

service more efficient? If we do, may we not hope that the success which is so vital, so necessary for the happiness of our people, of whose destinies we are the guardians, will be the reward that Providence will give to those who have proved themselves worthy of it?

**MR. RODOREDA** (Roebourne) [6.10]: It is not my intention to delay the House unduly, as I know hon. members are waiting to discuss highly important legislation which is to be brought down; but I would like to offer a few comments on the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. Before doing so—as congratulations seem to be the order of the day—I would like to add mine to those already offered to the leaders of the various parties in this House, and also to yourself, Mr. Speaker. Again, I must thank the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) for his references to the new members of the Chamber. As a matter of fact, I myself had thought of congratulating the House upon the number and also upon the calibre of the new members, more especially as we tend to bring new viewpoints into the deliberations of the Chamber. I trust that some at least of our suggestions may be deemed worthy of consideration by members older in political and parliamentary experience. I do not see anything to lead me to believe that the older members of the Chamber have a monopoly of brains, and I consider that the opinions of new members should be accorded a little more than the usual mild tolerance which ordinarily greets them. Before proceeding to discuss matters connected with the North-West generally and my electorate particularly, I desire to refer to the appointment of Sir James Mitchell as Lieut.-Governor. Various protests have been uttered in this Assembly, and I desire to add mine to them. In the Speech the Lieut.-Governor stresses the need for most stringent economy. To me it seems anomalous that the person who is the Government's instrument for announcing such a policy should be the means of increasing the State's expenditure by a sum of about £2,000 per annum, and, further may prove the means—not through himself but through his appointment to the office—of increasing that expenditure by a sum of up to £4,000 per annum. I am given to understand that the Imperial Government, in appointing Sir James Mitchell to the office, stated that they did so without prejudice

to their right to appoint a foreign Governor.

Members: What?

**Mr. RODOREDA**: I mean, a Governor from outside the State.

**Mr. Raphael**: The Governor we have is pretty foreign to our ways of thinking.

**Mr. RODOREDA**: I ask hon. members to note that there is nothing personal in this protest, which is directed merely against the manner in which the appointment has been made. Surely it is extraordinary that Western Australia should be led into such expenditure without having a say in the matter at all. Indeed, it would be a graceful act on the part of the Imperial Government to send along a cheque for the Governor's salary. I trust that later there will be an opportunity to discuss the matter at greater length. May I congratulate the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) on his speech, though certainly on many points I cannot agree with him, as, for instance, that we have to depend wholly and solely on our export industries to improve the condition of the State. I can quite conceive of a point being reached where, even if we cut our production costs down to the minimum, we would not be able to sell at a profit in the world's markets. The member for Nedlands stated that we had no control whatever over the prices of our primary products sold abroad. Unquestionably that is so, and therefore his whole argument amounts to saying that if those oversea prices are less than our production costs, we must produce at a loss. That seems to me not a policy which could be followed with any wisdom. This is all I have to say at present upon the speech of the member for Nedlands. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Wise) touched on North-Western matters as a whole. I propose to go somewhat into detail.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**Mr. RODOREDA**: I admit that the North-West presents a big problem to any Government, but not, I submit, an insuperable problem if it be tackled sympathetically. The North-West depends mainly on the pastoral industry, and will do so for some considerable time to come. There are other industries up there, chiefly mining and pearl fishing. All the various industries should meet with sympathetic treatment from the Government, inasmuch as the

