

workers. Not long ago the principal mines in Kalgoorlie were turning out a ton of gold per month. They were fabulously wealthy. It is easy to see that the horse is out of the stable when he has got out, but we do not think so much about preventing him from getting out. At the time I speak of, if these people had put by a proportion of their earnings to provide for a rainy day, not only with regard to miners' phthisis but with regard to the duration of the industry, and had distributed some of the rich ore over the low grade stuff, there is no doubt the mines would have had a long life still before them. The industry would not have blown out as it has done.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It was all blown up in champagne.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: The miners who are suffering most from disease were those who, in the early days, were making the highest money. To-day the poor wretches are down and out. They rushed back into the smoke, and filth and the dirt to make a little more money. I do not know what they did with it. If they had had the foresight to take out insurance policies for a rainy day, they would have been much better off. I foresee a danger in an innovation of this kind. I see no difference between workers in mines who are rendered physically unfit for further work by disease and other workers who are also rendered unfit for work as a result of occupational diseases of another kind.

Hon. J. Cornell: Compensation is only paid by reason of a man having been in a certain class of work.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: If a man has been in any ordinary employment he will have the same moral right to consideration as the man who has worked in a mine. Both should have insured their lives in times of prosperity. Once the precedent is established every man with every other disease, and in danger of his life, has the same moral claims for support. We do not know, therefore, where this will end. I admire the intention of the Minister, but I see grave dangers ahead of him. With other members, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on attaining your high office. I hope you will live long to adorn it and I am sure you are eminently fitted for the position.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.45 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 12th August, 1926.*

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

### QUESTION—WHITBY FALLS HOSPITAL.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham): In view of the action of the board of visitors of the Hospital for the Insane in (a) directing the attention of the Minister that accommodation at the Whitby Falls Mental Hospital was not being sufficiently utilised; and (b) later interviewing the Minister on the subject and urging that more use should be made of this hospital, has action, giving effect to the recommendation of the board of visitors in respect to the added use of the Whitby Falls Mental Hospital, been taken? If not, will consideration be given?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM replied: The management of the Lunacy Department is in accord with the board of visitors in this matter, and as many patients as possible who, in the opinion of the hospital authorities, are fit and willing to go, are being sent to Whitby.

### QUESTION—ROAD CONSTRUCTION, FEDERAL AID.

Mr. ANGELO (for Mr. Stubbs) asked the Minister for Works: In view of the announcement that the Federal Aid Roads Bill had passed through the Federal Parliament, and in view of the importance to this State of the early construction of roads to absorb the unemployed, especially during the winter months, is it the intention of the Government to bring in the necessary legislation to ratify the agreement with the Commonwealth Government before the completion of the Address-in-reply debate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The full list of proposals from the road boards throughout the State have only just reached the Main Roads Board. It will now be necessary for the Main Roads Board to examine those proposals, and prepare a programme for submission to the Federal Government in Melbourne for their approval. It is expected that the local ratification Bill will be passed by the time the Federal Government's approval is received.

#### QUESTION—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Premier: When drawing up the Estimates for the coming financial year, will he see that the necessary adjustments are made to credit the Wyndham Meat Works with the £12,000, together with the interest charged against it, for an air compressor that has been installed at Fremantle?

The PREMIER replied: No, as the amount has not been charged against Wyndham Meat Works.

#### QUESTION—PERMANENT PAINT.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that a new type of paint has been evolved which when applied forms a permanent surface, thus abolishing the need for constant renewals? 2, If so, is he prepared, when supplies of this paint are available, to confer with his Ministers upon the advisability of utilising it, having regard to (i) the beneficial effect on the Treasury, (ii) the prolonged life of public buildings throughout the State?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, No.

#### QUESTION—STOCK INSPECTION, CARNARVON.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What is the name of the stock inspector employed by the Government in the Carnarvon district? 2, Does he use a Government motor car for his work? 3, If not, what are the travelling arrangements?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Mr. W. R. Willesee. 2, No. 3, The salary provided includes travelling allowance, and the officer finds his own means of transport.

#### QUESTION—PHTHISICAL MINERS, ALTERNATIVE WORK.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is a man, suffering from miner's phthisis or dust on the lungs, when advised to leave the mines, afforded help to re-establish himself in some other calling? 2, If so, is it a fact that C. Dorazzi has been offered work on the railway line at Esperance, which he rejected as unsuitable, partly because of the necessity for keeping two homes? 3, Can such men, without the necessary capital to accept farms, be placed on the group settlements, or be enabled to get lighter work on the coast?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The Government will endeavour to find such men employment in connection with the Norseman-Salmon Gums railway, and have also set apart an area of land between Norseman and Esperance specially for these men. The work of road clearing and water supply is now in hand, and money will be advanced on the most favourable terms by the Agricultural Bank for developmental purposes. 2, I have no such information. 3, Yes, provided they can produce a medical certificate that they are physically fit. There is no light work available on the coast.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. W. D. Johnson (Guildford) on the ground of urgent private business.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Sixth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [4.36]: I wish to offer one or two words of criticism of the Government.

The Minister for Agriculture: And of praise.

Mr DAVY: No, I do not think it necessary for me to offer any words of praise of the Government. The Government and their followers appear to be well able to supply any praise, whether deserved or not. Indeed, it appears to me almost a characteristic of Governments to speak very highly of themselves. We had considerable eulogy of the Government from the member who

moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I will throw this one bouquet to the Premier, that he showed a sufficient degree of modesty as not to be prepared to accept everything said of him by the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy), who claimed for the Premier almost superhuman powers. He claimed that the Premier had created a record never before met with in this or any other House in that he had been able to estimate the deficit within £1,000. Of course, the Premier was honest enough to admit that that was more or less a fluke, as became apparent when it was disclosed that although the actual total deficit was within £1,000 of the estimate, the items making it up were entirely different from those in the estimate. I do not think that is any matter for criticism of the Premier because, as he pointed out and the Leader of the Opposition agreed, it is quite impossible for a Treasurer to predict with any degree of accuracy how much revenue he is going to get from so uncertain a thing as, say, income taxation. As a matter of fact, if the income tax returns had been less and something else more, the Premier might have got the same result again, but by an entirely different grouping; and if the income tax had been less and something else also, he would have been tens of thousands below his estimate. However, the Premier was not prepared to accept the remarks made by the member for Yilgarn, and so I am able to accord him that measure of praise. I do not think it can be denied on paper that the financial position of the State has been steadily improving for a number of years past. I say "on paper" because it is not really possible to dogmatise and say it is a genuine improvement. Nor for a number of years to come will it be possible to do so. After all, if large sums of loan money are expended, even foolishly, in any community, the reflection of that expenditure cannot possibly be avoided in the revenue of the country. If, for instance, the Government were so foolish as to borrow and spend on some wild scheme in Western Australia £20,000,000 in one year, undoubtedly the deficit would vanish and we should have a substantial surplus. But it would be entirely illusory. The whole test is whether the moneys we are borrowing and spending are wisely borrowed and spent. It would be impossible to determine that with certainty until some years after the moneys had been spent. The vast majority of members

of the House are of opinion that the main expenditure that this Government and their immediate predecessors embarked upon is a wise expenditure. The late Government initiated the system of expending large sums of loan money on group settlement, and the present Government, having had full opportunity to investigate the plans laid and inaugurated by Sir James Mitchell, decided in the face of considerable criticism from outsiders and some members, to carry on the scheme. We on this side supported Sir James Mitchell in inaugurating that scheme, and therefore we can hardly do other than support the present Government in carrying it on. So, as I say, it would be dogmatic to declare that the finances have genuinely improved, notwithstanding which we believe they have improved, because we believe the loan moneys expended have been expended wisely. The moral is that in spite of improvement it is still necessary, and will be necessary for many years to come, for Governments to exercise rigid economy and impose a considerable degree of taxation. We are not yet in that position where we can regard ourselves as having any spare pocket money. The Premier devoted a considerable portion of his speech in this debate to subjects that could hardly be termed matters of State. Whatever the Premier's qualifications as Premier and Treasurer and statesman may be, no one will deny that he is an extremely astute politician. Also there is little doubt that nothing could be more satisfactory to him and his party than to bring about an open breach between the two parties sitting on this side of the House. If he were able even to increase in any measure any little discord that many now exist or has existed in the past between those parties, it would be of the greatest value to him at the next elections. Therefore, I was not at all surprised to find him devoting a considerable portion of his time to probing any old sores there may have been and trying to create some new ones, if possible. He took it upon himself—it was done with the greatest air of grace—to convey to members of the party to which I belong some information regarding the activities of the Country Party in the various electorates. That information was not news in any sense of the word. Even the Premier could hardly regard the intelligence of the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), or the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) or the member for York (Mr. Latham) so lowly, or

deem their interest in their own return at the next elections so slight as to think that they were not perfectly well aware that the Country Party were organising in their electorates with a view if possible to winning their seats from them.

The Premier: I did not put it forward as anything new. One may be allowed to comment upon things that are known to members.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps the Premier was endeavouring to make it more widely known.

The Premier: A seasonal reminder.

Mr. DAVY: He thought perhaps it was not sufficient that the member for York and the member for Nelson should know these things. He may have wanted to spread it abroad in the light of day, hoping that some other persons supporting these gentlemen would be surprised and annoyed. That is perfectly well known to us.

Mr. DAVY: Why tell it again?

Mr. DAVY: It is not in the slightest degree resented by us. The Country Party are perfectly welcome to win any seat they are able to win.

The Premier: You are very generous about giving away your friends. You are not being attacked, but you are throwing your friends to the wolves.

Mr. DAVY: I claim to speak on behalf of the United Party solidly.

The Minister for Works: The member for Nelson spoke differently.

Mr. DAVY: The Country Party are welcome to win any seat they can from us. We equally claim the right, which will be readily conceded by our friends, to win any of their seats if we are able to do so.

Mr. Sleeman: They did not concede that a few weeks ago.

Mr. DAVY: There have been no negotiations between these gentlemen and ourselves at any time, that were not on the basis of our having perfect freedom to win seats from each other when we could do so by honourable means. When we find ourselves opposed, however, by any member belonging to the party that occupies the Treasury bench, although we may have rivalry between ourselves, we shall be standing shoulder to shoulder to defeat such a person.

The Premier: We shall see.

The Minister for Works: That is what you hope.

The Premier: Ask the member on your right.

Mr. DAVY: I am stating what our present intentions are. The flesh is weak. It may be that other meddlesome persons, who are poking their noses into our affairs, may be able to stir up strife, but I do not think they will.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: You hope not.

The Minister for Works: Your remarks do not carry much conviction.

Mr. DAVY: Although there are differences in political points of view between the Country Party and the United Party, and although we do not agree with all their methods of political organisation and they do not agree with all of ours, yet it is undeniable that in this House, since I have been here, on every matter of real policy our points of view have been the same. That is why we prefer to ally ourselves with the Country party in opposition to the Labour Party, with whom we differ on every point that we regard as important.

The Premier: Mr. Padbury says you cannot represent the farmer any more than we can.

Mr. DAVY: We are not concerned with what Mr. Padbury may say.

The Premier: Are you not?

