

ship their fruit from the nearest port. As a matter of fact I inquired and found that one private firm in Albany had already arranged for the shipment of 9,000 cases of fruit, and also arranged for the ultimate shipment during the coming season of 19,000 cases. That is one firm alone. I inquired as to what fruit would be available had those steamers, which the late Government arranged to call at Fremantle, also called at Albany. Unfortunately, the time at my disposal was limited and I could only secure an answer from one firm, but I found one agent alone had written to the department pointing out that he could ship 500 cases in February by a steamer of the Australind line calling at Albany, and 3,000 cases in March by another steamer, and 2,000 cases in April by a third steamer; yet the growers in the Mt. Barker district are compelled to send their fruit from the other end of the State down to Fremantle if they wish to utilise these steamers which have entered into a contract with the Government. It is a penalty upon these growers I do not think they should be called upon to bear. I sincerely hope the present Government will take steps to check this centralisation policy, which was such a marked feature of their predecessors in office. The member for Northam smiles.

Mr. Mitchell: Have you any objection?

Mr. PRICE: I have no objection to the hon. member smiling; all I object to is the peculiar warp of the conscience of the individual which will permit him to smile while he knows another individual is suffering an injustice. That is the only objection I have. The injustice which has been meted out to the fruit growers of Mount Barker may be cause for smiling on the part of some hon. members, but on the part of those fruit growers it is cause for considerable annoyance, and certainly one of the causes for the change we have seen take place in the Government of this State in the past six weeks.

Mr. Mitchell: Those electors did not make any change.

Mr. PRICE: No, but may I remind the hon. member a very sincere and determined effort was made to induce them to

make a change, even to the extent of spending £167 3s. 4d. of the public funds, and even then they were not able to make any change. I have drawn attention to the facts, and I feel sure that once they are brought under the notice of the present Government they will take those steps necessary to bring about an alteration and do justice to the people of the State. I do not intend to speak further upon this question because I am convinced that the members who are now entrusted with the administration of the affairs of the State will do all that is possible, not only to reform, if I may use the term, the departments under their control, but bring about in this State that period of prosperity and happiness which has not, unfortunately, existed in the past, despite the repeated assurances of our optimistic friend, the member for Northam, except in the minds of those who were the occupants of Ministerial positions.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): It is not my intention to take up much of the time of the House, but I feel it is necessary for me to make one or two observations in regard to the Governor's Speech. Before doing so, however, I wish to add to the many congratulations which have been extended to you upon your selection as Speaker of this Assembly. I also wish to congratulate Ministers upon their selection by their party to control the destinies of this State. While it is, of course, a matter for congratulation and satisfaction that we had such a record poll at the last general elections, one cannot help but regretting, sitting as we do on this side, that our numbers have been so depleted. However, we have no fault to find with the electors. They have spoken with no uncertain voice, and as one who always believes in majority rule, I am quite willing to bow to the will of the electors. They have entrusted the gentlemen opposite with the control of the affairs of the State, and I trust all their expectations will be realised. At a time like this one might be excused for making some reference to the work of the past Administration, and although a great deal of criticism has been levelled at that Administration, I think the country owes a

great deal to the efforts of the gentlemen who occupied the Treasury bench in the past.

Mr. Heitmann: They paid some of it back on the 3rd of October.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: As I have pointed out, I have no fault to find with the declaration of the people. It is, of course, a disappointment to us, but at the same time we bow to the will of the people. There may be, and we hope there will be, if the gentlemen opposite are not able to carry out all the promises made at the last election, an opportunity for those on this side of the House to be in the happy position at some future date of turning the tables. I regret very much that we have been visited in a portion of our agricultural districts by what might be looked upon almost as a drought. I think the word drought has been used rather frequently, in fact too frequently. I do not wish to say that those people who are suffering, are not suffering a very great deal, but at the same time I think we can hardly use the word drought in its fullest sense, when we take into consideration the fact that no doubt a great deal of the diminution of the crop this year has been brought about to some extent by want of perhaps more up-to-date methods of farming. At the same time I heartily sympathise with those people who have been affected in the dry areas. But, after all, while a number of our settlers may be suffering to a very great extent, it may be a warning to the Administration to perhaps prevent settlers taking undue risks by going too far beyond the safe rainfall areas. I am pleased to know that the Administration of to-day are doing all they possibly can by way of assisting and encouraging those who have the misfortune to find themselves in this position; at the same time I think a little might be said in regard to the efforts put forward by the past Administration so far as the provision of water supplies for the outback areas is concerned. While I do not agree altogether with everything the late Minister for Agriculture did, I think we should give him credit where it is due, and especially in regard to this ques-