conditions there are so different from those obtaining in the southern part of the State. To start with, our isolation presents a big problem. The major portion of the North-West is more isolated from the south of this State than is the State itself isolated from the Commonwealth. That should be borne in mind. I wish to bring under the notice of the Government the necessity for a reappraisement of the leases in the North. The population there is steadily decreasing, largely because of the same factors as have caused the loss of employment in the South, namely, the introduction of machinery. The bulk of the transport up there is done by motor vehicles, and the station owners have to use their motor cars in the management of their properties. This makes it possible to dispense with the great bulk of the employees. The leases were previously appraised chiefly on their proximity to port. In the instance of my electorate this appraisal basis has lost its value, inasmuch as the jetty has been destroyed and has not been replaced. This re-appraisal proposal has been put up to successive Governments, but without avail. On the last occasion the present Leader of the Opposition received a deputation in Roebourne, and said it could not possibly be done. An alternative suggestion was that the Government should pay a subsidy towards the lighterage costs of getting goods into and out of port. This also was turned down, and nothing more was heard of it by the residents in my electorate until, on the eve of the elections, the late Government of their own initiative, decided to grant this concession. I have no fault to find with the concession; it should have been granted years ago, when first asked for; but the way in which it was ultimately granted made it purely a monetary gift to the electors in my constituency. I do not suppose the fact that the election was approaching had anything to do with it, but that is how it worked out. And instead of making this subsidy begin from the date on which it was announced, the late Government made it retrospective to August last, which as I say, was purely a monetary gift from the Government to the electors. The late Government put through an amendment of the Land Act providing for an extension of the leases. Nothing more detrimental to the North and North-West could have

been put on the statute-book. The country up there is capable of carrying three times the present population, by which I mean the number of men on their own holdings. The greater portion of the land leased is not being used by the lessees, and especially in the coastal areas the country could carry at least three or four times the number of station owners. If a man were to secure the lease of a property on which he could run 12,000 or 15,000 sheep he could employ a number of men, and do better for himself than the holders of bigger stations have been able to do for themselves. Then I should like to bring before the Government the necessity for applying the Closer Settlement Act to various parts of the North-West, more particularly around the town of Onslow. No vegetables can be grown in Onslow, and so the place is dependent on vegetables sent up from Perth. Yet within 20 miles of the port there is abundant land on which to grow vegetables. The trouble is the people cannot get the use of that land. It is a scandal that we should have to import all our vegetables from the South. The late Government brought down a Bill to restrict the output from the pearling industry. It is a debatable point whether the restriction has increased the price of shell, but there is no shadow of doubt that the method employed for the restriction of shell has increased the cost of fishing that shell. The method adopted was to reduce the output of each boat, which necessarily means that if the output of a boat capable of fishing 10 or 12 tons per season, is reduced to six or seven tons, her fishing costs are increased.

Mr. Ferguson: What was the alternative?

Mr. RODORED: To reduce the number of boats

Mr. Ferguson: That is what your people objected to.

Mr. RODORED: Please do not think I am blaming any particular Government for their treatment of the North-West. I am blaming all past Governments. In my view we are here to get consideration for the North from whatever Government may be in power, and I think I can say the Government will hear more about the North-West during the next three years than has been heard down here at any time previously. As I have said, the method of restriction of the output of shell has increased the cost

of fishing that shell. I have just received from a master pealer a letter reading as follows:—

There are no restrictions at Darwin, therefore it is no advantage to restrict our boats here to a tonnage, and would only tend to force us to send our boats to Darwin, which would be a great loss to our State.

I might also mention that at the present time on the seven boats licensed here, there are 14 white men employed, but if the 7-ton limit is adhered to these men will be on the labour market, as it would be impossible to work the boats at a profit and keep them on.

As you know, we are trying the white diver experiment here, and it looks as though he is going to make a success of it. Young Jones had only three months' diving last year, and I think if he is left alone this year he will get eight tons, and I feel confident that next year he will beat the Japs, and I do not see why we cannot work all white divers if we got the right men and trained them, which would mean keeping more money in the country, as the Jap divers are the only members of the crew that take much out.