Mr. DAVY: The attitude of those gentlemen and of the gentlemen sitting here is as I have stated. In spite of any self-interested attempt on the part of the Premier to split us asunder, we shall, I hope, at the next elections be found standing side by side. The Premier seems to suggest that he is playing more or less the part of a mischievous boy soothing on two smaller boys, or trying to get two puppy dogs to have a fight. I tell him, and I tell the world, that the bone of contention which he slung across the floor so cheerfully the other night for the delectation of members on this side of the House, has not even been sniffed at. Perhaps the member for Nelson may have given a little sniff at it, but generally it did not even receive a sniff or even a longing glance. It will remain there, and be treated with the profound contempt that such a rotten bone deserves. I now propose to criticise the Government for an administrative act, which in my opinion was wrong. I submit that it was wrong, but without any hope that anything that has been done by the Government will be criticised by their supporters. I bring this forward for the good of their souls. In my first session of Parliament we passed certain important amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act. *Inter alia*, there were two new departures. The first

was an alteration in the Act to bring it into line more or less with the English Act by making it cover industrial diseases. The second important amendment was one which provided that every employer must obtain from an incorporated insurance office approved by the Minister a policy of insurance covering his liability under the Act. These two amendments were readily accepted by members on this side of the House. They were accepted because the principle has been recognised for many years that industries should bear the expense and loss consequent upon injury to those employed in the industry; secondly, because we had a very good precedent in what had been done in the Old Country and other parts of the world. We accepted the second important innovation, mainly with a view to protecting the poor employer, and the worker engaged by him. When I readily accepted that amendment, I had in mind a poor man who found it necessary to engage a nurse to look after his sick wife, or perhaps the sick wife, who was unable to do household work and was obliged to engage some person to assist her in these duties. In a case of that sort, if an insurance policy was not taken out, and a serious accident occurred, or serious results followed a minor accident, either the poor employer would be ruined and the house sold up, or the worker would get no compensation. The provision was that the employer should take out a policy or give security to pay compensation under some other method to be approved by the Minister. The Act required that the companies should be approved by the Minister. That was agreed to without demur in order to provide that such a policy should be bona fide, taken out with a genuine company that was able to stand up to its financial obligations, and was not a bogus company floated without sufficient capital and without stability. It was intended to insure that the policy should not be illusory. Members will agree that this is why they readily concurred in the principle that the company must be approved by the Minister. It was not that the Minister should have the right to dig into the domestic affairs of the company and dictate the premiums that were to be charged. It was merely that he should have to satisfy himself that the company was genuine and able to stand up to its financial obligations. As it was obvious that certain difficulties would arise in regard to mining diseases covered by the new Act, since it was more or less known that there was a large number of miners already afflicted with dis-

eases of that kind, the Minister promised that he would delay bringing that part of the Act into operation until such time as he was in a position to judge how many people were afflicted, and that in the meantime the mines would as far as possible be cleared of those already stricken with the disease, and the provisions of the Miner's Phthisis Act brought into operation. I am endeavouring to confine myself at present to facts that are common ground. I propose if possible to mention no fact, the accuracy of which can be contested. The Minister then proceeded to enter into negotiations with all the insurance companies as to the amount of premiums they should charge to mining companies and mine employers, when the miners' diseases were brought within the scope of the Act. It is a little difficult to understand why the Minister should have entered into these negotiations with the companies. It really had nothing to do with him. The concern was one for the employers who had to pay the premiums. But he did enter into the question. Finally we got from him a statement on the 1st June of this year, when he said that the negotiations had broken off, and that the companies had declined to accept the miners' phthisis risk, presumably suggesting that they had declined to accept mining risks altogether. I am not concerned with the rights or wrongs of any dispute that may have occurred between the Minister and the insurance companies. The companies said in the Press that they were not given any opportunity to judge the risk they were asked to take over. They claimed that the figures were not made available to them showing the number of men already afflicted with the disease. The Minister on his side claimed that this was not so, and that he had strained every effort to effect a compromise. Perhaps he did so, according to his lights. We have all seen the Minister from time to time busily engaged in straining every effort to arrive at a settlement. I think some of us have been reminded of that famous effector of settlements, Dick Turpin, when trying to bring about a settlement with a person from whom he was about to take a purse, and at whose head he was holding a pistol.

Mr. Hughes: That is the way the insurance companies act.

Mr. DAVY: I am afraid that that is the sort of mental picture we are inclined to have of the Minister for Works when he is

trying to effect a compromise. However, I am not saying at this juncture who was to blame in the dispute. The position having arisen, the Government, according to the statement of the Minister for Works, were faced with three alternatives. That is what he claims in his statement of the 1st June. I agree that the Government were faced with three alternatives. The first of these was to further delay the bringing into operation of the miners' disease part of the Workers' Compensation Act. The second alternative was to proclaim that part of the Act and throw on the mining companies the responsibility of carrying the risk without insurance, which prior to the amendment of the Act they were perfectly entitled to do if they thought fit. The third alternative was that the Government might offer the mining companies provision for insuring against this risk themselves. I do not think I would have risen here to criticise the Government if they had adopted either the second or the third alternative. Probably we all believed, and believe now, that the benefit of the miners' disease provision should have been made available to the men, who had long been promised that benefit. Therefore we would probably be all in agreement that the first alternative might be wiped out. The other two alternatives were, in my opinion, equally legitimately open to the Government. I, at any rate, would not have criticised the Government for adopting either of the two last alternatives. But they did not adopt any one of the three alternatives. Having said that they were faced with three alternatives, they proceeded to invent a fourth alternative by creating an insurance department despite the fact that they were forbidden by the law of the land to do so. Then they proceeded, by a course of doubtful legality, to wipe out all insurance companies from this particular line of business, and to compel all the employers in Western Australia to insure with the State Insurance Department. Having created their insurance department, and having passed certain regulations, which I presume are still on the Table of the House, the Government proceeded to endeavour to get the public to patronise the State office. Their first step was to do so by trying to frighten the public into doing it by fear of the long arm of the law. The Government published an advertisement telling employers that insurance was compulsory, that employers

could not insure with the companies, and that therefore there was no alternative for the public but to insure with the Government. They published regulations holding out threats of prosecution to those who would not agree to that process.

The Minister for Works: I thought you were going to say nothing that was not a fact?

Mr. DAVY: If I have done so, let the Minister challenge me right away.

The Minister for Works: I challenge you now. The Government never published any advertisement of that kind.

Mr. DAVY: Very well. Here is the advertisement—

State Accident Insurance. Workers' Compensation Act. Employers (including all those with domestic help) are informed that—1, Insurance is compulsory. 2, No incorporated insurance office now has the approval required under Section 10. 3, Insurees through the State office are guaranteed by the Government.

The Premier: Those are three facts, not threats.

Mr. DAVY: They are not three facts.

The Premier: Well, they were.

Mr. DAVY: I say they were not, because those statements were promptly challenged and an opinion was given by three lawyers, one of whom is especially entitled to respect, being the leader of the bar of Western Australia.

The Premier: Do you endorse the opinion of the other lawyers?

Mr. DAVY: Yes, I do. I was engaged to give an opinion on a certain subject, and I gave it. That advertisement having been published, setting forth that insurance was compulsory, that one could not insure with a private office but must insure with the State office—

The Minister for Works: The advertisement does not say that employers must insure with the State office.

Mr. DAVY: The advertisement says—

Insurance is compulsory. No incorporated insurance office now has the approval required under Section 10.

What were the public expected to believe from that if not that they were not entitled to insure with a private office?

The Minister for Works: You are quibbling.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister is quibbling. No person could possibly read those three statements of alleged fact without coming to the conclusion that it was necessary to

insure with the State office. Then the opinion was published setting forth that insurance was not compulsory in the circumstances, that there was no reason in the world why people should not go on insuring with private companies, and that insurance with the State office was valueless, not worth the paper it was written on.

The Premier: That is a very poor opinion.

Mr. DAVY: It is not a poor opinion, and it has not been challenged, because the next thing we get, the opinion having been brought to the Minister's attention and the Press having made headlines about the matter, speaking of "a legal bombshell," is that the Minister says the legal bombshell is a dud, and adds "We knew all about it all along." If that was not an admission of the accuracy of what I have quoted, I do not know what would be. I am drawing deductions from published facts.

The Minister for Works: You are not.

Mr. DAVY: Does the Minister dispute that he published that advertisement? Does he dispute that the words I have read out are the words of the advertisement? I am quite content to rest on that. There is the published advertisement, and there is the opinion. A day after the opinion was published the Minister, through the Press, virtually said, "We knew all about that and don't care." The deduction from that is that the Minister, or let me say the State Insurance Department, for which the Government are responsible—

The Premier: Say the Government.

Mr. DAVY: Very well. The deduction is that the Government, having first tried to scare the public and having had that attempt exposed, then proceeded to try a mixture of cajolery and veiled threats to persons with whom they had had some business transactions, in order to try to induce those persons to come in. The Government Actuary's office on the 26th June circularised a large number of the businesses with whom the Government had had dealings. A letter over Mr. Bennett's signature reads as follows:—

Dear Sir, The Government having decided to transact employers' liability insurance business, I take this opportunity of inviting you to transfer to the State Accident Insurance Office your insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act, the Employers' Liability Act, and at Common Law. The Government has for many years been a good customer of your firm, and as the good relations will no doubt continue in the future, I confidently suggest that in a spirit of reciprocity you should agree

to the transfer. Already some of the largest employers in the State have effected insurances through the State office.

This is the cream of it—

If I am able to report to the Hon. Minister that your firm has agreed to the transfer, I know that your action will be much appreciated.

I do submit to the House that this was not a dignified position for the Government. It was not dignified for them to find themselves responsible for the writing of that letter.

The Minister for Works: A circular was sent out to every business house in this State. It is an ordinary business letter.

Mr. DAVY: Is there nothing that a business house may do which a Government may not do? Is there not a little bit of added dignity and self-respect to be expected from a Government?

The Minister for Works: The insurance companies do that sort of thing every day.

The Premier: The people for whom you are pleading do it every day.

Mr. DAVY: Where is the pleading?

The Premier: You are pleading for the insurance companies; that is all.

Mr. DAVY: Does the Premier think so?

The Premier: I am sure of it.

Mr. DAVY: The Premier does not think anything of the sort.

The Premier: You admit that you have taken fees from the insurance companies for advice.

Mr. DAVY: I must say I am surprised to hear the Premier make a remark like that.

The Premier: Of course you are pleading for the insurance companies.

Mr. DAVY: I am not. I put it to the House that the Premier's suggestion—

The Premier: It is not for the people affected you are pleading, but for the insurance companies.

Mr. DAVY: The Premier's suggestion is a despicable one, and one that I never expected to hear come from him. The Premier knows perfectly well that a lawyer's job is to advise people when they ask him to advise, and that the lawyer gets fees for advising. Perhaps the Premier is now suggesting that I have received a fee for speaking here this afternoon?

The Premier: I say you are pleading for the companies.

Mr. DAVY: Let the Premier go on saying it. I am content that he should have his

opinion if he likes to degrade himself by holding it.

The Premier: You know perfectly well it is true.

Mr. DAVY: The letter I have quoted is one of which any Government might well be ashamed. The other letter, sent to the road boards, is one which reflects even less credit on the Government.

The Premier: It is the kind of letter the insurance companies send out every day.