tion of water supply, and the clearing of roads in the agricultural districts, a great deal was done by the former Minister, in fact, he initiated that system of constructing dams before settlement and providing new roads for the settlers.

The Minister for Lands: Not the system of providing dams; that was initiated in Mr. Drew's time.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I may not be right in saying that the former Minister originated the system, but he brought it into good effect by providing these dams and water supplies ahead of settlement. In any case, I think this new system brought about by constructing these works was a step in the right direction. I am pleased to know that the Agricultural Department has already taken steps in the direction of giving relief to those who have had the misfortune to find that they have no crops and who wish to carry on. I understand the department are going to provide seed wheat and will give assistance in other directions, and I might here suggest to the Minister that an early opportunity should be taken by the department, if it has not already been taken, to secure suitable seed as near as possible to the affected areas, so that the settlers may have at their disposal reliable seed which will be obtainable at as low a rate as possible. The difficulty will be, unless the seed is secured at once, that it will probably be bought up and held for higher prices. Therefore, in the interests of those settlers on the drier areas, and not only them but other farmers throughout the State who may wish to obtain reliable seed, more consideration might be given to the purchase of seed by the department than has been done in the past. I am very pleased to sit here and listen to the various speeches by members upon the Address-in-reply, more particularly in regard to the optimism in those speeches by members representing goldfields constituencies. I am pleased to know that they consider there is such a good future before the mining industry, and I can only express the hope as the representative of an agricultural district, that no efforts will be spared by the present Administration to foster that industry and do everything possible



that can be done to advance it. We who live in agricultural districts realise what the mining industry has done for Western Australia. We know it gave a great impetus to settlement and it made possible the development of the agricultural districts in what, under other circumstances, might have taken probably a hundred years. At the same time I am pleased to know that the Administration of the day realise that there is an even greater and more permanent industry in agriculture. If we want permanent prosperity we must develop our agricultural resources. It must be pleasing to members on this side, taking into consideration the fact that we represent nearly the whole of the agricultural constituencies of the State, to know that the new Government realise that if we are to make this country what we all expect it to be, a great country, we must develop the agricultural resources. I am entirely with the Government, and I have always been in favour of encouraging none but bona fide selectors to take up our lands. I am in favour of the cultivation and utilisation of our lands to the fullest extent. If we are to get the best results from the development of the land we must bring it under cultivation, even if we do not all produce cereal crops. There is a good deal of misconception with regard to the stock grower in this country. This man, I am sorry to say is, by some members and by some people in the country, looked upon as an interloper, a man who ought not to be holding land. At the same time if he brings that land under cultivation and can grow five head of sheep where previously only one grew, I think members will agree with me that he is a benefactor.

Mr. Underwood: What about the man who does not bring it under cultivation?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I say that with our system of agricultural railways, and seeing that the State is going to a very great expense in this regard, we might expect that the man who does hold land should make the very best use of it. But, as I have pointed out, it is not the desire of everyone to grow wheat. One man may wish to go in for growing stud sheep, an item we are importing very extensively.

I think every encouragement should be given to our settlers who wish to develop the land.

Mr. Underwood: What about the man who will not develop the land?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It all depends upon what you call development. If he will not clear his land you have a means of getting at him by taxation.

