

Mr. HUGHES: I agree that the controlling body should be allowed to keep certain people away, but before a man is deemed to be undesirable the charge against him should be set out in black and white and he should be given a full and complete trial.

Capt. Carter: Are not the courses private property?

Mr. HUGHES: The headquarters course is public property, and the control of racing is vested in the W.A.T.C. by legislative enactment. Jockey boys begin their training at the age of 14 or 15.

Capt. Carter: I think the courses are private property.

Hon. P. Collier: The W.A.T.C. course is not.

Mr. Clydesdale: It does not make any difference. They are under control just the same.

Mr. HUGHES: Jockey boys are purposely stunted in growth in order that they may ride at light weights. When they are precluded from riding their livelihood is gone. When a boy is disqualified he cannot readily take on other work. He is physically unfit for hard work, and the knowledge he gains in horseracing is of little use to him elsewhere.

Capt. Carter: Are the boys disqualified without a trial?

Mr. HUGHES: Yes. Quite recently three or four boys went up for their licenses, but they were told these would not be renewed. They had no chance of defending themselves. If they did wrong the charges should have been set out, and the lads should have been given a chance to defend themselves. Let us have public inquiry into these matters. If boys are guilty of malpractice on the course, let them be disqualified from attending there. I have no sympathy with the wrongdoer, with the boy who commits malpractices, or the trainer who assists, but every individual is entitled to a fair and open trial.

Capt. Carter: Have you sought legal opinion on the matter?

Mr. HUGHES: One can always get two opinions on any legal matter. Very often the boys have no money with which to go to law. The control of racing should be vested in a board, on which the jockey boys, trainers and owners as well as the public and the Government might be represented. The worst scandals connected with the course are due to the actions of those who are well in the play.

Mr. Clydesdale: There are no scandals in racing.

Mr. HUGHES: There should be more democratic control of racing. Every person charged should be given a fair trial and an opportunity to defend himself. If the right that is given to an ordinary criminal is given to one of these racing people, he should be satisfied with the result. As things are, a man is brought before the committee, one member of which may have a personal dislike towards him, and be the means of ruining the man's reputation. It is injurious to one's character to be warned off a racecourse, the assumption being that if a man has not done something wrong he would not be penal-

ised. Parliament should take more interest in the control now being exercised by the W.A.T.C., and demand that every person dealt with should be properly heard and properly tried.

On motion by Mr. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.22 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 8th August, 1923.*

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

### QUESTION—STATE ENTERPRISES.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, What was the Dr. or Cr. state of the profit and loss accounts for the year ending 30th June last of the following undertakings: Boya Quarry, State Brickworks, State Implement Works, State Steamships, State Sawmills, Goldfields Water Supply, Brookton Water Supply, Collie Water Supply, Cue Water Supply, Bridgetown Water Supply, Danzin Water Supply, Derby Water Supply, Geraldton Water Supply, Harvey Water Supply, Leonora Water Supply, Meekatharra Water Supply, Menzies Water Supply, Ora Banda Water Supply, Pingelly Water Supply, Torbay Drainage, other minor works, as shown on page 83 of Parliamentary Paper No. 26 of 1922? 2, Have interest, sinking fund, and depreciation been taken into account in each instance? 3, If not, in what instances are there omissions?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The information asked for will be supplied by way of a return as soon as possible.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY ROLLING STOCK.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many railway trucks, carriages, and locomotives have been placed

out of commission during the past five years? 2, What was the prime cost of same? 3, What was the age of same? 4, Were replacements made from loan or revenue funds? 5, What was the cost of relaying during past five years? 6, Were funds provided from loan or revenue?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, None. 2, 3 and 4, Answered by No. 1. 5, Year ended 30th June, 1919, nil; year ended 30th June, 1921, nil; year ended 30th June, 1922, £45,822; year ended 30th June, 1923, £114,718. 6, For year ended 30th June, 1922, £14,912 was provided from loan and £30,910 from revenue. For the year ended 30th June, 1923, £36,643 was provided from loan and £78,075 from revenue. Relaying has been undertaken and financed in accordance with the principles outlined in paragraph 32 of the Commissioner of Railways' annual report for year ended 30th June, 1922. A payment of £21,000 was debited to railway working expenses for 1922-23 and credited to the relaying suspense account. The Commissioner proposes to publish a statement of account in respect of relaying with his forthcoming annual report.

#### QUESTION—ELECTORAL PROVINCES, BOUNDARIES.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay upon the Table of the House plan showing the boundaries of provinces, as altered by the Redistribution of Seats Bill, as proposed by the Commission appointed under the Act passed last session?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes.

#### QUESTION—GAS, INFERIOR QUALITY.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: In view of the poor quality of gas being supplied in the metropolitan area, will the Government take the necessary steps to test such quality, as provided by Section 29 of the Perth Gas Companies Act, 1886?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The right to test the illuminating power of the gas by means of the apparatus which the city of Perth is required to provide is not vested in the Government but in the local authorities having the care of the roads within the limits of the Act, namely, a circle of five miles from the General Post Office.

#### QUESTION—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: Of the capital of the Wyndham Meat Works, how much is represented by losses on previous years' working?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: On working account from 1st January, 1919, to 31st December, 1922, £213,490; interest to 31st December, 1922, £244,232; total, £457,722.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### *Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd August, 1923.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [4.39]: In speaking a few words on the motion before the House, I would like to congratulate Mr. Ewing on having attained Ministerial responsibility. I am sure that Mr. Ewing's experience entitles him to the position he holds, and I am very well assured that he will follow the traditions which have been set up by previous Leaders of the House, in endeavouring to place all possible information before us. I have always looked upon the hon. member as the embodiment of enthusiasm, and I feel sure that he will now transfer the enthusiasm which he has for the South-West to the whole of the State. If that expectation is realised, as I believe it will be, during the ensuing 12 months, our felicitations will then probably be even more cordial than they are at present. I think Mr. Ewing is also to be congratulated on the fact that he has no Ministerial sins to account for this session at least, and I think he will be able to get through fairly well. I would also like to offer my congratulations to Mr. Kirwan on being elected Chairman of Committees. Certainly it is a compliment to the province I represent that my two colleagues are so well thought of by the House that they could tie for the position of Chairman of Committees. I am satisfied that Mr. Kirwan's long public experience on the goldfields, and his knowledge of the procedure of Parliament, will stand him in good stead as Chairman of Committees. Coming now to the Governor's Speech, I deplore the scanty reference which it makes to the mining industry. That is a matter of regret to me in common with other goldfields members who have spoken. It seems to me that an industry which has done so much for Western Australia might at least have had a little more advertisement in the Governor's Speech than it has received. I hope the Government will be able to do something to help the industry. I am not one of those who are continually carping at the Government for their neglect, but still I consider that something more might be done, seeing the condition of the mining industry to-day, especially as to water charges. Surely if ever there was a time when the Government might well reconsider those charges, and also the regulations, which latter are the worst part of the water scheme, that time is now, with a view to helping along struggling properties on the fields. We have been told times without number that there are going to be public conferences on the water question, and that consideration is to be given to the