Mr. DAVY: I am putting up arguments, at any rate.

The Premier: You are indeed!

Mr. DAVY: If the Premier has no better answer to that, than to cast aspersions—

The Premier: It is an ordinary business circular.

Mr. DAVY: The Premier says so. I say it is something that the Government ought never to have issued, which they ought to be ashamed of having issued. That is my opinion, and I believe it will be the opinion of many members of this House.

The Premier: It will not be the opinion of the people of this country. Make the issue the people versus the insurance companies.

Mr. DAVY: No, I will not.

The Premier: Of course you will not.

Mr. DAVY: I am not concerned in the slightest as to whether the Minister was right or not when he rounded on the insurance companies. What I am concerned about is that the Government have acted with an absolutely arrogant disregard of the law of the land.

The Premier: The companies have not acted arrogantly, have they?

Mr. Marshall: No. They have acted most humanely.

Mr. DAVY: There again, is it believable that the Premier suggests that the same degree of arrogance which a private concern might be guilty of would be justifiable in a Government?

The Premier: But these are highly honourable business people.

Mr. DAVY: I suggest that private companies and private persons are frequently arrogant, frequently dishonest, and frequently unfair. Of course they are. More-

over, they are criticised and dealt with by the courts of law when their unfairness—

### *Point of Order.*

Mr. Hughes: On a point of order. I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, whether in accordance with "May," pages 84 and 85, the hon. member, having admitted that he has received a fee for advising on this matter, is in order in discussing it.

Mr. Davy: The member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) knows perfectly well that I have never received a fee for advising on this matter at all. I was consulted as to whether certain regulations were *intra vires* or *ultra vires*. There is the opinion which I gave, and to suggest that because I have been employed to give an opinion on a specific legal point I am debarred from speaking on the general policy of the Government in this House is outrageous.

Mr. Thomson: Members opposite do not want the subject discussed. They are frightened!

The Premier: Oh, we are frightened!

Mr. Speaker: The point raised by the member for East Perth is whether the speech so far delivered by the member for West Perth comes within the scope of the following statement appearing in May's "Parliamentary Practice":—

A member is accordingly incapable of practising as counsel before the House, or any committee. By resolution, 26th February, 1830, members of the House of Commons are prohibited from engaging, either by themselves or by a partner, in the management of private Bills, before this or the other House of Parliament, for pecuniary reward. Nor is it consistent with parliamentary or professional usage for a member to advise, as counsel, upon any private Bill, or other proceeding in Parliament.

The point raised has reference only to the speech now in course of delivery by the member for West Perth. So far as he has proceeded—and there is nothing shown to the contrary—he is in no wise within the limits of what I may call the prohibition against legal practitioners, as defined or expressed in the paragraph I have read. Consequently, the hon. member is in order.

Hon. G. Taylor: That paragraph deals only with Bills.

The Minister for Works: No, it does not.

The Premier: It refers to "other proceedings in Parliament." Of course I am not disputing the ruling.



*Debate Resumed.*

Mr. DAVY: Of course not; no one can dispute it. If the position of a legal practitioner in a small community such as Perth were such that he could not take part in any debate on a subject respecting which he had given a legal opinion, it would be ridiculous.

Mr. Hughes: You are ventilating a matter on which you have already given your opinion, and for which you have accepted a fee!

Mr. DAVY: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course not.

Mr. Hughes: Did you give your legal opinion for nothing?

Mr. DAVY: Of course not; why should I?

Mr. Hughes: Then you accepted a fee and now you are ventilating the subject here!

Mr. DAVY: No. Certain facts were laid before me and I was asked what was the legal position with regard to the submitted statement of facts. I gave my opinion, which was published in conjunction with the opinions of two other members of the legal profession. I am not arguing now respecting the legal interpretation of the position. I understand it is admitted that the legal opinions I refer to were correct. That they were correct was pretty obvious, even to a layman. I have maintained that the Government unnecessarily adopted the fourth alternative. In doing so, they did what was not worthy of them, nor was it in the best interests of the community. The excuse offered for adopting the fourth alternative—that was of not only establishing an insurance office to cover the mining part of the business, but to wipe out the business conducted by all other insurance companies—was that it was not fair that companies should accept profitable business and not, at the same time, take on unprofitable business. Will the House consider just what that means? Clearly, there are only two sets of persons who can be asked to accept the responsibility of the miners' risks. One represents the employers of the miners, and the other is the whole community. If the State Insurance Department propose to take the mining risk at a loss or make up that loss on the other insurance business, every employer in Western Australia will share in the responsibility. If I cover my small staff, I am paying a bit more to assist the mining companies. That is not fair, and we are entitled to protest against any such proposition. If the community is to shoulder

the burden, then I am willing to agree that we should all bear it equally, in accordance with our means. But if we provide that the mining companies are to bear the burden, and later on it is said that the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay), for instance, is to bear his share, what can be said regarding that attitude, seeing that the law has provided otherwise? The only excuse for the Government being compelled to take on the other insurance business, as well as the mining covers, is clearly shown to run contra to the intention of Parliament. I find myself in a difficulty now, because of what I may term the somewhat indecent suggestions that have been made against me, but I propose to make the further remarks I wish to. I put it to the House that we have all made rather a mess of the miners' phthisis position.

Mr. Panton: Speak for yourself!

Mr. DAVY: I hope to satisfy the House that that is so. I admit that when we passed the Bill to amend the Miners' Phthisis Act, I did not take any particular notice of the proposals and apparently others did not do so either. The principal Act was passed a year or two before and I presumed at the time that the amendments made were consequential and necessary to make the new provisions more effectively operative.

The Minister for Mines: The Leader of the Opposition discussed the Bill and knew the meaning of its contents.

Mr. DAVY: Very likely he did.

The Minister for Mines: And he discussed it intelligently, too.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Merely because I believed at the moment that you had indicated what was required.

Mr. DAVY: I will admit, then, that personally I did not pay sufficient attention to the measure to understand what position was being created.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I took what the Minister said and believed the Bill was necessary to improve the position regarding the men suffering from miners' complaint. I helped the Minister to put the Bill through.

Mr. DAVY: Quite so. If we take the Act, however, and the miners' diseases sections, we will arrive at the decision that rather a ridiculous position has been set up. I will admit that members honestly endeavoured to meet the position at the time, but what I indicate has arisen. Under the Miners' Phthisis Act, if an examination is made and

a man is found to be suffering from tuberculosis, he may be sent out of the mines.

Mr. Panton: He is sent out; not "may be" sent out.

Mr. DAVY: That is so. If he has symptoms of tuberculosis, he is sent out, too.

Mr. Panton: And quite right.

Mr. DAVY: I agree. That man has to be paid full wages until he can get suitable work at full rates. Under the Workers' Compensation Act, if a man is so ill that he has to leave the mine before he develops tuberculosis, and if he has a claim under Section 7 of the Act, he cannot claim anything under the Miners' Phthisis Act. Therefore, he will receive only the reduced amount of compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act.

The Minister for Mines: The reduced amount that Parliament allowed.

Mr. DAVY: Exactly. A man may have slight symptoms of tuberculosis but may be physically capable of continuing in the mine, although, of course, it would be dangerous to himself and to others. That man would be taken out of the mine and would be given full compensation until he is able to secure suitable employment. He is in a different position from the other man, I have mentioned, who may be far more incapable of continuing work.

Mr. Panton: But there has to be the examination.

Mr. DAVY: Suppose that man has been missed in the examination.

Mr. Panton: But that would be a poor case.

Mr. DAVY: Then suppose the man has been examined and has been driven out of the mine. He gets half as much compensation as the man who went out before his complaint was discovered, although that man might be more fit.

Mr. Marshall: One man gets compensation as long as he lives, and the other has to get work.

Mr. DAVY: Who gets it?

Mr. Marshall: The man who is suffering definitely from tuberculosis.

Mr. DAVY: He gets it until he is able to find suitable employment and earn as much as he did formerly, if he recovers.

Mr. Marshall: Recover from tuberculosis!

Mr. Chesson: Yes, how many of them do that?

Mr. Panton: If the man is suffering from that disease, he is driven out of the mine,

no matter if he is physically capable of doing work or not.

Mr. DAVY: Exactly. Here is the subsection—

A person whose name is registered shall not have any right to compensation under this section, if such person is or becomes entitled to receive compensation under section seven of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-1924.

The same applies to the death of any person who has dependants. They can claim only under the Workers' Compensation Act, and they have no claim under the Miners' Phthisis Act. The position is that the man who is taken out of the mine on account of tuberculosis, is in an infinitely better position than the man who has to leave, although he is not found to be so suffering.

The Premier: No, he is not in a better position, because if he is taken out of the mine on account of tuberculosis, he gets full wages until he gets other suitable employment. If he is unable to get work, he is in a similar position to the other man under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. DAVY: That is so. From the start he gets half wages but the other man gets full wages until he gets suitable work.

The Premier: Yes, because one man can work and the other cannot.

Mr. DAVY: If a man is taken out of the mine, I presume there is a possibility of his recovery.

Mr. Heron: Not much.

Mr. DAVY: I suppose the position is not such that a man has to drop down before it is suggested that he cannot do any work. I understand that the development of the disease is progressive. It may be some considerable time before the disease makes itself manifest.

Mr. Chesson: But once it gets hold of a man, there is no cure.

Mr. DAVY: Is it suggested that under the law that man has to stay in the mine until he is incapable of any work in the future?

Mr. Panton: That would depend upon the doctor who examined him. He would have the say as to when he would have to leave the mine.

Mr. DAVY: It may not be on the decision of the doctor, but it may be a question for the law courts.

Mr. Panton: Even then the doctor's evidence will be the proof advanced.

Mr. DAVY: There will be medical evidence on both sides.

The Premier: A man is only eligible for compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act when his health is such that he cannot earn full wages.

Mr. DAVY: The other can get part wages only.

The Premier: He is entitled to compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. DAVY: As to partial incapacity, just in the same way as a man would be entitled to it because of an accident. If his working capacity is reduced, he gets compensation for partial incapacity.

Mr. Panton: But in a mine a man has to work to his full capacity or he has to leave his work.

Mr. DAVY: What if the man were partially incapacitated because of miners' phthisis?

Hon. G. Taylor: A man in that position would have to go out of the mine altogether.

Mr. DAVY: If it can be shown that he was still capable of earning portion of what he could earn before, how can it be said that he is entirely incapacitated? When does a man working in a mine become entirely incapacitated?

Mr. Panton: When he becomes incapable of doing a sufficiently good day's work to suit the boss.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is this quite perfect?

Mr. Panton: I do not suggest that it is.

Mr. DAVY: We have not got equitable provisions for dealing with the miners' phthisis question and we ought to review the whole subject. It appears to me that probably miners' phthisis is not a fit subject to bring under the Workers' Compensation Act. I believe that is at the root of the whole trouble. The insurance companies have declined to take this risk. I cannot imagine why they should decline. My experience is that if insurance companies hear of a house being erected which is not covered, one runs a risk of getting killed in the rush for the business. If there is a profit anywhere, they will do business; otherwise they will not. They are not in business for the good of their health.

Mr. Panton: Or the good of the community.