Mr. Green: The leader of the Opposition was going to throw that off.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am not here to make excuses for the leader of the Opposition. So far as I am concerned I would have preferred—and I think it would answer the purpose just as well—to see the local authorities given greater powers of taxation. Then possibly we might be able to do away with the dual cost of collection. A good deal has been said in regard to the cost of living. I think hon. members will agree that if we are to permanently reduce the cost of living we must encourage local production. We are not going to have cheaper living until we can bring our lines of production up to our requirements. I hope every encouragement will be given to our local primary industries to increase their production. We are told the present Government are going to give special attention to land settlement. I would like to have heard something more definite from the Minister in regard to the Government land policy. I think we might expect that as soon as possible the Government should take us into their confidence as to what they intend to do in regard to land policy. We know the prosperity of the country is bound up in the settlement of our lands. We have only touched upon the fringe of settlement as yet, and if we are to see our land settled we must adhere to a liberal and progressive land policy. I notice the Government have already put into operation a portion of their non-alienation policy, as far as town lands are concerned, and I think the people interested in agricultural development would like to know what further intentions the Government may have. A good deal of criticism has been levelled at the Minister for Lands on the score of the instructions issued in



respect to transfers. I believe the Minister and the Government are thoroughly in earnest in regard to this matter. I am in sympathy with them in so far as stopping any speculation in land is concerned, but I may say that there is very much less speculation going on than we are led to believe.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yet hundreds of applicants cannot get blocks.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is an unfortunate state of affairs for those who cannot get the land, but it is only to be expected that with the great inrush we have had, and the inquiries of those within our borders for land, there would be many disappointed applicants.

Mr. Green: Why not relieve the situation by opening up the Esperance district?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I will be prepared to deal with that much vexed question when it comes before the House. It requires a great deal of looking into, and I am not prepared to discuss it until in possession of the facts. I am entirely in accord with the Minister for Lands in endeavouring to prevent any lands being held for speculative purposes, but I think the Minister went the wrong way about obtaining the desired end. It is a fact that a good deal of unrest has been caused among holders of agricultural lands by these instructions. I have lived nearly all my life in agricultural districts, and I know from experience the difficulty we had in the past in getting financial institutions to look at our conditional purchase securities. For many years the associated banks would not advance a brass farthing upon conditional purchase lands. It was not until a few years ago that the associated banks looked favourably upon these conditional purchase blocks as securities.

Mr. Price: The Agricultural Bank compelled them to do it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The reason of the establishment of the Agricultural Bank was that it was quite impossible to get any other financial institution to look at these conditional purchase securities. As the member for Albany has pointed out, the Agricultural Bank served to give to

our lands a fixed value, and afterwards this State institution was followed by the associated banks, which are now established throughout the length and breadth of the country. I do not for a moment think the Minister for Lands is going to withhold any transfer of a bona fide settler. I am satisfied that when such a transfer comes before the Minister he will not hesitate to put it through. But the mischief of the thing lies in the fact that to some extent a scare has been created amongst the financial institutions. So far as the associated banks are concerned, no doubt they have little to fear, because they see to it that the improvements are well carried out before they make advances. But there are others who are doing a very great deal towards developing the country by way of assisting the new settler. I refer to that much abused class, the country storekeepers. Let me say that if there is any individual who has done yeoman service in opening up the country it is the country storekeeper. I do not say that he has carried out his business upon philanthropic lines; but at the same time he has had to take very great risks, and he is a man who generally comes in before the Agricultural Bank.

The Premier: Did not the warehouses take the risk and charge ten per cent. for it?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not know. Very often the storekeeper has to fall back upon the financial institutions, and that is where the pinch comes in. He has been prepared to take risks in the past because he felt that the department would see his client through. I hope the Government will reconsider this phase of the question. We do not want to see any land taken up and left unimproved, while somebody else who is not entitled to it gets a premium upon that land; but I think that if the Minister dealt specially with these cases and said that in such case he would not allow a transfer to go through until the whole of the improvements had been completed, he would be better advised.

Mr. Heitmann: Where does the storekeeper hope to get his return; from the produce of the land or from the security?



Mr. A. E. PIESSE: He always has the land to fall back upon.