mining industry in this respect, and that the Minister will look into the whole subject, and I do not know what else. But nothing seems to be done. We simply seem to go on as we are. I hope that before the end of the session, or fairly early in the session rather, something will be done by the Government to help the goldfields. While on the mining industry I may also refer to the Federal aspect. Certainly it is pleasing to see our Federal members uniting to try to do a little better for Western Australia than has been done in the past. When I think of all that is being done by the Federal Government for other industries, it is amazing to me that our mining industry should have been neglected in the way it has. The people of Australia are paying something like a hundred million sterling per year to help along about 16 per cent. of the production of Australia in the secondary industries. Further, I find that there is £177,000 being paid to assist the meat trade. Up till recently £14 per ton has been paid as duty on sugar, and now we find that there is to be a uniform duty of nearly £10 per ton. Again, we find that the agricultural industry is receiving a certain amount of assistance. The price of wheat was stabilised for a number of years, and our agricultural members in the House of Representatives are very active indeed in trying to get a remission of the tariff on agricultural machinery and implements. Moreover, consideration is being requested for the fruit industry. On behalf of the mining industry, however, nothing whatever seems to be done. The industry which has practically made made Western Australia, and also other parts of the Commonwealth, is now being allowed to dwindle and die without anything being done for it. It seems to me that the Premier's conferences neglect this aspect of our industrial life altogether. Very rarely do we see anything affecting the mining industry brought forward at those conferences. I am more hopeful by reason of the activities of our Federal members of to-day. Next I wish to refer to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Here again we are in rather a bad way, and quite a number of times the Minister for Mines has stated that something will be done to help the fund. Up to date, however, I do not know that anything has been accomplished. I wish to refer to miner's phthisis. When the Bill was passed last session, various goldfields members of this Chamber were most generous in their congratulations to the Government. We realised that the Bill fell short of what we desired, and even of actual requirements; nevertheless it was a step forward, and we were only too pleased to get the small measure of relief which it afforded. Now, what do we find? The Bill was passed last session, yet nothing whatever has been done. The Minister may say he is waiting for the Federal Government. On the other hand, probably the Federal Government are waiting for the State Government to make a

start. In the meantime the miners are suffering. I ask the Minister whether he cannot do something to put the Act into operation. It is not going to cost very much, it will to some extent relieve the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, and will show the miners that at least something is being attempted to relieve the burden of that terrible scourge. Ordinary members of the Chamber can have no knowledge of the terrible nature of that scourge. Many times have the representatives of mining districts drawn attention to it. Every year I become more appalled at the ravages of miner's phthisis. It is only those intimately acquainted with the industry and with the workers in that industry who can know what is taking place to-day. A study of goldfields industrial statistics and of the reports of the Wooroloo Sanatorium will give some idea of the position. It is awful to contemplate the ravages of the disease on the goldfields. Hundreds of men are suffering from it. Think of the position of a man stricken down by a lingering disease with only one possible ending, after which his family will have to fend for themselves! Surely we might do more than we are doing, especially when we remember what many of those men have done for the State. I hope the Minister, with his well known enthusiasm, will see what he can do in this direction, and I hope that the Minister for Mines also will get a move on and do something. I have never indulged in carping criticism to hinder the Government in any way, but I feel that if something be not done soon in respect of miner's phthisis, goldfields members will be prone to show their dissatisfaction. I do not know whether the Government intend to reintroduce the Hospitals Bill this session. The Governor's Speech differs from all its predecessors inasmuch as it foreshadows scarcely any Bills. We are told that certain measures will be brought forward, but we are left in the dark as to what those measures will be. We were subjected to a great deal of criticism for our opposition to the Hospitals Bill last session. More unjust and illogical criticism I have never heard. The Bill itself was one of the most unjust measures ever introduced. If it be the intention of the Government to reintroduce it this session, I will stress to the Minister the necessity for trying to place in it something more nearly equitable than was in the Bill of last session. Let me direct the Minister's attention to this: on the goldfields for the last 30 years the miners have paid for their own hospital accommodation and medical attention, paid by levy through the mines. Yet the Bill of last session would have taxed the miners to the extent of 4d. to 6d. per week, without giving them any additional benefit, while in other parts of the State men on a certain rate of wage were to have hospital accommodation, although their wage might be better than that paid on the goldfields. It is not to be expected that the men of the goldfields would tolerate anything like that. Had the Bill gone through and been put into operation, serious trouble would have been caused. I realise the necessity for placing our hospitals on a better basis than

they are to-day, especially in respect of administration. If the Government are prepared to bring down a more equitable Bill, they might get our support. The goldfields aspect to which I have referred is not confined to the Eastern Goldfields, but obtains also in other mineral and timber areas where men are providing their own hospital accommodation. Why should those men pay further taxes for the upkeep of hospitals? I hope the Government will endeavour to give us a better Bill than that of last session. I notice that the Colonial Secretary, speaking at Bunbury, declared that the defeat of the Hospitals Bill had put back the clock of civilisation. That is some of the criticism to which this Chamber has been subjected over the rejection of the Hospitals Bill, as if we were doing something that would deprive people of the medical attention they ought to have. As a matter of fact, we have done nothing whatever calculated to alter the conditions which have existed for long past. Yet a section of the Press and of the Ministry declare that we have done something to put back the clock of civilisation.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Because they did not know the prevailing conditions.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I was pleased indeed to see the attitude adopted by the Minister for Agriculture as the result of his visit to Esperance. He is, I think, the first Minister other than a Labour Minister to attempt to give the Esperance land a fair deal. It is to his credit that he went to Esperance and, being a practical man, knowing what he was talking about, did not let bias come into his ideas, but simply stated what he really believed. He told the community that we have at Esperance a very rich province which might well be exploited. When I think of what has been the result to the State of the bias exhibited against Esperance in the past, it makes my blood boil. To some extent the goldfields population has dwindled. Had the Esperance railway been there, no doubt a large number of those who have left the State would have settled in and around Esperance, and in consequence, we should have had down there a happy and prosperous community to-day. I hope the Minister for Agriculture will not stop at that speech of his, but will endeavour to assist the Esperance people and the goldfields with some practical effort. I appreciate the attitude of those members, and others outside, who are watching the working of the immigration scheme. Our thanks are due to several members, especially to Mr. Lovekin—although I do not agree with all he has said about immigration—and others for the interest they are taking in this question in an endeavour to evolve perhaps a better scheme than that we have to-day. I appreciate also the reference made to it by Mr. Monger in to-day's newspaper. The Government would do well to take heed of what some of those men, who know what they are talking about, are saying. I believe a number of unsuitable migrants are coming out,

men who might well have been left at Home. One aspect of the criticism with which I cannot agree is that voiced by Mr. J. Thomson, M.L.A., and others. I understand a resolution was carried by the New Settlers' League in conference to-day in respect to the same matter, namely, that we should get men from the rural districts of England. Mr. Thomson seems to have the idea that in England one can pick up countless farmers with a capital of a thousand pounds each, and bring them out here. I suggest to the Government that they offer Mr. Thomson his expenses and an honorarium to go to Scotland and get, say, 100 farmers with a capital of £1,000 each to come out to Western Australia. Then the Government might grant those farmers free farms. Anybody who has been to England realises how utterly mistaken it is to think that one can go into the rural districts and pick up farmers with capital. The men are not there, nor for that matter are the farming districts. People seem to think that all one has to do is to travel through England to find huge unbroken stretches of smiling farms. It is a great mistake. One can go to some manufacturing town in England and select intelligent tradesmen, carpenters, builders, and others, bring them out to Western Australia, put them on the land, and find that they will make better farmers than many of the farm labourers of England and Scotland. The conditions there are totally different from those prevailing here. The conditions of farming in England and farming in Western Australia are just as dissimilar as are those applying to the trades in the respective countries. A great deal of unmitigated rubbish is talked about going to the rural districts of England and picking up farmers for Western Australia. They are not to be had. The only thing to do is to make the best of the material offering. Still, I think more restrictions should be placed on the number of unsuitable men coming here. We are going to get a percentage of unsuitable men, no matter what we may do, but it strikes me that just now the percentage is altogether too high. I wish to refer to the treatment of tuberculosis and other diseases. A great deal of interest is being taken in the Spahlinger method and also in the treatment by Dr. Dreyer. The Federal Parliament are very active in respect of these matters, and probably it is a subject rather for them than for this Parliament. Still, if the Health Department have any information in regard to these various methods of treatment, it would, I think, be wise to make it widely known. I would direct the attention of the Minister to a method of treatment for what is known as rheumatoid arthritis, which is being tried in the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne. I do this from an impersonal point of view because it does not affect me. There are numbers of young people who are suffering from this most distressing disease. By the courtesy of a medical practitioner in Perth I was given a copy of