Mr. DAVY: No, they serve a useful purpose or they would not exist. Every business must be useful or else it must die. We have to face this impossible position. The Minister proposes to bring down legislation to start a new department—a State Insurance Department. I should think such a

measure would run a fair risk of being defeated in another place. At the same time, the diseases is progressing. Our first care should be to consider the best way to cover the men affected, and I suggest to the Minister that the proper thing is to review the whole position and see whether a more equitable way cannot be devised to cover such men, without resorting to squabbles or rows on principle amongst ourselves.

Mr. Marshall: How would you suggest that we get over the difficulty with all these men out of the mines? Who would look after them in the meantime?

Mr. DAVY: In South Africa an entirely different method is adopted. There no attempt is made to cover affected miners by workers' compensation. They are graded according to the stage which the disease has reached, and the whole system works very much better than ours can ever hope to do.

The Minister for Works: The mining companies will not listen to that system.

Mr. DAVY: We need not bother about that; we are not here to be dictated to. We have to satisfy ourselves what is the best and most equitable method of dealing with this frightful problem.

The Minister for Works: What is wrong with the present system?

Mr. DAVY: I have endeavoured to show what is wrong. One thing clearly is that it has thrust on the Government something which they declare they have the greatest possible reluctance in undertaking.

The Minister for Works: That is only a question of insurance.

Mr. DAVY: It is the result of the unsuitable method of attacking the problem. Anyhow, I have stated my views and I am satisfied that a number of members are in agreement with me. I do not join in criticism of the Government for forecasting such a small programme of legislation. I fear that, as in past years, it will grow as the session progresses. Many people share the view that we in Western Australia could get along very well if we had no new laws for a number of years, but confined our attention to the consolidation of existing laws and gave the people, with respect to whom there is a ridiculous fiction that they all know the law, a chance to settle down with a stable set of obligations. I wonder what the people would say to a party that went to the country with the slogan that they would have no new legislation, except obviously necessary legislation, for ten years. Probably they

would be defeated. Every little section of the community and almost every individual has an idea that one particular law would bring the millennium immediately. Most members, I believe, agree that we could very well call a rest and have no new laws for 10 or 15 years. The present position is becoming impossible. We have to deal with an enormous mass of statutes, and regulations and bylaws that are poured out from the various departments almost every day. Where it will all end, it is difficult to say, but there will come a time when a score of lawyers together will be unable to tell us the laws, and yet every poor wretched citizen is deemed to know them all. If a man is prosecuted for a breach of the law, he has to stand the penalty; he receives no consideration if he pleads ignorance of the law. I do not suggest that the matters with which I have dealt with are the only points upon which the Government could be criticised, but I do not wish to make myself too unpopular with the Government.

Mr. Panton: You are still the curly-headed boy.

Mr. DAVY: Let me express the hope that the season will prove as good as it promises to be because, if we have not good government, we shall need all the better season.

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [5.37]: I wish to deal with matters mentioned particularly in the Speech. Naturally I shall have to cover much of the ground I traversed last year, because I have not been so fortunate as those members who have received much consideration from the Government and are thankful for it. I am thankful for one or two very small concessions, but I do not believe in being content with small things when I represent a district that is warranted in its demand for the establishment of bigger works. According to the Speech the returns indicate a continued active demand for agricultural land. I realise that, and I also realise that the greater proportion of the 2,023,236 acres selected during the last 12 months was taken up, not in the South-West agricultural areas, but in the outback districts. I am a strong believer in settling the land adjacent to existing railways before going farther afield. Between Pinjarra and Bunbury there are 300,000 acres of land which have been locked up and left undeveloped, notwithstanding that the railway runs through it. That land is cap-

able of providing holdings for hundreds of settlers. To prove my argument I might mention such places as Burekup, Roelands, Harvey and Bengier, which are amongst the most prosperous places in the South-West. At the recent South-West conference Mr. Johnston, of Harvey, read an interesting paper on land settlement, and referred particularly to the undeveloped land along the South-Western railway. The land in that area is of mixed quality, but it contains large loamy flats which, under cultivation, would be capable of carrying as many head of stock as would any similar area elsewhere in the State. Interspersed with these flats is clay land which at one time was considered to be valueless, but with improved methods of farming and knowledge of the value of topdressing, it is now recognised to be amongst the best land procurable for subterranean clover. People who have established pastures on clay land have become prosperous.

Mr. Sampson: And it is the finest potato land.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: I have not forgotten that area. I shall remember it when we get our scheme approved.

Mr. WITHERS: I am glad to hear the Minister say so, because I urge the necessity for settling that land as soon as possible. Its excellence for closer settlement was stressed by Mr. Johnston, who maintained that an area of 100 to 120 acres would carry sufficient stock to enable a family to make a comfortable living from dairying, pig raising and poultry raising. He quoted men at Harvey who were working 80-acre blocks of similar land and doing well. Here is an extract from Mr. Johnston's paper—

We would summarise the estimated costs of actual development as proposed under this scheme as under, and inclusive of the cost of the land:—120 acres first class clay land at £2 per acre, £240; part clearing and thinning out 50 acres at £1 10s. per acre, £75; ploughing, 50 acres at £1 10s., £75; disc cultivating 50 acres, three times at 4s., £10; drag harrowing and T-bar rolling, once 2s. 50 acres, £5; 100 bags subterranean clover burr at 6s., £30; 10 tons super. at £5 10s., two dressings of 24 each, £55; other grass seeds (mixture), £25; seeding, cartage, freight, etc., £1 per acre, £50; well or dam to value £50; 160 ehns. of 4-wire fencing at 10s. per chain, £80; extras, not specified £25; total, £720. We now have an area of 120 acres, 50 acres of which is under pasture. For the purchase of the land, 50 acres pasture, water supply, boundary fencing, and the 50 acres of pasture fenced off

and top dressed, and the pasture in its second year, the total cost has not exceeded the sum of £750. It can be said with confidence, this work, all done under contract and supervision, should not exceed the figures. The features of this scheme as placed before you can be summarised as follows:—It is an attempt at closer and continuous settlement. The land is already served by railways. The nearness of the area to be opened on to coastal lands, the capital and ports. The country is well watered, very suitable for intensive cultivation, dairying and pig-raising, and will produce potatoes, onions, butter, cheese, milk, bacon, eggs, etc. Only this means the money that is now going to the Eastern States will remain in Western Australia. The task of drainage of this part of the State has to be undertaken for existing settlement. Therefore intensive settlement and production is necessary and essential, so that production becomes so high as to amply justify the necessary drainage of this territory.

From people established in the South-West I know that the proposed scheme could be carried out. The work could be done, and the fences put up, and then pastures established in the second year. The idea is not to put the settlers on sustenance, but to have the work done by contract and so prepare farms ready for selection. The area would be cut up into so many blocks, and applications would be called for the blocks, and a board would be appointed to decide who should have the blocks. A person taking up a block would then be responsible to the Government for its price. He would have 50 acres of pasture fully matured and ready for his stock, instead of having to go on for two years, as under present conditions, before receiving any return. I believe this scheme will prove better than the group settlement scheme. I fully understand that drainage is a big task. The Governor's Speech contains a reference to the expenditure of about £250,000 on drainage in the South-West. The member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard) knows that the scheme has meant great advantage to that part of the State. The enormous volume of water coming down now proves the value of the drainage which has been done near Busselton. Certain parts of the area I refer to are drained naturally by streams and brooklets. With a proper system of water conservation, such as we already have at Harvey, this part of the State would become the irrigation area of Western Australia. In support of this contention I produce the last balance sheet of the South-West Co-operative Dairy Products Ltd., generally called the Bunbury butter factory. That factory has been established

for 18 years, during which period it has made wonderful progress. The balance sheet proves that the factory continues to make rapid strides.

Mr. Sampson: It shows how much can be done by co-operation.

Mr. WITHERS: The factory is purely co-operative. Of the 667 shareholders, 477 are supplying cream to the factory, while 190 are what are called "dry shareholders." The dry shareholders receive nothing except 1 per cent. on the capital they have invested in the concern. To-day one cannot become a dry shareholder. In the first instance dry shareholders were accepted in order that the necessary financial backing might be secured but now one must be a supplier of cream to the factory before one can become a shareholder. During its last financial year the factory paid for butter fats at the rate of 1s. 7d. per lb., plus a bonus of 1d. per lb. The shareholders who supplied cream, therefore, received a dividend of 7 per cent. and also a bonus of 1d. per lb. on all butter fat they had sent to the factory during the year. The purchases of butter fats for the year amounted to £54,412 15s. 2d. Manufacturing and testing materials cost £1,874 17s. 6d. Wages and salaries amounted to £4,441 14s. 3d. Fuel and water cost £645 7s., and working expenses and machinery repair £774 12s. 8d. Trade and travelling expense absorbed £435 5s. 2d., and stationery and advertising £317 0s. 9d. Railage and carting came to £902 1s. 6d., and lighting and telephone to £153 13s. 5d. Rates and taxes totalled £432 6s. 6d. Legal expenses are the smallest item of all, £9 9s. 6d. I quote those particulars in order to show the amount of money circulated in the South-West by the efforts of this co-operative society, which is extending its operations through the growing settlement area at Manjimup. The society desires to purchase the Busselton butter factory from the State. Although I am an advocate of State trading, as part of the platform, I think that in the circumstances it would be a good thing if the society were permitted to obtain the Busselton factory at a reasonable price. I say this because the society is purely co-operative. If the transfer should be effected, Busselton also would progress greatly in butter production.

Mr. Sampson: The society in question is one of the best managed concerns in the Commonwealth.

Mr. WITHERS: Sales of butter for the year totalled £69,854 2s., and ice sales during the summer months brought in £2,188 0s. 6d. For the three months of May, June and July of this year the butter output of the society exceeded the output for the same period of the previous year by 33 tons. This shows that the quantity of butter being produced in the district is by no means small. The quantity of cream received during the last 12 months of the factory's operations was 667 tons, for which £48,463 was paid. From the cream 360 tons of commercial butter was manufactured. Such success on the part of a factory established on the seaboard, at Bunbury, and not among the dairy farmers, goes to show that in spite of all adverse criticisms the South-West is eminently adapted for the dairying industry, and affords scope for further expansion of that industry. Turning now to another aspect, I may mention that just outside Bunbury there are three of the largest poultry farms in the State. The South-West also offers opportunities for pig-raising, which has not been exploited to as great an extent as it might have been. Reverting for a moment to the Bunbury butter factory, let me stress the fact of the production of an additional 33 tons of butter during the last three months as proving that the South-Western farmer now has more knowledge of the subject of dairy farming than he had two or three years ago. The real cause of the increase in butter production is to be found in the improved methods of producing pastures: top-dressing has come to stay in the South-West. In fact, top-dressing has proved invaluable to the South-Western farmer. At Elgin, a little siding on the Busselton line, just on the outskirts of my electorate, there were some few years ago a number of very old settlers who made a little butter and brought it into town for sale occasionally. Though Elgin siding remains as it was 25 years ago in point of accommodation, a great change has occurred there. More superphosphate is being delivered at that siding for one man now than used to be delivered there for the whole of the settlers a few years ago. In return, there have been as many as 60 cans of cream leaving Elgin siding on one train. That fact illustrates the advantage of closer settlement. Throughout the South-West one sees to-day on every station and siding cans of cream awaiting despatch to the Bunbury butter factory.