Mr. Underwood: How many storekeepers are there in the Old Men's Home?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I would not be surprised if many of them were there, seeing that all they have gone through and having regard to the risks they take. The country owes a very great deal to those who have staked almost their very existence in trying to help the new settler through the early stages. They did not do it on philanthropic lines; I admit they had to live, but my point is that if you are going to kill out the man who has helped the settler over the initial stages, you are going to prevent any great settlement taking place in many of our agricultural districts. I have already pointed out that in 50 per cent. of these cases this individual gives assistance before the Agricultural Bank is able to help. One suggestion I would like to make to the Minister is in regard to a more effective way of learning whether the improvements have been carried out, and that is by increasing the inspection staff. I have always maintained that the proper way to find out whether these lands are being held for speculative purposes is to bring about closer inspection. As far as my experience of inspectors goes, I believe they are men who work very hard, in fact they have so much work in hand that they are not able to give the time necessary to the carrying out of this work as effectively as we would like to see it done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What would you suggest the Minister do if the improvements were not carried out?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Where the land is being held for speculative purposes and is without improvements, I should say it ought to be forfeited; but in cases where a man though trying conscientiously to develop his land is faced with overwhelmingly adverse circumstances, consideration should be given to him. We know of instances in which a certain amount of consideration has had to be given to settlers in dry districts this year,

and the same thing should apply to the Great Southern, where five or six successive wet years have kept our people back and prevented them from effecting their improvements as they would have done in better circumstances. I hope the Minister will take this phase of the case into consideration. No doubt special cases will be brought under his notice, and I hope he will deal leniently with those cases.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Has he not already told you that he will deal with each case on its merits?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: As I have already pointed out, I am satisfied that the Minister will do that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Then why try to make any scare?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am not trying to make a scare; I am just pointing out the danger of interfering and that the placing of restrictions upon these transfers is frightening the people. Numbers of cases have come under my notice where the people have become alarmed. The average man on the land, owing to his isolation, becomes suspicious and anxious, and why add to his troubles? So far as the improvements are concerned, if the Minister would, even now, say clearly that these instructions for forfeiture will only apply to those lands which he finds are not being bona fide developed, it will greatly reassure the settlers.

Mr. Underwood: If they were being bona fide developed he cannot do anything.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There are one or two other matters that I should like to refer to that come under the control of the Minister for Lands and Agriculture. One is the question of the poison and poorer lands, more particularly lying to the west of the Great Southern railway. Something has been said in regard to the poison board or board of inquiry that was appointed quite recently to go into this question, and I am hoping that the result of that inquiry will be that the Minister will be able to give relief to some of the settlers who have gone into those poison areas, and, after having to pay for the land in the first instance more than it was really worth, have had



the misfortune not to do well. As far as I am concerned, I will do my best to help the Minister to become acquainted with that district, and any assistance I can render him in showing him over that area, more particularly in the direction of Dininup, I shall be pleased to give, so that he may be able to see the difficulties under which these people are labouring. I am glad that the Government intend to go on with the policy of railway construction, and I hope that we will have some promise from the Government in regard to the construction of the railway which has been asked for to the west of Tamberlup and Cranbrook on the Great Southern; also that we will hear something in regard to the proposal to build a railway from Narrogin to Armadale. This, as was pointed out by the member for Williams-Narrogin, will bring a portion of the Great Southern country into closer proximity to the port of Fremantle and the city of Perth. There is not the slightest doubt that a portion of the railway between Spencer's Brook and Narrogin will very shortly have to be duplicated, but instead of duplicating the line I think it would be very much more economical to build this line direct from Narrogin to Armadale, thus shortening the distance by some 57 miles. One of the greatest difficulties we have to contend with in that portion of the State is the loss of time in travelling to the City and Fremantle. In regard to water supply and road clearing, I hope that the Government will push on with this much-needed work, and that they will not forget that the districts to the east of the Great Southern are needing these supplies. In those localities we are pushing out into the lesser rainfall areas, and if we want to keep the people there we must see that all these facilities are provided. I hope that no time will be lost in erecting freezing works at the various ports and providing the most up-to-date facilities for the handling of produce. Another matter to which I should like to call the attention of the Minister for Railways—I shall be bringing figures before him in the course of a few days—is that of the reduction of freights upon the carriage of oats and

chaff. Up till last year oats were carried at the same rate as wheat is carried today, but owing to some adjustment of the grain rates last year oats were left out, and I say it is unfair, particularly to those people who are living a long way from the chief centres of population, that they should have to pay a higher rate for the carriage of oats on the railways than is paid for the carriage of wheat. I trust, therefore, that the Minister will look into the question of revising the rates on agricultural produce, and will also consider the reduction of the chaff rate. It simply means that the districts to which I belong would have been completely out of the chaff market had it not been for the dry season and the shortage of crops in the other districts this season.