the "Australian Medical Journal" for March last. I found that there has been a treatment used in the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, which has been fairly successful. It is an intravenous injection of a standardized vaccine. Quite a number of cases have been treated there successfully. I suggest to the Minister that the Health Department should introduce some of the vaccine here so that local patients might be treated.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: It is already obtainable.

Hon. J. E. DODD: The principal contention is that for those patients who cannot afford to be treated at home, the doctors have insisted upon their going into a hospital for 24 or 48 hours, because of the reaction. If the vaccine is here, however, so much the better. Perhaps if a little more public attention were directed to this matter by the Health Department, so that those who are suffering could know about it, it would be very much better. I now come to the question of land values taxation, and to a more uniform basis of classification as well as taxation. I was very pleased to read the last report of the Commissioner of Taxation that was laid on the table of the House. This dealt fully with the conference held between the Federal and State Commissioners and road boards in regard to bringing about more uniformity in this matter. If the Commissioners are going on with this, it will do an immense amount of good. But the question is, are they going on with it? I am inclined to agree with what Mr. Sanderson often said, that officials talk a lot and write a lot, but there they stop. If they are going on with a uniform system of valuation and classification—Federal, State, and road board—we shall get a great deal of good out of it. The report is illuminating. The State Commissioner of Taxation states that when he took office after 15 years operation of the Act he found no means of arriving at the non-taxable value of land in the State, and very little means of arriving at the taxable value of land at all. He stated that returns were often called for by members of Parliament, both State and Federal, but that no information could be given. A very complete system of valuing and classifying land has been laid down. I am sure that if put into effect this would do a great deal of good. Many of us have been waiting for the introduction of the long promised Bill, which we thought would be submitted three years ago, giving municipalities the right to impose taxation on the unimproved value of land. I do not know why this has not been done. It has been asked for by the local bodies on many occasions. Mr. Colebatch promised it two years ago, but it is not yet here. When I read of the values of land in Perth, and the increased values of land around the City, I feel it is time that something in the direction of a better form of taxation than exists to-day was brought into force. Murray-street properties are now

valued at something like £400 per foot, and St. George's-terrace properties up to, and possibly exceeding, £300 per foot. Almost every public man who speaks on the migration scheme, or upon what is happening in Western Australia, draws attention to the increased value of land and to the probability of still further increases in a few years. Mr. Monger says that if the immigration scheme is a success it will greatly increase the value of farming lands. Probably, if Mr. Monger would go further he would refer to the increased value of City land, which must of course also go up. It is gratifying to know he recognises that the spending of money and the increase in population will add to the value of land. Mr. Colebatch said before he left the State that the value of land in the City must increase enormously owing to the demand on the part of business people. The large expenditure of public money that is going on in the State, and the settlement of new people must enhance the value of properties all over Western Australia. If we could only remedy some of the crushing taxation which is needlessly killing industries, and place a tax on the value of land we should do very much better than we are doing to-day. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.7]: I congratulate the Leader of the House upon attaining Ministerial rank. I am sure he will do credit to his office and that he carries the good wishes of all members of this Chamber. I also congratulate Mr. Kirwan upon his election as Chairman of Committees. The hon. member has had previous experience as Chairman of Committees in the House of Representatives, and I feel certain he will carry out his duties in a manner creditable both to the State and himself. The Speech is the most empty I have yet read.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is not so much what it said, as what it intended.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is no question but that it requires the efforts of everyone to cause the State to go ahead. Sir James Mitchell is a very optimistic gentleman and bristling with energy. If his energy could be harnessed it would mean a wonderful thing for the State, but it is just as difficult to harness his energy as it would be to harness the waves of the sea.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is a bit wavy in places.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: References have been made to the Premier in this and another place, as well as by a section of the Press and the public. One would think that he is the one and only man who can pull this State out of its present trouble. We have had some years of his administration, but I can see very little improvement as a result of it. This worship, which is equalled only by people in Eastern countries who worship idols, is beyond my comprehension.

What has Sir James done to deserve all this?

Hon. H. Stewart: Increased taxation, for one thing!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Quite so. Even the so-called Bolshevik State of Queensland cannot equal Western Australia in that direction. I do not altogether agree with the application of the term "Bolshevik" to Queensland. Many alterations have been brought about by the Labour Government of that State which reflect great credit upon them, and have resulted in much good to Queensland. This constant bolstering up and praising of Sir James has got him into the position of feeling that everything is right with the State, and that it is on the high road to success, notwithstanding the deficit. He is egotistical enough to think he is the only man who can put things right.

Hon. J. Cornell: He may not have been consulted as to whether he should be called the joss of Western Australia.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: During the debate I made an interjection. A representative of a goldfields province said that there was no reference in the Speech to the mining industry. I interjected that Mr. Colebatch did not write the Speech on this occasion. The Leader of the House replied that he was not aware that Mr. Colebatch had ever written the Speech, that he did not know he had even done so unless some Cabinet secret had been let out. I would remind members that at a public gathering, at which the Minister for Education was present, the Minister for Agriculture spoke very strongly on the matter. It is from that source I have taken my cue. I do not say I know that Mr. Colebatch wrote the Speeches, but the Minister for Agriculture said he would be missing in that direction.

Hon. J. Cornell: He only referred to Mr. Colebatch in an editorial capacity.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: He gave it a literary flavour.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Potter referred to the wonderful chain of swamps between Jandakot and Fremantle, and asserted that nothing had been done to make use of them during the past 90 years. Some hon. members take up the position that people did not know the value of these swamps many years ago. Of course, they knew it. Their trouble was the same trouble that exists to-day. Where are the markets for the produce of these swamps? Mr. Potter went on to say that swamps lying adjacent to the metropolitan area would have all their products absorbed by the market that exists in and around the City. Such a statement would be humorous if it were not so serious.

Hon. H. Stewart: Cabbages at 1s. a bag!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Potter cannot have seriously considered the question. It is ridiculous to put forward such a suggestion.