The cream comes from as far as Bridgetown. Now I would like to touch the fringe of group settlement. This is a subject of which I perhaps do not understand as much as members with settlements in their electorates. From what I have gathered in travelling through the groups, more especially in the Busselton area, I can certify that some of the remarks made last night by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) are justified. There has been, and there is, in group settlements a good deal of complaint on the score of the administration of the groups by one central board. The settlers are desirous of having that system altered, and they suggest local boards. Their desire seems to fall in with the views held by south-western residents generally. A matter especially agitating the minds of group settlers is standardisation. Standardisation means that a settler on one block is expected to make the same "do" of his land as a man on possibly a much superior block.

The Minister for Lands: That cannot be so because the areas differ in size.

Mr. WITHERS: At any rate, the general impression in the group areas is that the system is such that a man is restricted to cattle raising whether his land is suitable or not for the production of pastures. They cannot go in for poultry, pig raising or whatever they may desire, but have to develop their holdings in accordance with the system I have indicated. Mr. Clark is a prosperous farmer at Burekup. He understands the agricultural industry from A to Z and is essentially a practical man. He bought some property that was considered to be stagnant and unsuitable for production. The previous owner had allowed it to get into such a state that the general impression was it would grow nothing. Mr. Clark had a look at the property and conceived the idea that it would produce peas. He experimented accordingly, and at last year's agricultural conference in the South-West he gave particulars of the production. Unfortunately I have forgotten the details, but the outstanding fact was that the peas loosened the ground and made it suitable for the growth of other commodities that had failed there previously. It is such experiences as that of Mr. Clark that should be availed of by those in authority in the group areas. It would be productive of much good if some of these settlers who have carried out experiments successfully and have proved what is possible with vari-

ous types of land, were consulted to a greater extent and thus assist in the task of making our group settlers' success more assured. I am perfectly aware that some people have not made much progress on their holdings in the South-West although some of them have been on their blocks for 40 or 50 years.

The Minister for Lands: They have made no attempt to achieve success.

Mr. WITHERS: That is quite true. At the same time we must realise that those old settlers had not at their disposal the assistance of science such as we have to-day. The old farmers had to rely on natural manures and had not the artificial manures that play such a part in making the ground productive in these days. I was pleased to note in the Governor's Speech that the Government had done so much towards supplying wire netting to the farmers in the wheat belt in order to protect them against the invasion of the rabbit. It seems to me that the people in those districts should be more grateful to the Government than apparently they are. Settlers in the wheat belt have received more from the Government than have those residing in any other part of the State. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) referred to the provision of an agricultural college in the South-West. I do not know that such an institution is altogether necessary, but I do consider that we are entitled to more consideration regarding the establishment of experimental farms. We had one some years ago, but a "D.S.O." named Willmott came on the scene and destroyed the State orchard.

Mr. Lambert: What does D.S.O. stand for?

Mr. WITHERS: The people down there give him that title—"Destroyer of State Orchards." That was at the Brunswick State farm, which comprised good land. Fruit trees were growing there, but Mr. Willmott, who was then a Minister, was not satisfied with the progress, and in order to prove that the orchard was not satisfactory, he had the trees rooted out.

Mr. Lambert: Now the people have rooted him out.

Mr. WITHERS: Perhaps that is the result of his action some years ago. Drainage is an important question in the South-West, and will have to receive even greater attention in the future. Our timber trade has contributed largely towards the prosperity

of the State. Thus it is that the South-West has contributed to a great extent to the finances of the State. Last year I suggested that the timber trade was looked upon as a diminishing asset and that we would have to look to reforestation to make up the deficiency. I am pleased to note that the Government are alive to that fact, and that large areas in the South-West have been planted with pines. Plantations have been established in several centres, so that when the hardwoods have decreased beyond a certain point, we will be able to turn our attention to the softwoods we are establishing to-day. Regarding railway construction, I am pleased to know that the Lake Grace-Newdegate railway has been completed. Following upon that work I hope to be able to secure more facilities in Bunbury to cope with the extra harvest that will be handled from that portion of the State. I can deal with that matter more extensively when the Estimates are under consideration. I endorse the appeal made by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), who urged the Government to push ahead with their legislation to authorize the construction of the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway and to proceed with the work as soon as the Bill becomes law. I know the district affected well; some of the settlers have been established there for upwards of 50 years. In the past many of them have had to make the long journey into Bunbury in bullock drays. They have grown fruit trees and established orchards 18 miles away from the railway siding. It is time that they received some consideration in recognition of the pioneering work they have done in the South-West. There may not be much land suitable for closer settlement in the district covered by the line, because it is fairly well settled now. I agree with the contention of the member for Nelson that there is an abundance of timber there that has been left almost untouched. At the present time, however, people are working three shifts with motor lorries, carting sleepers from 20 miles out in the back country. Hon. members will readily appreciate the condition of the roads traversed by the lorries.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: They are shifting the roads.

Mr. WITHERS: Fortunately it is ironstone country and so far the roads are in better condition than those in other parts of the State. That is more than can be said

for the greater part of the South-West. At the present rate that state of affairs will not exist very long if the motor lorries continue to use the roads. I do not say they should not be allowed to do so, but if the railway were constructed the sleepers would be conveyed by rail and much expenditure on the roads that will be necessary in the future will be saved. Some of the residents still drive their old-time wagonettes and have not purchased motors because they expect the railway to be built in the near future. I hope therefore that the Government will go ahead with the construction of the line as soon as the Bill is agreed to. Dealing with road construction generally in the South-West, we cannot conscientiously claim to have any roads at all in that part of the State. One could hardly designate them as roads, but we certainly have areas where the roads ought to be. The Minister for Works realises the importance of this question. The task is a big one, and he is making every effort to cope with it. I trust the time is not far distant when he will be able to finalise matters regarding the Federal scheme. I know the State will be behind the Minister so that we can make a start with a reasonable road policy. I hope to see the Roelands quarries thrown open again because the metal available there has been proved to be of a quality suitable for road construction. If that be done, there will be ample freight available for empty railway trucks during the winter months. Road repair work will then be possible in many districts and work will be available for the unemployed. Naturally, it is impossible to construct roads in the South-West during the winter months, and they will have to be attended to at other periods of the year, so that the position will arise that work will be available on the roads practically continuously throughout the year.

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

Mr. WITHERS: Before tea I was about to touch on the Bunbury harbour. I notice the Speech states that dredging operations have been continued at Bunbury. I was wondering if that was a misprint, for I know only too well that dredging operations have been discontinued at Bunbury. However, I hope that in the near future they will be continued. Only a week or two ago

I went down the wharf to see what the conditions were during the stormy period we were then passing through. About half-way down the wharf I noticed there was as much sand as water travelling at terrific speed from the estuary towards the break-water. But despite its speed it was obvious that quite a large percentage of the silt was depositing itself on the harbour bed. Silting this year will be a serious problem, and I am anxious to hear from the Minister what is to be done towards providing the nucleus of the new scheme. We must look facts in the face. The Bunbury harbour is older than am I, and portion of the wharf in use to-day is at least as old as I am. The improvement of the harbour is essential to the progress of the South-West. The jetty will not withstand the pressure upon it much longer. We do not want to see it meet the fate of the Fremantle bridge. The teredo worm is destroying the piles in the jetty. One can see that with his own eyes, to say nothing of the cost of repairs. So something more than the mere dredging of the silt in the harbour is required in Bunbury. The tonnage exported from Bunbury last year does not compare favourably with the figures of the previous year. The revenue was £2,000 less than in the previous year, due principally to the falling of in the bunkering trade and in wheat. Last year we shipped 18,000 tons less than in the previous year. The port should be receiving the bulk of the bunkering trade, but to get that we require an improved harbour.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you not want to improve the coal?

Mr. WITHERS: I will leave that to the member for Collie. Due to lack of accommodation and perhaps also to lack of facilities, we are not getting the bunkering trade that we should get. Shipments of jarrah have been maintained fairly well, although not up to the level of the previous year; but that should be compensated by the extra amount of bunkering and the extra quantity of wheat in the geographical zone of Bunbury. The jarrah exported last year amounted to 205,726 loads of 50 cubic feet; wheat 24,302 tons; coal 10,116 tons, or 18,000 tons less than in the previous year; apples 625 tons; potatoes 369 tons; general 382 tons; a total tonnage of 373,671 tons of an approximate value of £1,915,431. So the port of Bunbury has been responsible for a fair amount of revenue. Imports re-



presented 7,458 tons, including 5,000 tons of naphtha and kerosene. Imports by rail included 553 tons of kerosene and 1,879 tons of naphtha. The total cargo handled during the year was 386,129 tons. There were 138 steamers of a net registered tonnage of 343,442 tons and a gross registered tonnage of 554,639 tons. I am quite justified in again bringing under the notice of the Government the necessity for something being done at the port of Bunbury. It should be treated as an urgent matter. As to the railway, Bunbury suffers from a congestion. We have in the yard a bottle neck through which the whole of the traffic has to pass, with the result that in the peak seasons we are considerably congested. This matter was brought before the Premier during his visit to Bunbury, as was also the inadequate accommodation for the locomotive running staff. I have it on good authority that the falling off in the wheat shipments has been due to the system operating at Bunbury, where there is a weighbridge of obsolete type. It is a double weighbridge, and the shippers of wheat have to accept the railway weights. On going into the figures we find the average weight given over that weighbridge is 1lb. less per bag than is paid for by the millers when buying wheat for gristing. The miller is not going to pay for 1lb. more per bag than he is actually getting; and the wheat weighed at the siding before going to the mills works out at a little more than 1lb. per bag as against the weight over the weighbridge at Bunbury. So imagine the loss to the Railway Department in respect of a shipload of 80,000 bags! Then there is the loss to the shipper and the loss to the producer; so the State is losing all that money as the result of using an obsolete weighing machine.

Mr. Lindsay: It is a serious statement to make.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, but I have the figures here to prove it. I would not have made the statement had I not the figures. That question must be considered as a part of the new railway yards to be provided under the new Bunbury harbour scheme. Whilst on the question of railways, I should like to express my appreciation of the attitude of the Government in granting increases to the railway staff and also introducing the 44-hour week. The railway men are very anxious to know when the 44-hour week is to be extended to the whole of the service, and

when long service leave is to be granted to the wages staff. The Government have always been sympathetic towards the railway men and ready to recognise the value of their services. I hope they will continue to extend that just recognition of the men who are doing such yeoman service for the State.

Mr. Latham: What about giving something to those not in the Railway Department?

Mr. WITHERS: I think the primary producers generally appreciate the fact that the men working on the railways have at all times done their best to shift the farmers' produce. The average railway man is always anxious to do his best for the farmers, and indeed for all primary producers. Speaking from an experience of 25 years. I am satisfied that railway men are really social outcasts. Railway men, and particularly the running staff, being in the employ of the general public, have to work at holiday time when other people are on pleasure bent.

Hon. G. Taylor: You do not suggest that is the only time they do work.

Mr. WITHERS: They work harder on holidays than on other days. I was on the goldfields for some years, and in that climate one could appreciate a holiday in the summer time, but because the peak season was the summer time and relieving hands could not be obtained from the coast, the men had to take their holidays during the winter time.