We have seen the introduction of the white diver in the industry. Previously it was said he could not possibly compete with the Japs, that he could not do the work. But it is now proved that he can, and I suggest to the Government that instead of renewing all the Japanese licenses next year, they should renew a portion of them and give a percentage to white divers. This would give a start to the system of employing white divers exclusively. Last year we had one boat manned exclusively by whites and the fact that the men have all gone back again this year suggests that they were well satisfied with the conditions. Various mistakes have been made in the North-West for want of knowledge of local conditions. More particularly has this been so in construction work, amongst the engineering branch. In support of this I quote the fiasco of the Beadon jetty, a jetty constructed after some nine months surveying by so-called competent surveyors and engineers. After construction it was found that the jetty was against the run of the tide, and when the jetty had been bashed about by a few steamers, the Harbour and Lights Department would no longer allow steamers to berth at the jetty, except on the ebb tide, thus making practically another tidal port on the coast. This could very easily have been avoided had the engineers taken notice of persons with local knowledge, but they will never do that. Another fiasco was the water supply provided at Beadon, again by

supposed competent engineers. After about three months the water turned out to be as salt as the sea, and within the last six months the people have been paying 4s. per 100 gallons for fresh water carted around to them by a motor truck. The Government were so disgusted with the position that they handed the water supply over to the road board free of the capital cost, and since then the road board has received a subsidy from the Government, with the result that after experiment they have solved the water problem. It is appalling to consider the losses occasioned and the money wasted by the Main Roads Board in constructing roads in the North-West, again, through want of local knowledge and because the different condition prevailing in the North-West were not considered. The same specifications were applied to works there that are applied to main roads around the city. Had that work been left to the local authorities, hundreds of miles of usable roads would have been constructed in lieu of the few odd miles of road that now adorn or detract from the beauty of the surroundings. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) spoke of the need for reducing production costs. There again, the varying conditions ought to be considered, especially in regard to the license fees charged for motor trucks. There has been a big agitation throughout the North-West to have the Traffic Act reviewed—I refer to the heavy traffic charges—inasmuch as the bulk of the work in the North-West is seasonal and comprises mainly wool carting, which takes place from May till towards the end of the year. Consequently truck owners have to license their vehicles for the full year. They license for the last six months of one year and the first six months of the next year, because their vehicles have to be used in the two periods. They get no benefit from the half-yearly licensing arrangement. They should be allowed to license in quarterly instead of six-monthly periods. The charges also are too heavy. We get no benefit from the heavy license fees paid. We have no roads to travel on, and after an inch of rain motors cannot get through the country for a week.

Mr. Latham: All the money paid in license fees goes to the local authority. It does not come down here.

Mr. RODOREDA: That does not help the producer. The carter cannot cut his costs when he has to pay excessive license

fees. The few pounds paid to the road board would not help much in the way of road construction. Those men have to travel 200 or 300 miles with their loads. There is a great agitation in the North-West for adequate medical service and hospital facilities. The Leader of the Opposition is well aware of what we have to put up with in the way of medical service. After his last visit, we understood that conditions would be improved, but not much has been done yet. A scheme was suggested, to be worked in conjunction with the Australian Inland Mission. I would like to hear something from the Government about that proposal. People will not stay in the North-West unless they can get adequate medical attention, especially for the women and children. They are mostly isolated; some of them are 200 miles from the port, and sometimes when they get to the port there is an incompetent man in charge, or the hospital is not up to standard. The late Government hit on a brilliant scheme of economy by leasing the hospitals to subsidised matrons. Consequently, where we had two nurses at the Roebourne hospital, we now have one lady who is not under the control of the doctor appointed and subsidised by the Government. The doctor has no control over the hospital, and I leave members to imagine the result. If the doctor and matron are not good pals, the patients suffer. It is time that state of affairs was altered. There would be quite an uproar if the scheme were adopted in the city where the people could make themselves heard. I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle on the question of education. Not nearly enough money is being spent in the right direction. It is difficult for the Government to find any more money for education, but the people who are helping to develop the country should have greater consideration than they receive at present. The subsidy to the University amounts to £18,000 or £20,000, and I do not see much benefit being derived from it. We are turning out a lot of students with degrees of law and medicine, etc., and later on half of them go out and break stones on the roadside for sustenance. The money could be better expended in providing University scholarships. A free University is all very well when we can afford it, but I cannot see why people who can afford to pay for their children's education at the

University should participate in the benefit of the £20,000 provided by the Government while the children in the backblocks are neglected. To-day I made a request for a monitress for the Beadon school, but because the number of children in attendance was one or two below the total stipulated by regulation, no monitress could be supplied. That request could be met at no great cost to the Government and it would be of great benefit to the children attending the school. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Wise) mentioned the royalty charged on kangaroo skins. This seems to be a somewhat humorous matter to members, though not to the people engaged in the industry. The anomalous position exists that no royalty is charged on skins shipped from the Hedland district, but royalty is charged on skins from adjoining districts. That difference is due simply to the fact that the member for Pilbara was more active when the subject was under discussion and secured the exemption of his district. No declaration is required regarding skins shipped from Hedland, no matter where they are obtained, but skins shipped from Roebourne are charged royalty.