Hon. J. Cornell: Cabbages are 37s. a bag in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: On the Peel Estate and in other parts of Western Australia it is impossible to grow cabbages and other vegetables except at the time when the market is over-supplied. Mr. Potter eulogises the Peel Estate. I once had the temerity to speak in a derogatory manner of the Peel Estate and group settlements. That was last January. I was criticised by a section of the Press and by members of this and another Chamber, as well as by numbers of people in the City. Some went so far as to say that I was a "doubting Thomas," and one of the strongest references to my attitude was that I was a "traitor to the country." I take this credit to myself, however, that while I have been a member of the Legislative Council, no man has been more sincere than I in the desire to help the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are not charged with insincerity, so why do you want to defend yourself?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: When reference is made to my being a traitor to the country, it amounts to the same thing. I do not adopt that attitude without some knowledge of the question under discussion. The position at the Peel Estate to-day is even worse than it was last January. A tremendous amount of money has been spent there and with what success? The Peel Estate is drifting on towards the end that Kendenup has reached, and if the Government do not take the matter in hand that is where the whole scheme will finish.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: The Government have a deeper pocket than the Kendenup people.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is the unfortunate part; it is a mere waste of public money.

The Minister for Education: Do you say that the development of the Peel Estate is a waste of public money?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, above a reasonable amount.

The Minister for Education: In what way?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Because the estate will not return anything. When an estate is over-capitalised, the extra expenditure represents a waste of public money and the Government are getting very close to the over-capitalisation of the Peel Estate now. It is all very well while the men are receiving 10s. a day and are engaged in drainage and other works. If those men are thrown on their blocks and are asked to make a decent living for themselves, hon. members will very soon see but few people there. It has been said that my attitude is wrong and that we must bolster up our population by means of migration. What is the good of bolstering up our population when the work is proceeding along lines which mean that inevitably the crash will come later on. This will be a retrograde step, because it will reflect upon the interests of the State as well.

Hon. H. Stewart: Have many men been put off at the Peel Estate?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, 42 men have walked off.

Hon. H. Stewart: Out of what number?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not know the exact number there. There is, of course, a fair number there, but once the daily payments are stopped, look at the position the unfortunate people will be in. Figures were given the other day which showed that some £400,000 had been spent on the Peel Estate. I am led to believe that the expenditure represents a great deal more than that sum and I hope the Leader of the House will supply us with something authentic about the expenditure that has been incurred there. Surely we should know what expenditure has been incurred on this Estate.

The Minister for Education: You will know everything so far as I am concerned.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is pleasing to hear that statement. If the appointment of the hon. gentleman to his present high position means that we will get such information, something will have been achieved.

The PRESIDENT: If the hon. member will pardon me, I would ask him to address members as "hon. members" and not to use the term "hon. gentleman." There is no doubt that they are entitled to be described as honourable gentlemen, but the hon. member should remember that under our rules, he should refer to them as "hon. members."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: When we are told that the State has already incurred an obligation of £400,000 on this one scheme, it is reasonable that we should mark time and have a thorough inquiry into the whole subject. What is the use of going on as at present? That is the big drawback that characterises the Premier and his work. He possesses big ideas and has plenty of energy and ability, but he never completes his schemes. That is the position we have to face. One man cannot carry the whole burden of the affairs of a State like Western Australia. This is such a big scheme to handle that the Premier should have some assistance to enable him to carry it on. There is no doubt that, in the history of Western Australia, we have not had a man in public life who has worked harder than the present Premier, Sir James Mitchell, or a man who has been more sincere about the work he takes in hand. We have had no man who has been a greater Western Australian. But why does he not adopt a different attitude and appoint someone to help him in his heavy task.

Hon. J. Cornell: Has he not plenty of departmental officers?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, but I am of the opinion that he wants the assistance of experienced men in addition.

Hon. J. Cornell: What do you suggest?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I suggest the appointment of practical men who know the position and then, instead of having chaos as exists at the Peel Estate to-day, we would have development proceeding along sound lines.

Hon. J. Cornell: Would you have a board?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, we could have a board or several local boards.

Hon. J. Cornell: I read something like that yesterday!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But that was a different subject. At the Peel Estate we have some 80,000 acres of land and we are told that 20,000 acres of that area represents good swamp land. I have not inspected all the swamps, but I know some of them and I know full well that all do not comprise good land. I would like to have information to let the House know what exact acreage of good land is obtainable there. If we have 60,000 acres of soil that is only moderately good, and it is valued at £2 per acre, and if we work on the basis of one million pounds, as stated by the Premier, we will find that the value of the balance works out at £44 per acre. What can be done with the land there to carry such a capitalisation?

Hon. J. Cornell: You will turn it into a cemetery soon.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It will have to be turned into something very profitable to carry that capitalisation. I hope my criticism on this occasion will be taken in the proper spirit and that some inquiry will be made into these matters. Parliament would be doing a service to the country if it decided to appoint a Royal Commission or some other body to inquire into the whole position. It is very necessary that this should be done. I do not adopt this attitude with a view to the criticism or abuse of the present Government, or of its head. I do not trouble how we are getting on politically, but I am troubled about the prosperity of Western Australia. We have a similar position in regard to the group settlement scheme which is on a much larger scale than that operating at the Peel Estate. I am indeed sorry to read in the Governor's Speech that the number of group settlements has been increased to 64. I had thought when I raised my voice in January last that there would be some slackening in the establishment of groups and that rapid progress would not continue. It was to achieve such an end that I spoke in January. I wanted a halt with a view to reckoning up our position, so that we might have a stocktaking. My attitude regarding the South-West is that we have wonderfully good land there awaiting development. It will cost something to develop, of course, but ultimately the State will be well recompensed. As I have said on many occasions, the development of the South-West should be carried ahead slowly. The present Government, however, have rushed on with the establishment of 64 groups, instead of starting with ten. Where are we going to finish? What money will it cost to establish these groups, and where is our success to be achieved? It is hard indeed for any hon. member to stand up in his place in this Chamber and criticise these things. For my part, my action is taken merely in the interests of the State, and I feel that I cannot sit down without voicing my protest and doing my level best to put things right. I say, Mr. President, most emphatically, that things are not right at present.

The Minister for Education: What is wrong with the groups?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I will tell the Minister what is wrong before I have finished. Let the Government give us a statement of expenditure in connection with these groups.

Hon. H. Stewart: That information has been asked for.

The Minister for Education: You will get that information when I reply to Mr. Stewart.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Government should go further in furnishing us with information so that we may have a guide and that members of another place as well, may know where we stand. Let Parliament know the capitalisation on each of the blocks in these groups, the cost of fencing, clearing, the erection of homes and so forth, the number of cows to be supplied to the settlers, and the cost of them. I asked for this information last January and I have not received it to-day. We want to know the whole capital cost, including everything on these groups, and then we will have some idea of what will occur. Day after day we read in the Press paragraphs about the Premier displaying some wonderful potatoes or some huge cabbages grown at one or other of the centres throughout the State. The Governor's Speech contained a reference to an export market for our potatoes being opened up in the Eastern States. I would like to hear the views of the potato growers of the South-West on that particular matter. What chance have we of opening up an export market with the Eastern States?

Hon. J. Duffell: People are paying £28 a ton for new potatoes now.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What quantities can be sold at that figure?

Hon. E. Rose: The growers got £20,000 in six weeks.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: When I was Honorary Minister for Agriculture, I studied the potato question and I know that there is no greater gamble than that embarked upon by the potato grower. No settler will grow potatoes with a view to opening up a trade with the Eastern States. They cannot afford to do that. Rather is the position the other way about. The potato merchants in the Eastern States are prepared to ship potatoes to Western Australia at £4 10s. per ton or at even a smaller figure if necessary, in order to get rid of their surplus stocks. Our growers cannot compete with this price. We cannot ask our settlers to go in for potato growing in the South-West but rather to concentrate on dairying.