Mr. Latham: Many workers do not get an annual holiday.

Mr. WITHERS: The holidays granted to the railway men are not commensurate with the inconvenience that they suffer throughout the year. We should encourage people to travel more on holidays by reducing the fares. Cheap tickets should be issued to the seaside resorts, not only in summer time, but all the year round.

Mr. Latham: You want a bit more centralisation.

Mr. WITHERS: No, but I should like people to have the opportunity to travel from the back country to such salubrious places as York. They would do that if cheap tickets were issued.

Mr. Lindsay: What about Wyalcatchem?

Mr. WITHERS: Anyone who would go there would not deserve a holiday.

Hon. G. Taylor: Our chief trouble is that too many people are coming to the city.

Mr. WITHERS: I am speaking of Bunbury and other seaports. Last year, in com-

pany with the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), I approached the Railway Department and suggested that at the end of the harvest season a fast weekend train should be run from Narrogin to Bunbury. I felt that such a train would bring additional revenue to the department, and provide a service that would be appreciated. The department did not give the request the consideration I expected, but that is their affair. If the department will not take advantage of such suggestions, the member for the district cannot fairly be accused of falling down on his job. Though Western Australia is a young State, it is quite old enough to improve its railway system in order to cope with the ever-growing opposition of road traffic. I have nothing to say against the road vehicles, but when we have an established railway system, efforts should be made to ensure that it caters better for the public than it is doing at present. Then people would make far greater use of our railways than is made of them to-day. In the Speech there is reference to the Collie power scheme. I do not object to the term "Collie" power scheme, but I would point out that the agitation for it comes from a considerable portion of the South-West, and is not confined to Collie. This scheme will be of tremendous importance to the South-West. It was pleasing indeed to find that after a couple of conferences had been held, finality was reached and that the Premier has come to our assistance on a pound for pound basis. One can hardly conceive the scope for expansion that the power scheme will make possible. In the South-West are minerals of various kinds that it would be well worth while to prospect if power were available. Inquiries have been made with a view to establishing salt works at Lake Preston. I have it on good authority that if cheap power were available, electrolytic works would be established. The Mt. Lyell Company have purchased an area of about 80 acres at Picton Junction, four miles from Bunbury, to establish works for the manufacture of superphosphate. The power scheme will not only assist these industries but will be an incentive to people to establish other industries in that part of the State. The water in numerous streams could be conserved, and windmills and oil engines could be scrapped in favour of electric power supplied by the scheme. The possibilities that cheap power open up are beyond conception. The Bunbury electric plant is obsolete, and an enormous sum would be required to remodel it. When the

Bill authorising the Collie power scheme comes before us, I hope it will receive the support of members who are not closely identified with the South-West. I am always prepared to support proposals for the benefit of other districts.

Hon. G. Taylor: Albany is looking for a little support.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not know whether the South-West scheme would be extended to Albany. The first part of the scheme will involve an expenditure of about £220,000, but the ultimate scheme is designed to link up Narrogin and all the intervening districts. It is not intended that the scheme shall serve merely the districts between Collie and Bunbury. The object is to generate current at the pit's mouth at the cheapest possible rate, and thus confer upon the districts to be served the many advantages to be derived from cheap power. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) will appreciate the fact that cold storage for fruit should be provided at Bunbury. The cool stores at Bridgetown, as well as those at Mt. Barker, have meant much to those districts. By providing cool stores at Bunbury we shall be able to assist the apple growers in the Bridgetown district as well as those in other districts that have not cool stores. Cool stores on the water front would make a wonderful difference to the condition in which the fruit was shipped.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I was told that no more fruit would be shipped from Bunbury unless some such provision were made.

Mr. WITHERS: I appreciate that fact. Last night the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) referred to the mental reception home, which is mentioned in the Speech. I have had occasion to realise the inadequacy of the observation ward at present in use. The treatment meted out to patients, who have become normal and are waiting to return to their friends, is next door to criminal. Only last week I heard of a case.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are you referring to the observation ward?

Mr. WITHERS: Yes. In the ward there is hardly room for people to walk about.

Hon. G. Taylor: The ward is a disgrace.

Mr. Sampson: It is one of the greatest scandals in the State.

Mr. WITHERS: I am glad the Government intend to do something to improve the accommodation for such patients. The time for doing so is long overdue. Amongst the legislation forecasted in the Speech is a Bill dealing with State insurance. This after-

noon we have been informed of the legal aspect; in fact, we were treated to almost a second reading speech on the Bill, although the measure has not yet been introduced. I am pleased that the Government intend to proceed with State insurance. Wherever I go I am asked, "When are you people going to bring down a measure for State insurance?" and this sort of inquiry is not confined to people who support Labour. The time is ripe for such action on the part of the Government and, in spite of the opposition indicated by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy), I hope that when the Bill is explained to members, they will agree with the Government that it is necessary.

Mr. Sampson: It would have been proper on the part of the Government to refrain from introducing State insurance until Parliament had approved of it.

Mr. WITHERS: I am pleased at having had this opportunity to discuss several important matters. I have tried to impress upon the Government the necessity for doing something for the South-West, and when I speak on the Address-in-reply next year I hope I shall be able to say to the Government, "Thank you for what you have done for the South-West."

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [8.0]: This is the last session of the present Parliament. It may be that I, as with many other members, will not be here next year. Apparently, from the speeches that have been delivered, that is in the minds of some members, although they have not said so. I have been told by older members that the last session of Parliament is generally used for the purpose of talking to the electors. It is a sort of window-dressing in order to secure a majority for their particular party at election times. After hearing the speeches, particularly the remarks of the Premier, I agree that this statement is probably true. It is usual, when preaching a sermon or delivering a funeral oration, to take a text. The Premier used for his text something Dr. Saw had said about cordial relations. He then proceeded to preach his funeral oration. Evidently by the personal vindictiveness he displayed towards this little party, it was the funeral oration of his party, with the Country Party figuring in the role of the burying party. He also talked about cordial relations, and at once proceeded to pour vitriol into the cordial in order to poison any relations that ex-

isted. He also talked about assassins' knives and cannibals, and three-legged pots and the fattening up of missionaries. These cordial relations between the United Party and the Country Party may exist. From my observation of the faces of many members of the United Party, I should have thought they were the cannibals, and that we were the missionaries and were being done to a turn. The Premier also dealt with the P.P.A. organisers. Apparently, he objected to our having organisers in the group settlement areas. We belong to a union and believe in unionism.

Mr. Sleeman: I suppose you believe in preference to unionists.

Mr. LINDSAY: When we are in the Government, and have been there for some little time, we shall be able to talk about that. At present we have to use moral suasion with those who are engaged in industries to join our union. We think we have a right to do this. The Premier talked about the member for York, the member for Wagin, the member for Moore, and the member for Irwin, and about the other people who, armed with assassins' knives, were chasing them. I suggested at the time the Premier was speaking that he might finish the story, but he did not do so. I intend to finish it now. We also have organisers in Albany, in Yilgarn, in Greenough, and in Geraldton. What is more, although I am sorry to have to say it, we shall in future have an organiser in Kanowna.

Mr. Sleeman: I thought you were going to say in Boulder.

Mr. LINDSAY: We think we have a right to these organisers. There was recently an election for the Central Province. A very able man, and a white man, the sitting member, was defeated. He told me how he was defeated. He said he was defeated by the operations of the A.W.U., of which the Premier is a member. Within the last few months the organisation with which I am connected has increased its membership by thousands. We have done that with the aid of our organisers, but the best organiser we have is the A.W.U.

Mr. Sleeman: Then why complain about it?

Mr. LINDSAY: The Premier was making very loving advances to the United Party. He said he did not know why we had no organiser in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition. I am sorry the member for Northam is not here, for I should like to

warn him that there is an assassin's knife in his electorate, and that it is a longer and a sharper knife than any other we have. The Labour Party has an organiser there. Apparently the Premier can see the writing on the wall. He realises that the Country Party are coming back at the next elections stronger than they are now, and is very much afraid that his party will be in the minority. He has had a taste of power and he likes it, and he wants to retain it. He has therefore approached my friends opposite in order to get a coalition with them.

The Premier: Ah!

Mr. LINDSAY: The Premier went further. As a member of Parliament, I have a right to reply to criticism. I do not object to the criticism of the Premier, or anyone else, except as far as my private business goes. The Premier talked about this party is representatives of the primary producers. He said, "The member for Irwin has grown more wheat in one year, and ploughed more acres than the whole of your party combined." That is not true. It is like many other statements he has made. It is untrue.

The Premier: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member said I have made statements in the House that are not true. I ask for a withdrawal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LINDSAY: I withdraw. I do not profess to be a plutocratic land owner; I am just an ordinary farmer.

The Premier: A cookie.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have an ordinary average acreage and live the ordinary average life of a farmer, one of the people I represent. I live the life of a farmer, eat the food of a farmer, do the work of a farmer, and think the thoughts of a farmer. I think I am as fit and proper a person to represent that class of farmer as anyone else, although I cannot represent the class of the member for Irwin. We find the Premier occupying another role. I expect when the Road Board Bill comes down members opposite will be urging the principle of one man, one vote. These democrats will say, "Why should property have votes?" Later on there will be brought down a Bill to alter the franchise of the Legislative Council. They will then say, "Why should these property qualifications exist? Why should these men who own a lot of property have more say in the gov-

ernment of the country than we have?" The Premier said that because the member for Irwin grew a million acres of wheat, he was a fit and proper person to represent the primary producers.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. Lutey: That is quite wrong.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Premier said the member for Irwin had grown more acres of wheat in one year, and ploughed more acres, than the rest of the Country Party had done all their lives.

The Premier: Yes, but I did not say all that you have attributed to me.

Mr. LINDSAY: I noticed a little while ago in the Press that the Premier, whilst in Melbourne, represented the A.W.U. as a delegate.

The Premier: That is not true.

Mr. LINDSAY: I only say I saw it in the paper. There is a union of workers engaged in our industries. We are not opposed to unionism.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Mr. LINDSAY: We have no right to compel anyone to join a union. We cannot tell any farmer or producer that he must join a union, as members opposite can do. We have not the power they have to-day, but we say that every man engaged in our industry should join our union, and we reserve the right to ask him to do so. I am surprised to hear the Premier, who talks so much about and believes so much in unionism, attempt to belittle the organisation to which I belong.

The Premier: Not because it is a union, but because of its methods.

Mr. LINDSAY: Our methods have been described by the Premier. We have assassins' knives in the hands of our organisers, who are compelling people to join our union. When I heard the Premier talking about assassins' knives, cannibals, three-legged pots, and so on, I thought that, although he makes a master politician, he would make a lovely villain in the pictures. How the flappers would flock to get a look at him!

The Premier: If I had your face I would put up as a villain in the pictures.

Mr. LINDSAY: Last session the member for Katanning made certain remarks with regard to the employment of workers at the Labour Bureau. He said that before they could get a job there they must have a union ticket.

Mr. Griffiths: That was last session.

