as it could in days gone by.

Mr. Lindsay: If it is free, it cannot be much cheaper.

Mr. WITHERS: We use the term "free," but when parents have a number of children who have to be educated to the High School standard before they can get a start in life, their education is an expensive item. For a child to enter for the junior examination costs £1 12s. 6d., as I know from recent experience, and there are plenty of parents who cannot allow their children to sit for the examination because they cannot pay the fee. Yet such children may possess more ability than those of parents who can afford to pay. The question of school books should also receive consideration. This matter has been discussed in other places, but we have not been able to ascertain who is responsible for the frequent changes of school books. I have a tin trunk at home half full of books which my elder children used, but which are useless to-day because books of different kind are required. Many of them are good books that cost up to 7s. 6d. each. I have a child who passed out of one standard and was followed by another child in the same standard in the next year, but the second child had to have an entirely new set of books. I do not know whether the department or the head master is responsible for deciding the books to be used, but a fresh set of books has to be provided almost every year.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think we had better buy the books for the children.

Mr. WITHERS: I would not mind buying the books if they could be used by other children later on, but when you buy books for Jack and Joe follows in the same standard in the next year, the books are declared to be useless, because the teacher says he is teaching from some other books. It is time that sort of thing was stopped, because it means that parents have to pay pretty dearly for this so-called free education. I hope the department will take up this matter as the high cost of school books is a serious matter for many parents.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of the Department of Education.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.