Hon. A. Burvill: What about potatoes as a side line?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What is the good of talking of potatoes as a side line? The hon. member does not realise the extent covered by the 64 groups or the quantities necessary to be grown to provide a living for those established on the groups.

Hon. H. Stewart: Are they not concentrating on dairying?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not know where they are doing so. I do not know that many cows have been supplied to them

or where the cows are to come from. I stressed this point last January and I do not know of anything having been done yet. I know that the State has been cut up into several areas where the different breeds of cattle are to be encouraged. I have not heard of any big increase in the number of dairy cattle so that the group settlers can be supplied.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: The Minister for Agriculture made a statement about that the other day.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You have been telling us of what is going to happen when the cows come home.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: One very strong supporter of the scheme, a member of Parliament too, visited the groups just after Christmas and came back bubbling over with enthusiasm. He spoke of the wonderful success of the groups and said he never expected to see anything like them. I asked, "What about markets for the produce?" He replied, "I saw cabbages weighing 12lbs. and they were beautiful." I asked, "Where are they going to dispose of their cabbages?" and his reply was, "That is the rotten part of it." This grower sent half a ton of cabbages to Kalgoorlie and secured practically no return.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is that the member who viewed the North-West through the port-hole of a ship and gave his impressions of it?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The hon. member is seeking too much information. Some of the tradespeople in the South-West are ardent supporters of group settlement and the same applies to the business men in the city, but they have never considered it seriously. They have considered only what trade they are likely to gain, and that is a selfish way of looking at it. What they gain now may be taken from them later on. They should consider the question as it affects the State rather than from the viewpoint of personal gain.

The Minister for Education: They have the greatest faith in the scheme.

Hon. H. Stewart: And not much to back it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I know several people in the South-West who at present are preparing to dispose of their businesses while business is good.

The Minister for Education: That is always the case.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Of course it is; they are looking at the other side of the picture. If the Government had contented themselves with establishing ten groups and had secured markets for the produce, they would then have been in a good position to start another ten, and so the scheme would have been carried out on sound principles. At present, however, the Government have 64 groups started. I hope they will not establish any more. Let them call a halt and confine their efforts to putting the groups already in existence on a sound basis. The Government have started on



wrong lines by paying the members of the groups 10s. per day, and I understand it is intended to continue that payment for 12 months after the settlers go on their own blocks. If this is wrong, I should like to be corrected.

The Minister for Education: It is wrong.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am under the impression it was announced by the Premier. Anyhow, the principle is wrong. I know of no country where such a Utopian idea has been tried. Fancy paying men 10s. per day to go into a group to improve virgin land. We know something of the results of groups in the Eastern States, and should have profited by their experience, but here the Government are going one better by paying the members of the groups 10s. per day. The work of preparing the groups should have been done by contract. Then it would have been done at a reasonable price, and the settlers taking up the blocks would have had a reasonable chance of making good. There is no doubt that the costs will have to be written down. Look at the amount of money the State will have to find. Mr. Lovekin estimated the expenditure at £16,000,000. I doubt whether £16,000,000 will be enough. The expenditure does not stop with the preparation of the groups. Only last week the Premier was reported as having said that he hoped private enterprise would establish butter factories, and that, if private enterprise did not do so, the Government would. There we have an indication of an extension of Government enterprise; the Government must do something to carry these settlers on. There are not the profits in butter factories that the Premier seems to imagine. In the early days the butter industry of Victoria was established only by the payment of a bonus and it was established on old country that had been used for grazing for years. Any expert will tell us that such is the best country for dairying, but here the Government are attempting it on new country. I think the responsibility of providing butter factories will certainly fall on the Government. Now I come to a matter in which Mr. Cornell may be more interested than in group settlements—the wonderful new discovery in the Eastern portion of this State. On opening my newspaper the other morning, I read under big headlines about a new wheat province. Later on I found it referred to 3,000,000 acres of wonderful wheat lands. First of all the Premier announced that some of the surveyors had given this information. Following on that, the Minister for Education journeyed to Esperance, leaving Perth on Tuesday and reaching Esperance on Friday, and he was then in a position to tell the people not only of Western Australia but of the world that we had suddenly discovered 3,000,000 acres of wonderful wheat land.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not quite fair to the Minister for Agriculture. He did not pose as the discoverer; he re-discovered it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I advocated the building of the Esperance railway. At that time the Premier, who now sees such wonderful virtue in that country, could not say anything too bad about it. Now he goes back to it. A good portion of the country for a fair distance eastward of the railway will be good wheat growing country. I am not speaking of things I have been told; I am speaking from a knowledge of country through which I have travelled. Three million acres, however, will take in a lot of country. If we are going to grow wheat at Zanthus, why not grow it at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie?

Hon. J. Cornell: We are growing it there.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But not on a commercial basis. There is a fair area of land eastward of the railway, but beyond that is a belt of country with a very scanty rainfall. Eyre, situated in the Bight, has a rainfall of 11 inches. Part of the country referred to is salmon gum country, and salmon gum predominates on the goldfields. Much of this country has broken granite through it. Close to the coast the country has been stocked for years and with what success? Time and again it has proved disastrous. One would think that there had never been any attempt to grow crops down there. Attempts have been made. The English syndicate, which years ago had the Madura station, tried to grow crops, but got only one crop in five years. Talbot, of Mundrabilla, has tried to grow crops on excellent land right at the foot of cliffs, and his experience has been the same. At Fraser's Range alone has success been attained, and that is on the Esperance side and towards the belt where I say wheat can be successfully grown. Further east, however, the Government should be cautious. We do not want another rush to that area such as we have had to the South-West.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: But the rush to the South-West continues.

The Minister for Education: And will continue.

Hon. J. Cornell: Yours is a policy of despair.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is a policy of common sense. Why not develop the South-West on sound lines? Most of the land east of Esperance is a good chocolate soil, but the rainfall is deficient. The same applies to the goldfields where there is beautiful soil but insufficient rainfall, and it is necessary to have the rain in the growing season. The governing factors are rainfall and transport; the former is scanty and the latter means great expense.

Hon. J. Cornell: Has the coast no influence as against the goldfields?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Practically none at all. It is 11-inch country.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Is not that enough?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: At Eyre the rainfall is 11 inches, but further back it decreases rapidly, and it is only 15 miles from Eyre where so many unsuccessful attempts have been made to grow crops. That land, how-

ever, can be turned to good account. A strip of 70 miles from the coast could be cut into 100,000-acre blocks for sheep and horse breeding. On account of the limestone, this is excellent country for horse breeding. Water can be obtained at depths ranging from 250 to 400 feet, and so this country could be turned to very good account. In time to come, with improved methods, it may be possible to grow wheat there, but the Government should not rush wildly into a scheme of putting settlers there at present. Let them settle the lands adjacent to the railway where we know wheat can be grown, but not attempt to carry agriculture too far east where the risks are so great. A very important question affecting our wheat areas generally is that of water supplies. Excepting in very wet seasons difficulty has been experienced for a number of years owing to water shortage, and the Government have been put to huge expense in carting water on the railways. Something must be done sooner or later to overcome this difficulty. I suggest that a survey be made of the wheat areas to ascertain whether the goldfields scheme can be extended to these areas and at what cost. Such a survey need not entail much expense. The people in the Yorkkrakine area have for years clamoured for information as to whether it would be practicable to extend the goldfields scheme to them. They cannot stock; they have no water for the stock, and it is that that is crippling the farmers and holding up operations to-day. It is only lately that the report has been made available, which shows that it is not a practical proposal to extend water to these places; the work would be too costly. The people in question have waited three or four years to be connected up with the scheme, and it is only now that they find that they must make a commencement in another direction in order to secure for themselves a water supply. If they had known the position three or four years ago, a start could have been made then. Unfortunately, we are familiar with the procrastination of departments and the extent to which the community are at times compelled to suffer in consequence. Why not make a complete survey and let the settlers know if it is practicable to connect up with the scheme? Water supply means everything to the farmers—it means the difference between failure and success, and something should be done in the direction of helping them to establish success. Another matter about which I desire to say a few words relates to the State trading concerns. I would not have been so keen about referring to the subject, but for the fact that last session this Chamber carried a motion empowering the Government to dispose of the trading concerns. That motion, unfortunately, received scant consideration from another place. After all, what did it mean? It simply gave the Government power to dispose of the trading concerns. Apparently the Government did not want that authority. I can come to no

other conclusion. The National Government were pledged to get rid of the trading concerns.