Mr. LINDSAY: That statement was denied by several members opposite. I think the Minister for Works said that the statement was untrue, that a worker could not get a job at the bureau if he agreed to join a union, and that he could pay his fee after the second pay. That may have been the case then. I have no reason to think otherwise. While the Minister was making that statement, other statements appeared in the Press contradicting it. Now we know that this is the position. The unemployed talk about industrial conscription. One of their number said that, although he had been a member of a union for 40 years, when he applied at the bureau for a job he was told that until he took out his A.W.U. ticket he could not get a job.

The Premier: I say that is untrue. It is merely an anonymous statement in the Press. That is the sort of thing on which you are basing your arguments.

Mr. Griffiths: What does Meade say?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have no doubt that Meade's statement is correct.

The Premier: But that is not Meade's statement.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have no doubt Meade's statement is correct to-day, although it was probably incorrect yesterday, because to-day he happens to belong to the Trades and Labour Council.

The Premier: But you were not dealing with Meade's statement. You should not switch across at me when I say that the other statement is not true.

Mr. Sampson: If he does not belong to the A.W.U., he must belong to some other union.

The Premier: That is not the point the hon. member was making.

Mr. LINDSAY: This man said, "If I had been a member of the A.W.U., that job would have been held open for me."

The Premier: That is not true.

Mr. LINDSAY: He said, "They are plumping for the A.W.U."

The Premier: Who is he?

Mr. LINDSAY: And he added, "And are compelling men to become members." This statement appears in the "West Australian."

The Premier: By whom was it written?

Mr. LINDSAY: I do not know.

The Premier: It is not true.

Mr. Griffiths: What about the deputation?

Mr. LINDSAY: Mr. W. E. Meade said he was organiser for the unemployed and represented the single men. His is the only name I can find here. The deputation expressed appreciation of what had already been done by the member for Subiaco and other people. Later on the report says that Meade had been to the Trades Hall and that Mr. Kenneally, Mr. Mooney, and the present secretary had fixed things up to his satisfaction. In this House, during this session, when the question of our union, which seems so much to annoy some members, was being dealt with, I heard the Minister for Works interject, "Who pays the Arbitration Court fees?" I contend that our union has a perfect moral right to try to make every primary producer in the State join, and this for the very reason advanced by the Minister for Works. The Primary Producers' Association pay their own Arbitration Court fees, and it has cost them hundreds of pounds to fight unjust claims made by the union of which the Premier is a member. The member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) recently said that even the blind workers have a union. The members of our union are not blind.

Mr. Marshall: It all depends on the point of view.

Mr. LINDSAY: Last week the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) spoke of the profit made by the Fremantle Harbour Trust, giving the amount as £140,000. The Premier subsequently stated that the amount was not £140,000, but only £130,000. It is almost a habit of members opposite to contradict statements made by the member for Katanning. In this instance I took the trouble to ascertain whether the member for Katanning was right or the Premier was right. The "Statistical Register" for 1925-26, which I hold in my hand, states that the surplus earnings of the Fremantle Harbour Trust over working expenses and interest and sinking fund amounted to £140,517.

The Premier: That was for the previous year.

Mr. LINDSAY: For 1925-26.

The Premier: No; for the previous year.

Mr. LINDSAY: The member for Katanning made a statement that was correct, and the Premier, for the purpose of belittling him, contradicted the statement.

The Premier: I said the profit for last year was £130,000. The member for Katanning said it was £140,000.

Mr. LINDSAY: The member for Katanning made a statement which is true, and which I have shown to be true. The profit is disclosed to every member of the House by the "Statistical Register" was £140,000, but the Premier said it was £130,000. Any assertion is good enough if it belittles the member for Katanning.

The Premier: Can't you read the dates?

Mr. LINDSAY: The member for Katanning further stated that Mr. H. V. McKay intended to manufacture agricultural machinery in Western Australia, and that before doing so he entered into negotiations with the unions, or with the Labour Party, to ascertain whether they would allow him to do so. The member for Katanning thereupon stated as a fact that Mr. McKay had not started implement works here, because of Labour opposition to piece work. The Minister for Works immediately said, "You are wrong; the Labour Party are not against piece work; they have piece work in operation now. It was the Engineers' Union who opposed the scheme. McKay has started works in Western Australia."

The Minister for Works: That was not my statement.

Mr. LINDSAY: I happen to know something about the matter. Last March I was in Melbourne and met Mr. McKay, who placed his agricultural expert at my disposal, together with a motor car, and offered to drive me anywhere I wanted to go in Victoria. I did go through Mr. McKay's works, and what struck me as remarkable in them was that every man was not only working, but very much interested in his work. I looked at my watch and said to Mr. Gillespie, who accompanied me through the works, "It is 5 minutes to 12 o'clock now and no one has knocked off." Mr. Gillespie replied, "We do not knock off till 12." I said, "My experience is that usually the workers stop a little before knock-off time to clean themselves up." He said, "They do not do that here on piece work." I had lunch with Mr. McKay, and spent two or three hours in his company. I asked him to explain the system of piece work to me, and questioned him concerning the earnings of the men on piece work rates. He showed me a waiting list of hundreds of men in other workshops who were anxious to enter his works because the men there were receiving larger weekly payments than those

obtaining in other Victorian workshops. I discussed with Mr. McKay the question of his establishing works in Western Australia. We had a map before us, and spoke about the wheat yield. Mr. McKay told me of the result of his last visit to Western Australia, when he discussed his proposals with the Leader of the Opposition. He said to me that he was coming over again himself, but unfortunately the illness of his brother, Mr. H. V. McKay, prevented him from getting away. One of the young McKays came to Western Australia and had a conference with the Engineers' Union in respect of only one part of the business, the assembling of machinery, not the manufacture of machinery. McKays have been established for the assembling of machinery at Fremantle for eight or ten years. The expansion of the business was such as to render their area at Fremantle too small, and they purchased a block of land at Maylands. They have not, however, spent one shilling in erecting a building at Maylands. All they are doing there is the assembling of harvesters. The assembling of reapers and threshers and binders is done at Fremantle. This question was decided by the political side of the Labour movement.

Mr. Sleeman: You know nothing about it.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have the statement of Mr. Mooney made through the Press.

Mr. Sleeman: Mr. Mooney is not on the political side, anyway.

Mr. LINDSAY: Mr. Mooney stated—

I have sent circulars to the unions, and have called a conference for Friday next, July 2, to which representatives of the Fremantle and Midland Junction district councils of the Australian Labour Party have also been invited.

I may be wrong, but I am under the impression that the Fremantle, Midland Junction, and Perth district councils are political bodies.

The Minister for Works: They are industrial bodies too.

Mr. LINDSAY: I agree that they are both. However, they are not exactly the representatives of the unions concerned in the industry. They are in the nature of political bodies. I agree that certain unions were represented at that meeting, but those were not the unions to be engaged in the industry of making machinery. They were unions representing the whole Labour movement of Western Australia.

The Premier: You are wrong.

Mr. LINDSAY: I may be wrong. If I am, I stand corrected. I leave the public to decide. We primary producers are now holding a conference in Wellington-street. It is an industrial conference. Hon. members opposite, I have no doubt, will disagree with that view and will say that we are nothing but a political body. I admit that we are both industrial and political. However, the present point is that I agree that Mr. Mooney says certain unions were represented at the meeting. I am disposed to think, though I may be wrong in thinking, that the gathering was also political.

The Premier: There was no one present at the council meeting except representatives of the unions.

Mr. LINDSAY: A proposal was put up to the council by Mr. McKay, and the council turned it down. I have been told that Western Australian wheat-growers would not get their machinery one penny cheaper if the machinery industry were established here. Leaving that aspect altogether, I ask would it not be an excellent thing for Western Australia if three or four hundred men were employed in making machinery here?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. LINDSAY: Of course. The unions in discussing the matter, ought to have considered Western Australia as well as themselves.

The Premier: Don't you think they did?

Mr. LINDSAY: How did they consider Western Australia? Did they inquire whether in Victoria the industry was carried on in a manner detrimental to the interests of the workers? Inquiries in Victoria would have shown them that that is not so.

The Minister for Works: I know more about the Victorian machinery industry than you do.

Mr. LINDSAY: When I went into McKay's workshops in the afternoon, I was on my own, and I then asked the men there about the results of piece work. I did not speak to the men working the machines, because they were too busy to talk to me; but I asked the foreman in charge of a section of the shop, "Is the piece work system satisfactory to the men?" His reply was that the men would not change back to the daily wage. I put the question to three different foremen, and got the same answer from each of them. There has been no industrial trouble in McKay's works for many years,

simply because McKay's works have proper method of dealing with such questions. They are dealt with not through union secretaries or organisers, but through one man appointed by a particular section of the shops. That man meets a member of the supervision or office staff.

Mr. Hieron: That is job control.

Mr. LINDSAY: Having investigated the matter on the spot, I am quite convinced that McKay's workers are better satisfied under piece work conditions than they would be on day work.

The Minister for Railways: Even if they are, these other fellows have the same right to decide for themselves.

Mr. LINDSAY: I would not dare to speak of "these other fellows." They might tackle me if I did so. I will call them workers. The workers who exercise a considerable amount of control over the financial position and policy of the Government should consider someone else besides themselves. They should also consider Western Australia.

The Minister for Railways: So they do.

Mr. LINDSAY: Let me deal with the question whether the primary producer would get machinery any cheaper if the factory was established here. I agree with the Minister for Railways that the workers should decide upon their own job. I would not expect the Trades and Labour Council to consider the question of the wheat growers' cost of production. That is even beyond my thinking. But I have been chipped with the assertion that the establishment of the industry here would not reduce the price of agricultural machinery. While I was going through McKay's workshops, combined drills were being built; a number of them were on the floor. Mr. Gillespie told me that those drills were for Western Australia. I asked him, "Why build them and finish them here? You have to pull them down again." He replied, "Yes, but we find it absolutely necessary to do that in the case of these machines—build them here, pull them down, pack them, and rebuild them in Western Australia." That is not done with every kind of machinery. Harvesters intended for Western Australia are partly assembled, and the parts are put in big crates. We have to pay for those crates, and for the unpacking of the harvesters, and for rebuilding them. Undoubtedly the primary producer in Western Australia pays a good many more pounds for the same machinery than the primary producer in Victoria. I am assured that it

the machinery industry were established in Western Australia, we would get our machinery at the same price as the Victorians get theirs.

The Minister for Works: The manufacturers would make you a present of all the freight and handling charges.

Mr. LINDSAY: I admit that we would have to pay something on account of those items. I agree that the freight on iron and other materials shipped from, say, Newcastle would mean a slight addition to the cost of our machinery. But that addition would be nothing like so heavy as the freight we now pay on machinery packed in crates. Moreover, the machinery would not have to be rebuilt.

The Minister for Works: I give you every assurance of assistance towards the establishment of that industry here.

Mr. LINDSAY: We are in competition with America, and my belief is that the Australian workers, if they were allowed to do a fair day's work, would be equal to any workers in the world. If the piece-work system is good enough for America, it should be good enough for us. I know that hon. members opposite do not believe in piece work.

The Minister for Works: Who said so?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have said so.

The Minister for Works: That is nothing.

Mr. LINDSAY: The reason which has been given me for Labour's opposition to piece work is that piece work means speeding up, that if a man on piece work makes a little too much money, the bosses say to him, "You are getting too much, we will reduce your rates." I agree that these things have been done in the past.

Mr. Heron: I have done piece work.