Mr. Ferguson: We reduced the royalty 50 per cent.

Mr. RODOREDA: That helps us, but it does not reduce the price where no royalty is charged. We have the ridiculous position that the Government charge a royalty on kangaroo skins on which the vermin boards up to a few months ago were paying 6d. each, which amount has since been reduced to 4d. The vermin board were treating kangaroos as vermin and paid 4d. for their extermination, and out of the 4d. the Government take 2d. royalty. One might as well tax the rabbits down south.

Mr. Ferguson: We would willingly, if we could get rid of them.

Mr. RODOREDA: The hon. member will not get rid of the kangaroos by penalising the man who goes out hunting them. Inquiry should be warranted into the industry of tanning and disposing of the skins. America has a complete monopoly of the trade, and I do not see why she should have it. There are great tanning works in England, and we also have tanning works in this State. The price charged for the tanned skin is out of all proportion to the price paid to the hunter of the skin. Mining is the only bright spot in my electorate on

which I can congratulate the Government. The present Government have assisted greatly both with the institution of the prospecting scheme and with the provision of crushing facilities. The member for Nedlands mentioned that gold was of such great value to the State owing to forces outside our control. The same thing could equally well be said of wool if its price went up, but that does not alter the fact that, without the assistance of the mining industry in the last two years, this State would be in a bad position indeed. I do not think members representing southern constituencies fully realise how greatly the gold mining industry has helped the State. It is not only the number of men employed on the mines that we have to consider; we have to take into account the hundreds of men scattered throughout the gold-bearing areas, chasing the weight. Of them, no proper record is made in the official returns. A considerably larger number of men would be on sustenance in the North-West if it were not for the little gold being found there. In my district I believe there will be big developments within the next 12 months. There is auriferous country at least 200 miles long that has not yet been prospected, and no assistance to the industry can be too great. I congratulate the Government and the Minister for Mines on the prospecting scheme. Why other Governments have not taken action in the matter, I am at a loss to understand. The loss of the jetty at Roebourne needs to be reviewed. Eight years ago the jetty was blown away, since which time the people in my electorate served by that jetty have paid £25,000 in lighterage charges. That is a very large sum for a population of fewer than 300 people who were served by the jetty. That amount has been paid mainly by people in the pastoral industry. Any assistance the Government can give to remedy this disability should be forthcoming. If the Government are seeking big works on which to employ men, I can suggest no better scheme than that put up seven or eight years ago, namely, to build the jetty again at Sampson. The money would be expended mainly in labour. There is enough stone within a square mile to build five or six jetties or breakwaters, and all that would be necessary would be the pro-

vision of a locomotive, some rails, and a few trucks. I suggest that the Government consider the matter when searching for schemes on which to employ men. The great burden pressing on the industries of the North-West, particularly the primary industries, is that of interest. This applies equally to the farming industry. It is the greatest burden our industries have to bear. I do not see how they can possibly carry on unless that burden is reduced. I am in a position to state that a few stations with no interest bill to pay have made profits every year in the last four years, which covers the period of the lowest price for wool. The interest burden, however, is killing other stations. They are all over-capitalised, but the financial firms interested will do nothing to help them in this direction. The writing-down of debts is necessary, and many people will have to lose money that was foolishly advanced when the market was at the peak. No industry can carry on under such terrific burdens. I am pleased to see reference was made to this in the Speech, and I hope the Government will do all they can to reduce this interest burden on primary products. I hope that, in any legislation that is brought forward, consideration will be given to the varied conditions applying to the North-West. This is a vital matter for the people there. Most of the blunders which have been perpetrated in the past have come about because this was not taken into consideration. The people of the North-West contend they have not received value from the Government for the taxation imposed upon them. This covers all Governments. They have not received value for the money they have been called upon to pay. Great dissatisfaction is expressed everywhere in the North-West because of this, and, unless a change is effected, an agitation will arise for the formation of a new State up there. We have just as much right to demand secession from the southern portion of the State as Western Australia has to demand to secede from the Commonwealth. I notice that one of the papers which was most active during the secession campaign scouts the right of the North-West to decide for itself whether it should secede or not. If we follow the argument to its logical conclusion, the whole of Australia should have taken part in the referendum held in Western Australia. If