Hon. J. Cornell: And to convert leaseholds into freeholds.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What has been done in the direction of disposing of the trading concerns? A little was done during the regime of the Lefroy Government. But since that time there is every appearance of these enterprises having been extended. A great many of them were not paying, and the Government should have seized the opportunity of endeavouring to induce another place to endorse the action of this Chamber. One or two of the enterprises have been closed down, but they were only small affairs, and the others have been carried on, and in some cases extended. I have begun to wonder whether the Premier is not, after all, in accord with the principle of State trading. I may be justified in coming to the conclusion that he is now a keen supporter of that principle.

The Minister for Education: Who, the Premier? Certainly not.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have not heard of any attempt to dispose of the trading concerns. Let me quote what the Premier had to say on the subject of State trading in 1914, when he was sitting in opposition. These are a few of his remarks, made on the Address-in-reply in that year—

The people are wondering where is the Labour platform which says "borrow for reproductive purposes only." Are the trams reproductive? Are the wretched steamers, the sawmills, the brickworks, the butcher shops, the motor cars, and a hundred and one other small things reproductive works in the broad sense?

Later he goes on to say—

Timber is dearer to-day than before the State mills were established. Government competition has been beneficial to the business man. The competition of the Government is laughed at, and business men go rejoicing on their way and are able to get a better price than before the Government came on the scene.

That was how Sir James Mitchell spoke when sitting in opposition in 1914. To-day, being the Premier of the State, he seems to be keen on continuing the trading concerns. I wonder what has made them so popular. It cannot be the result of their operations, because almost without exception there have been heavy losses, and those losses have assisted to increase the deficit. When the Labour Government established the trading concerns, we were told that one of the objects was to control prices and to assist the community to get the various commodities at fair rates. This was done for a little while, but I am afraid now there is not one of these concerns that is out of the combine which we know exists. It does appear now that in recent years the State trading concerns, instead of protecting the public, have

been the means of further increasing the price of commodities, and this had to be done so that a profit might be shown.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You have had five years of unsympathetic administration.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That cannot be said of George.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Are we to continue these trading concerns? Is there any justification for their continuance? I say, no, but the Government apparently think there is. We have not yet heard the opinion of the Leader of the House, and we well remember the views held by his predecessor, Mr. Colebatch, before he became associated with the Ministry. Mr. Colebatch denounced the State trading concerns in strong language. It certainly looks as if the trading concerns were not the right thing to carry on while a Labour Government were in power, but that there is no harm in their being retained by a National Government. State trading is not the prerogative of the Government of a country. Governments were never intended to embark on trading enterprises. I understand that the latest move of the present Government is to assume control of the Northam butter and bacon factory.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Don't say that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I understand that is so. For three years, while I was a Minister, my brain was puzzled in trying to get rid of a white elephant, the freezing works at Albany. Now the Government propose to take over a Northam concern.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why did you not get rid of the Wyndham Meat Works when you were Minister?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I ask the hon. member, when the opportunity presents itself, to tell the House how it would have been possible to get rid of these works during the period of the war. I would like to know also what chance there is of getting rid of them to-day. The Wyndham works are peculiarly placed. I wonder if the hon. member has really gone into the position at Wyndham?

Hon. A. Lovekin: A loss of £457,000 has been capitalised.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so, but we cannot ask the Government to give these works away.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They could have been got rid of the year before last.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We know, in connection with the Wyndham works, that the loss in the first place was brought about by gross waste of money in construction. At least £260,000 was wasted in this direction.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And the rest.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There has been a good deal wasted since that time. The Wyndham question is a big one.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You keep it going to-day, when the capital is £1,200,000.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is another important question which has been exercising the minds of the Government and the Perth Municipal Council for a number of years—that of the establishment of markets. I

went into the subject six years ago, and I found on record that the Perth council had appointed a committee to investigate the matter. The investigations were carried on for a long period, and I kept writing for information. Nothing was done, however, until last session, when a Bill was submitted to Parliament. That Bill did not find favour. There seems to have been failure on both sides, and on that account I would suggest to the Minister that he should endeavour to summon a round table conference of all those concerned in the hope of arriving at some decision.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is not the City Council solvent enough to establish its own markets?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The City Council must have legislative authority.

Hon. J. Cornell: If that is all they need, let them have it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If a Bill on similar lines to that introduced last session is again submitted, it will not be acceptable to another place. In the meantime consumers and producers are losing money, and the people are being exploited. The existing markets are as bad as they can possibly be. Modern markets are required with cool chambers attached. I trust it will be possible to bring about a round table conference in the hope of arriving at a decision.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: What is wrong with private enterprise tackling the markets?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is not possible to get private enterprise to spend such a large sum of money. Moreover, private enterprise would require control, which the authorities would not be prepared to give. Another subject to which I desire to make reference is the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. Last session this House carried a motion dealing with the matter, and the members who spoke expressed strong views against the proposal to build that line. They asked for a halt to be called until a proper investigation was made. The motion went on to another place in all good faith, but the other place absolutely ignored it. Is this Chamber to be ignored? Are we to sit here debating questions only to see them received with the scantiest courtesy when sent along to another Chamber? Do the Government take this House seriously? If not, the Government will find a very strong stand taken by this Chamber. In all sincerity members of the Legislative Council wanted that railway project inquired into, and we are entitled to have inquiry made. However, the matter was not even considered in another Chamber; it was simply struck off the Notice Paper.