The Minister for Mines: Somebody has been making a profit out of chaff.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In our district we have had no market until this year. I am pleased to know that the Government intend to deal with the matter of cheapening the cost of agricultural machinery, and in whatever means they may adopt to bring this about they will have my entire support. I do not know whether the Government have definitely decided upon manufacturing these machines in the State workshops, but if they do that I would suggest that they decide upon manufacturing one or two of the most important lines with a view to, at the same time, standardising the parts of such machinery. This, of course, is only an experiment and we have yet to learn that these machines can be satisfactorily manufactured by a Government department. There is, however, no getting away from the fact that we are at present paying too much for our agricultural machinery, and I will do everything I can to help the Government in adopting whatever may be considered the best means to bring about a reduction in price. I am also glad to know that medical facilities are to be provided in the out-back districts. No one realises more than I do the disabilities under which the people in these far distant parts labour. In many instances they have to travel over bad roads for distances of 40, 50,



and 60 miles to reach the nearest doctor, and in this connection, although it is a Commonwealth matter, I hope the Government will take into consideration the advisability of assisting in constructing bush telephones in scattered agricultural and mining districts. So far as the Federal authority is concerned, although the conditions under which we can obtain telephones to-day are much more liberal than they were a few years ago, they do not yet meet the needs of this State. The Federal authorities do not seem to fully realise the difficulties we have to contend with in this great country with its scattered population. I would like to see the railway telephones used more freely than they are to-day. There seems to be some regulation in regard to these telephones which prevents the people having the use of them at the smaller sidings, and it does seem absurd that we cannot make more use of the railway telephone lines, especially in agricultural districts. But if we are going to overcome this difficulty and meet the needs of the people in this direction, the State Government should, with the consent of the Federal Government, go into the question of constructing bush telephones, because, after all, in these days when time means money, and when everyone who goes far into the bush almost carries his life in his hands, every assistance should be given by the Government in the provision of these facilities. Perhaps the Minister for Agriculture will look into this matter and see if the agriculturists cannot be assisted in this way. After all, if we were to spend £10,000 or £20,000 in the erection of these telephones, what a convenience it would be in a country like this! It would decrease the appointments of medical officers to a great extent and, if we only saved one life in 12 months, we would be performing a very good work. So far as education is concerned, I am glad that the Government are going to push on with the erection of the University, and I do hope that the institution will be made available to the child of even the poorest parents in the land, so that any child showing the ability and the desire may have an opportunity of graduating from the primary schools

through the secondary schools to the University. At the same time, I hope that the back country schools will not be lost sight of, and that a little more haste will be shown in the erection and alteration of these schools by the Works Department. Many of our country schools are arriving at the stage when additions are required, and it is to be hoped that the Works Department will not delay in this matter. A number of the schools are overcrowded to-day, and I trust that the Minister for Education will remember this and get the Works Department to move a little faster than they have in the past. So far as new legislation is concerned I do not intend to take up the time of the House to-night, because when the different measures come before us we will have an opportunity of dealing with them, but a number of the measures mentioned in the Governor's Speech will receive my support. I hope before the session is concluded the Government will bring down a Bill re-enacting the Roads Act. I suppose it is their intention to do so, because I think the present measure expires at the end of this year. I hope members will be given an opportunity of looking into the Bill in ample time to suggest any amendments they may think necessary. I am sorry to have taken up so much time of the House to-night. I shall conclude by hoping that the present Government will have a prosperous career, and that the result of their administration will be even more successful than that of the last Administration and result in even greater prosperity to this country.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): At the outset I desire to add my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on the high position in which you have been placed, and also to congratulate the members of the Ministry on their positions. I feel sure they will do their duty to the State and act in accord with the requests and desires of the large majority of the electors who have placed such a strong party behind them. I consider that owing to the House meeting so late in the year it is absolutely impossible for the Ministry to do a great deal of business this session, and I would urge that