we as a State have a right to secede from the Commonwealth, the North-West has a right by its own vote to determine whether it shall remain a part of Western Australia or establish a new State.

**MR. WARNER** (Mt. Marshall) [8.3]: I have already conveyed my congratulations to you, Sir, upon your accession to the high office of Speaker. I will now deal with a few items which I think should be looked into by the Government before we can bring about a rehabilitation of the wheat and wool industries. As I have been returned as the representative of the chief wheat-growing constituency of Western Australia, I trust some notice will be taken of my remarks. There is great suffering, it will be admitted, amongst primary producers. The greatest problem the Government have to tackle is that of the farmers' debts. Until this is solved, the farming industry will not function smoothly. Whilst it remains in its present unsatisfactory condition, the whole State must suffer too. It is of national importance that this problem should be solved, and I trust the Government will look upon it in that light. Due to the fall in the price of primary products, the producer has lost all power to meet his obligations. His assets have depreciated to such an alarming degree that he is forced to view his property more as a liability than as an asset. His equity has disappeared. He has not received sufficient for his products to enable him to pay his way. If something is not done in the near future to relieve the situation, the whole industry will be engulfed. In my view a board of inquiry should be constituted, free from Government, debtor or creditor influences, so that unbiassed recommendations may be made to Cabinet. In all cases of accrued debt there should be a writing down to manageable proportions. Every case should be thoroughly investigated, compound interest should be stopped, and interest in general should be brought down to the lowest possible level. It should be the aim of the Government to enable primary production to compete on the basis of world's parity prices. To bring this about the cost of production must come down. The writing down or freezing of debts or liabilities would greatly assist to this end. There should be fewer charges

against the crop. If this were brought about, the farmer would have greater heart to proceed with future cropping. He would make every endeavour to retrieve the position, and would have his heart in his work. The result would be better crops to the acre. Something must be done to assist along these lines. When that happens it will mean that the industry will be put on a payable basis, and once we arrive at that stage we shall be taking the first step out of our troubles. The farmer, too, must have greater security of tenure. He is passing through times unparalleled in history, and is the victim of circumstances over which he had no control. He has the haunting fear of being dispossessed of his property. That is confronting nearly every farmer, and must be removed. It is a harmful factor against good work being done on the farm. Whilst he faces that we can never expect him to carry on and do good work. He does not know from month to month whether he is going to remain on his farm or be obliged to accept the dole. It is not enough to tell him, as he was told by Ministers in the last Government, that whilst he does his best and plays the game, he has nothing to fear. Bitter experience has taught him otherwise. That is not sufficient protection for him. He was told that the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act and the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act would give him all the security he wanted, but he finds that is not so. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act will not assist him. Once a creditor has decided there is no further advantage in carrying on a farmer, the stay order is allowed to lapse, the law is allowed to take its ordinary course, and he is thrown upon the goodwill of the creditors. Some security must be given to the farmers. If his debts are frozen he will have that much security. In most of the holdings the farmers have invested their life savings, and put in years of hard work. In many cases they have carved out a national asset from the virgin bush. It is the moral right of them all to demand security of tenure, and I hope consideration will be given to that matter. A man must have a reasonable living allowance from the products of his labour. It has been the age-long right of a man to participate in the fruits of his labour. No farmers should be denied this. Why