Hon. H. Stewart: It was a private member's motion.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Government were responsible, though a private member might have used his influence. To treat a motion in such a way is to flout this House. I will not discuss the railway now, except to say that its construction would add greatly to the loss which the system is making. Surely the House is entitled to more respect

from the Government of the country. There is a very important line—the Ucarty-Yorkkrakine line—which is years overdue, and which I recommend to the earnest attention of the Government. In the district which that line would serve, men are carting from 20 to 22 miles. The district shows wonderful development and the line is one of the first which should receive consideration from the Government. As soon as the survey is complete the line should be put through. During the time I was in charge of the wheat scheme, I continually had deputations asking for stacking sites and contract carting in that district. I believe a certain organisation is about to establish contract carting there, though I fear that the system will not be continued beyond a year. Undoubtedly the Ucarty-Yorkkrakine railway would pay. It is a great pity that the Dowerin-Merredin line was constructed so far away. Had it been differently located it would have saved the expense of putting another line in between.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Dowerin-Merredin railway is one of the few lines that pay.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It would have paid equally well if it had been built a few miles further in. Mr. Potter, in the course of his speech said he was pleased to note the application of science to our soils. As one interested in this subject I am puzzled to know where the hon. member found that science had been applied to our soils. I hope the day is not far distant when it will take place. At present, however, there seems to be no attempt in that direction. The yield from our wheat areas, for instance, is not what it should be, nor what it could be if we had the necessary scientific advice. About 1911 three Agricultural Commissioners were appointed. One of them is still with us, but not in his original position of Commissioner for the Wheat Belt. He is now Director of Agriculture, in which position his wheat experience is not worth anything at all to the farmers of this State as it cannot be made available. If that gentleman is useful to Western Australia it is in advising Western Australian farmers with regard to wheat growing. There are other officers who could fill the position of Director of Agriculture, and I think it is a great mistake to keep Mr. Sutton tied up to the office. True, Mr. Sutton is engaged on very creditable work now, urging farmers to fallow and improve their system of farming. That means a lot, but it does not get us over the difficulty with regard to the production from certain lands. There are in this State lands which, after yielding 16, 18 or 20 bushels per acre for a period of years cannot be made to produce more than 8 or 10 bushels. The question will be asked, why? We want the scientists to tell us that, and to tell us what to do with our soils. It is quite an easy matter by the application of science to our soils to increase our average yield for the State by three bushels per acre. On the present acreage, and with reasonable prices, that would mean an increase of a million sterling or more over the present returns. Considering that we are only in our

infancy as regards wheat growing, that is a large amount, more especially as it would be practically all profit except for the cost of handling and of bags. Such an increase would mean a great deal to the farmers, who would be enabled to improve their properties and so produce more revenue for the State. What is the present position as regards the Agricultural Department? We have an Agricultural Department which ten years ago was expending almost as much as it is expending today. There is only a difference of £10,000 between the department's expenditure for the past year and its expenditure for 1915-16.

The Minister for Education: What about Agricultural Bank advances?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Those advances do not improve the yield. They help the farmers to clear their land, but we have to make use of the land when it has been cleared. Take another Department—the Education Department—for instance. That Department in 1915-16 spent £317,656, and for this year its expenditure will be £600,000.

The Minister for Education: Not as much as that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Minister for Education is correcting his Premier. The Premier gave the figure publicly.

The Minister for Education: The expenditure does not amount to that at present.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am merely quoting figures given by the Premier at a banquet at York. Say the expenditure is a little less than that, and still there is an increase of very nearly 100 per cent.

The Minister for Education: Education is important.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, but which is more important, to bolster up the Education Department and train students for positions which they cannot secure here, but must go to other countries to find, or to hand over a little additional money to the Agricultural Department? Take the district high schools; what is the use of them without an agricultural course to finish with?

The Minister for Education: We are going to have that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We should have had it long ago.

The Minister for Education: You are never satisfied.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I cannot be satisfied with the way things are going. The encouragement given for establishing the district high schools was that we did not want country children to get in touch with the cities; but a child coming into the towns from the country will have a liking created for city life just as much as if he came to Perth.

Hon. H. Stewart: Many people will not agree with you on that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Possibly not. In my opinion, however, high schools are of no use unless there is an agricultural college established for finishing. A family starts off by teaching John, aged 7 or 8 years, music; and Tom, aged nine or ten years, drawing. In a

few years' time the parents suddenly discover that the children are not adapted for these arts, and will never be a success at them. Similarly, our Education Department are trying to carry a large number of children on to things for which they are not adapted. Look at the amount which the University costs!

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not use the Avondale Estate for an agricultural college?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is not a matter of securing an estate, but of establishing an agricultural college. Personally, I did my utmost to get the Government to establish such a college, but my proposal was not sympathetically received. Now, at the eleventh hour, and in a dying session, something is to be put on the Estimates for an agricultural college. It could not be done before. Surely if we expend £600,000 per annum on education we can spend an additional £12,000 per annum on the scientific side of the Agricultural Department with a view to getting the best out of our soils. Until we do we shall not be as successful as we ought to be; in fact, certain districts cannot become successful at all until we get such scientific advice.

Hon. H. Stewart: But you must get the local knowledge as well.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Certainly. But what chance have I personally of treating my soil on a scientific basis? And neither is one going to get students from the University to fill such a position satisfactorily. Until scientists are appointed for the purpose, we shall not succeed in that direction.

Hon. H. Stewart: What do you want a scientist appointed for—for entomology or what?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We want advice as to the various sections of science, and more particularly scientific advice on the different kinds of soil. It would possibly cost £10,000 or £12,000 a year, but that would be a very small amount in comparison with the return. I hope our new Leader will take up the matter seriously and see what can be done. I was in charge of the Agricultural Department for three years, and I can tell our friend that the one department which is of supreme importance to this State has been starved for a number of years and is being starved to-day. Since we have a Premier who is so optimistic, and so keen on land settlement, do let us use our utmost endeavours to ensure that wiser counsels shall prevail.

Hon. H. Stewart: Does the Premier block that additional expenditure?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I cannot go so far as the hon. member's question suggests. If the hon. member cannot read between the lines, he must not expect me to tell him. The time is ripe for a drastic alteration, an alteration in regard to the provision of funds for the Agricultural Department.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [7.30]: I desire to congratulate Mr. Ewing on his appointment as Minister for Education and Leader of the House. In this the Premier has made a very popular selection. Mr. Ewing has a difficult position to fill in following the ex-Leader of the House, but I have no doubt he will carry out his duties to the satisfaction of all. At the same time I would congratulate Mr. Kirwan on his elevation to the position of Chairman of Committees. In him unquestionably we have a man who will fill the position with honour. I desire to criticise the Premier on the building of the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. The Commissioner for Railways is to be congratulated on what he has done during the past 12 months. He has reduced the railway deficit from nearly half a million to about £62,000. That is very creditable, but I am afraid that if the Premier persists with the construction of the Narrogin-Dwarda railway he will make things so impossible for the Commissioner that when the line is built there will be an increased loss of at least £100,000 per annum. I hope the Leader of the House will use his influence with the Government to stop the building of that line. On the 24th January last I moved in the House the following motion—

That in the opinion of the House the Government should instruct the Railway Advisory Board to furnish an up-to-date report on the advisability of constructing the Dwarda-Narrogin railway, or to recommend alternative routes for the purpose of shortening the distance between the Great Southern districts and the metropolitan area so as to serve the greatest number of people and the best interests of the State as well; and also to report where, in their opinion, the line from Dwarda should proceed to, if not constructed to Narrogin.

Although that motion was carried without dissent, the Premier has taken no notice of it. My idea in moving the motion was to make the way easy for the Premier because, knowing the country as I do, I realised that if an up-to-date report were made, no advisory board could recommend the construction of the line. The building of that line was recommended 12 or 13 years ago, when there were arguments in favour of it. Since that time, or about nine years ago, both Houses of Parliament have agreed to the construction of the line. The distance to Narrogin via Spencer's Brook is 162 miles, and the distance if that line be constructed via Dwarda will be 143 miles, or a reduction of 19 miles. But as the grades between Pinjarra and Dwarda run to one in 30, the Railway Department will not send one ton of stuff over that line. The Commissioner of Railways will send the stuff via Spencer's Brook, as to-day. But he would have to charge on the shorter route, and so would lose 19 miles of railrage freight on stuff going to Narrogin, and southward to Albany. The

same would apply to all the branch lines between Narrogin and Albany, and also as far back as Cuballing, because the shorter route would be via Dwarda. The department can send the stuff on any line for their own convenience, but can only charge the customer the shortest mileage route. So, if the line be built the Commissioner of Railways, instead of being able to reduce his annual loss, will have another £100,000 piled on to him. When, 12 or 13 years ago, the advisory board recommended the building of the Narrogin railway, there was a good deal of congestion on the line between Narrogin and Brookton, a length of about 40 miles. The whole of the wheat grown in the Dumbleyung area, and all round Wagin, came up that line, and the advisory board could see that when those wheat producing areas got going, one line would not be sufficient to carry the produce. So they recommended a continuation of the Dwarda line into Narrogin, as part of an ultimate short cut to Albany from Perth. Since that report was made, the Bunbury harbour has been deepened. Big sea-going boats in search of wheat can now come into Bunbury. Furthermore, the railway line has been built from Wagin to Bowelling, which makes a direct line from Wagin to Bunbury. So the congestion is no longer on the line between Narrogin and Brookton, and the argument upon which the advisory board recommended the construction of the Narrogin-Dwarda railway no longer exists. The other day, on noticing in the Press that the Premier had promised to build the line to Narrogin, I arranged an interview with him. I pointed out to him that all I asked for was an up-to-date report by the advisory board. I do not want to take the business out of the hands of that board, but when we construct a line I like to know that the report upon which it is constructed is up to date. A report made 13 years ago is obsolete. Moreover, to-day we have learned the value of salmon gum and gimlet country; that it is the best wheat-growing land we have. Thirteen years ago we did not know that. It materially affects the route. When I pointed out to the Premier that all I wanted was an up-to-date report, he said in his light and airy fashion, "We have plenty of reports." "But," I said, "they are from 12 to 13 years old." He said, "No, we have a report made about two years ago." "But," I said, "that was not a report on the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. The board was asked to report on a line from Dwarda northwards, and they reported in favour of the construction of the line from Dwarda north-east to a point named Codjattotine." That line, if constructed, would be in the best interests of the State, for it would open up new country and serve a lot of people wanting a railway. But the Government do not propose to build that line. Their proposal is to build another line in a south-easterly direction to Narrogin, at an esti-

mated cost of £136,000. That is the estimate. I do not know how much it will cost if the present costs are to be maintained. Last winter, when the unemployed difficulty was rather bad, the Government put men on to construct that line. Those men chopped down trees over 95 acres or 96 acres, at a cost of £850. The farmers' cost for doing similar work in that locality is 10s. per acre, or £48 for the 96 acres.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Is that for clearing?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: No, merely for chopping down the trees. The figures seem astounding. If the line is going to cost as much in proportion through the day labour system, it will not be constructed for £136,000. The Government promised to build the line. They ignored this House which unanimously carried a motion, and ignored another request for a select committee moved in another place. It seems to me that the Premier is taking what he thinks is the line of least resistance. I think he will alter his opinion before the line is constructed. Such a good case has been made out against the construction of the line that I feel I am justified, in the interests of the State, in taking up this stand. If the line is constructed, the Commissioner of Railways will not send a single ton of stuff from Perth or from Fremantle. It will not open up any new first-class land. It will not serve anyone, because every settler on the route is already served and is within 15 miles of a railway. Most of the settlers are within 10 miles of two or more railways. There is the Great Southern railway running north and south, the Narrogin-Collie line running east and west, and the Dwarda railway at Dwarda, and its continuation from Dwarda would run into the corner between the other two lines. This line was passed by Parliament about nine years ago, and would probably have been built but for the war. Had it been built before the Bunbury harbour was deepened and before the line was built from Wagin, we could not have blamed any Government for doing so. Seeing all the arguments in favour of the line have now been eliminated, why make this great mistake if it can be avoided? Would any member of this House suggest building the Bullfinch railway, which was recommended by the advisory board, if the mines had been closed down beforehand? Any Government would have been justified in repealing an Act of Parliament in such a case, although many people contend that Acts of Parliament should never be ignored. The same view should be taken of the line I am now discussing. If it were continued about 12 miles north-east from Dwarda it would serve a large number of people who have been settled there for many years. But in the interests of the State I cannot support a line going the other way. I wish to refer to some of the tactics which have been employed to compel the Government to go on with the line. We have read a lot in the papers about unemployment at Narrogin. That is simply a rose

designed, chiefly by the municipal council at Narrogin and other public bodies, to induce the Government to start the line. I was at Narrogin when a rally of the unemployed was called in the park on Sunday morning. Only 15 men turned up.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Was there any unemployment there?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Not worth mentioning, for some of the 15 men already had jobs.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You will find 15 unemployed in any town in the Great Southern.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Narrogin ought to have about 15 unemployed at any time so that the men might be used for odd jobs. I notice in this morning's paper that the unemployed position at Narrogin is all right. The Government had some railway constructions to the southwards and asked for 12 men from Narrogin, but they obtained only two. The people of Narrogin have been promised that the line will be built. The whole thing was worked up to persuade the Government to start it.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You had better move the motion again, and use better arguments.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Public bodies at Narrogin are wrath with me for taking this action.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You are supported here.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I realise that if another motion came before another place it would also be supported. I have tried to make the way easy for the Premier. Some 12 months ago a deputation from Narrogin asked him to hurry on with the work. Knowing this I talked the matter over with the member for Pingelly, who tabled the motion on the Thursday night for the appointment of a select committee to deal with the question. My reason for making the suggestion was that when the deputation came before the Premier on the following day he would be in a position to say diplomatically that the question was now in the hands of Parliament and was sub-judice.

Hon. J. Cornell: You have given the show away.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: We thought the Premier would do this, but evidently he did not see the point. When I moved the motion in this House I again thought I was making the way easy for the Premier, and that he would ask the advisory board during the recess to make a report, and then do what was best in the interests of the State. This, however, has not been done. I have been snubbed in the town in which I am living because I will not support a fifth railway to run into it. I do not mind being snubbed by a little coterie or by an unscrupulous politician.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You ought to regard that as an honour.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The greatest reward any public man can have is the knowledge that he has conscientiously and faithfully done his duty. I feel it my duty to emphasise this question, and I hope the Leader of the House

will insist upon his Government giving it the attention it so well deserves.

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

*House adjourned at 7.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 8th August, 1923.*

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAY RATES, BACON PIGS.

Mr. JOHNSTON (for Mr. Pickering) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that for the past 12 months a rate has existed for bacon pigs by which the consignor was enabled to load en route, from starting point to completion of loading—on branch lines only—the freight being charged from the farthest point, and that by these means the grower procured from the buyer a more favourable price for his products? 2, Has this rate been cancelled since the 1st August for the South-Western district? 3, Does this rate and system of loading still apply on branch lines in the Eastern district? 4, If so, on what lines? 5, What is the reason for preferential rates in favour of the Eastern districts as against the South-West?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Such a concession has been allowed since July, 1920, in certain localities. It is now in operation between Narrogin-Naremben, Wagin-Lake Grace, Kataanning-Nyabing, and Foggitt Jones' Siding, Bellevue. 2, The concession has never been in operation in the South-West district generally, but only between Busselton and Boyanup, Manjimup-Bridgetown, and Foggitt Jones' Siding, Bellevue. These sections were deleted from the list as from the 1st of July, 1923, on representations that the objects for which the concession was instituted had been fulfilled. 3 and 4, See No. 1. 5, The stimulation of pig breeding in certain defined localities.