Mr. LINDSAY: Perhaps that is why men are opposed to piece work, and explains why we have heard of strikes against the piece-work system.

Mr. Sleeman: What about the coal workers and the timber workers? They are on piece work.

Mr. LINDSAY: The coal miners have found the system satisfactory for a long time. Generally speaking, however, the Trades Hall people are against piece work.

Mr. Marshall: The men belonging to the biggest union in this State are working on piece work.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, and we had the spectacle of the shearers who put in a log seeking to make us pay £2 per 100 for shearing the sheep on contract and they wanted

a guarantee of a minimum wage of £8 10s. per week, even if they did not work!

Mr. Marshall: If it were left to your union, the men would not get £1 per week.

Mr. Griffiths: You are getting bites now!

Mr. Marshall: I worked on a farm for 2s. 6d. a week and worked long hours too.

Mr. Griffiths: You were worth it!

Mr. LINDSAY: The hon. member may have done so, and probably he got more than he was worth. I have dealt fully with this phase of the question.

The Minister for Works: You have hardly touched the problem at all.

Mr. LINDSAY: Some reference has been made to the future extension of the wheat belt. The Leader of the Opposition gave certain figures indicating the increase of population and of our wheat production. He went on to show that owing to the world's increased population large quantities of wheat would be required, with the result that we could carry on with our wheat production. At that time the Premier remarked that America had stopped the export of wheat. From 1920 to 1924 the average annual export of wheat from America was 165,000,000 bushels. If America is exporting wheat, it is not with the approval of the Agricultural Department of that country. The wheat industry of America has been carried on at a loss since 1920 and is certainly the most unprofitable industry in that country. While the manufacturing industries have thrived, wheat production has become poorer and poorer with each succeeding year. The reason is that the cost of production in America has increased almost equally, if not a little more than the cost of production in Australia. On the other hand, the price received for wheat, notwithstanding the increase referred to, has not risen in proportion. A departmental report shows that for the three years following on 1920, the loss on the winter wheat crops was 19 cents per bushel and the loss on the spring crops for the four years from 1920 onwards, was 21 cents per bushel. During that period 1,600 banks in America closed their doors. Then again in 1923, when the highest price for the wheat was received, the index figure for agricultural production was 85 compared with 100 before the war. That affords some indication of the bad position into which wheat production has drifted in America. It is a fallacy to talk about the huge production of wheat per acre in America. Naturally the production varies from year to year,



but over a period of ten years the production worked out at 13.6 bushels per acre.

Mr. North: Do they not get two crops each year?

Mr. LINDSAY: I did not expect such an interjection from a member of this Chamber. What is known as the winter crop is grown in the southern States where it is not so cold; the sprung crop is grown in the north, where they have snow and ice. The crops are merely grown in different parts of the country and that is what accounts for the hon. member's misconception regarding two crops each year. When we come to consider the position in Western Australia and have regard to the averages over a period of four or five years, it must be conceded that wheat growing in this State has been profitable. Thus we have nothing to fear regarding the expansion of our wheat areas, from the industry in the United States. Canada is in a slightly different position, because the average yield there is higher. The reason we can compete with America is that our crops are grown nearer the coast than are the crops in the United States. The average wheat crop in America is grown about 1,000 miles from the sea coast which means that the freight on the average American crop is much higher than on any Western Australian crop. Taking the statistics from 1920 to 1924 and the pool figures in Western Australia, the average price to the farmer in Western Australia, not dealing with any particular State in the East for the moment, and comparing the results with the details regarding the wheat grown in the United States and the prices to the farmers there, we find that our farmers received about 4¾d. per bushel more than did the farmers in America. That being so, it follows that we can produce wheat here in competition with the Americans. There is another reason. I have heard men talk about the average wheat farms in America. Official details show that the average spring farm in United States comprises 402 acres, while the average farm in the winter wheat States is about 238 acres. Hon. members will appreciate, therefore, that the average acreage in Western Australia is much greater. Recently I read a bulletin issued by Professor Perkins, an eminent agricultural authority of South Australia. It dealt with the increased wheat production of that State and disclosed the increased returns gained by those engaged in the agricultural industry there. In order to arrive at his

figures, he selected Yorkes Peninsula in South Australia and dealt with the average increased cost of production. He showed that the increase in 1925, as compared with 1913, was 19s. 7d. per acre. Regarding increased prices he proved that had the farmers of South Australia not improved their methods and increased their efficiency the wheat growing industry of that State would have had to stop. The census he compiled disclosed that the efficiency of the South Australian farmer had increased from 1913 to 1924 by 90 per cent. That is to say, the acreage farmed per man had increased to that extent. That is how the farmers in South Australia have overcome the increased cost of production. To achieve that it was found necessary to do away with the small farms, to increase the size of agricultural machinery and increase the capital cost of the machinery. In 1925 the workers engaged in the agricultural industry in South Australia were fewer by 3,000 than 12 years previously. Notwithstanding that fact, twice as much wheat was produced. That is something the farmers there may be proud of. It discloses that the agriculturist has done everything possible to increase his efficiency. That could not have been done had it not been for the assistance of the agricultural machinery manufacturers.

The Minister for Works: Do not those figures disclose the reason for the drift to the cities?

Mr. LINDSAY: According to Professor Perkins, had it not been for the position the farmers had attained by means of increased efficiency and so forth, the drift to the cities would have been greater still. Without it the men could not have stopped in the country areas and produced wheat at a profit. Only because of the increased efficiency and augmented production have the farmers been able to sell their wheat in competition with the world. That is the position to-day. When I mention that the increased cost of production in South Australia has been 19s. 7d. per acre, hon. members will realise what a great strain has to be borne by the industry. More particularly is that so seeing that it is impossible to increase the price of the commodity to make up for the augmented cost of production. Farmers cannot gain more than world's parity for their wheat. So it is that we have to compete against low-priced labour countries and we are doing that by reason of our increased effie-

iciency. I hope the workers of Australia will continue to assist in that direction. According to Mr. Sutcliffe, when giving evidence in this State, although the efficiency of the farming community had increased by ninety per cent., the efficiency of the manufacturing side had increased by only six per cent. The consequent increased cost of articles manufactured has to be added and the primary producer has to shoulder the burden.

Mr. Hughes: If you have shown an increased efficiency, you must have been going pretty slow in the past.

Mr. LINDSAY: I thought I was talking to intelligent men! I explained how the increased efficiency was brought about. I mentioned the increased size of agricultural machinery, the increased efficiency of employees and the area farmed.

Mr. Hughes: You did not mention the employees!

Mr. LINDSAY: Certainly I did.

The Premier: Can you tell me how it was determined that so much was due to increased efficiency and so much was due to the variation of seasons?

Mr. LINDSAY: Professor Perkins is recognised in Australia as one of the foremost agriculturists. In his bulletin he dealt with every phase of the subject. Speaking from memory, I think he showed that the increased cost of agricultural machinery was over 100 per cent., and the increased cost of other goods, such as sacks, twine, oil, etc., was 46 per cent. Then he showed that the increased cost of tools and so on was 160 per cent. and the increased cost of labour also showed a large increase. He also gave the increased cost per acre under the several headings which made up the 19s. 7d. I referred to at an earlier stage. Present day efficiency has been achieved by producing more per man and that is how the wheat producers have been able to pull through. Owing to our larger areas and our climatic conditions we produce more wheat per man than is done in any other part of the world.

Mr. Hughes: Do you say that your efficiency has been increased by 90 per cent. per man?

Mr. LINDSAY: I did not say that my percentage efficiency had reached that figure. As a matter of fact I have not increased my efficiency at all since I have been in Parliament. What I said was that Professor Perkins had disclosed the efficiency of the workers had increased by 90 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: Was not much of that due to the improvements in machinery?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have said so. One of the difficulties the settler is under to-day is that in order to increase efficiency it is necessary to secure the most up to date plant. Nothing must be done to stop the increased efficiency, because it is the only way in which to meet the increased cost of production. But that machinery is very costly, and its life is not more than ten years. The life of tractors is not more than five years. Yet the Commissioner of Taxation declares the life of agricultural machinery to be on an average 30 years. The Land and Income Tax Assessment Act provides that the Commissioner shall allow deductions on agricultural machinery. It also says that the deduction means the life of the machinery. As I say, the life of such machinery is ten years, with only five years for tractors. Yet the Commissioner says he will allow us 10 per cent. on its written down value. Consequently every year agriculturists are being taxed on machines that have no longer any value. For instance, if a man starts with a plant of the value of £1,000—a very small plant for a wheat belt farmer—in ten years he still has £355 on his books; and has that £355 is a decreasing quantity he will still have some left even after 27 years. If he pays £700 for a tractor he will still have £460 on his books at the end of five years. It means that there may be five tractors on the books of the average wheat farmer who is vainly trying to get true depreciation. It is an anomaly that the House never intended. The intention of the House was that the depreciation should be on the life of the machinery. It may be asked why the farmers have not gone to the court about it. It is because when we appeal to the Commissioner he will not give us any satisfaction, but tells us to go to court. But if I go to a local court and win, the Commissioner will certainly take me to the Supreme Court. So it will be seen that the farmer has no chance against the Commissioner and realises that it is not worth the struggle. I hope the Act will be amended and the Commissioner of Taxation compelled to give everybody a fair deal.

The Minister for Lands: It would be very difficult in an Act of Parliament to estimate the life of all classes of machinery.

Mr. LINDSAY: I agree that it could not be done. Still, it is already provided in

the Act that depreciation should be allowed for the life of the machine. The Commissioner should not be allowed to continue to charge for a machine that has been scrapped, but should be told that we are entitled to the depreciation allowed in the Act. Then there is rabbit-proof fencing. In the Act it is allowed as a deduction, but nobody has ever yet been able to get it. The Act provides a deduction for money used for the protection of income. If I did not put a rabbit-proof fence around my place I should have no income, for the rabbits would get the lot. Therefore I say the rabbit-proof fence is a protection of income. So, too, with the dog-proof fence. In my district no man can keep sheep unless he has such a fence. Consequently the erection of a dog-proof fence means the expenditure of money for the protection of income. I erect the fence to protect my income, but I cannot get the authorised deduction.

The Minister for Lands: If you did not build a house for the protection of your goods and chattels, you would not have any.

Mr. LINDSAY: I build a house, not for the protection of my goods and chattels, but to live in. Anything used for the protection of income is allowed by law, but not by the Commissioner. I am loth to tackle my next and concluding subject. I was a member of the Royal Commission on group settlement. Last year I had to listen to criticisms, not of the Commission's report, but of me as a member of the Commission. Yet I was not allowed to reply. It seemed to me there was a conspiracy between the leaders on both sides that the Commission's report should not be disowned. Perhaps they were right, but certainly when I am criticised I should be allowed to reply. Last year the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) went to great lengths in criticising me. However, in his speech last night he said things about the South-West that I would not dream of saying. It was contended that we had condemned certain lands in the South-West. We said in our report that the evidence in regard to light lands suggested that that class of country should not have been selected for group settlement. Because of that statement we have been slated by every newspaper in the State. Recently the president of the Primary Producers' Association made certain statements, and the Minister for Lands has replied to them. One of Mr. Padbury's statements was

that a board should be appointed. It is remarkable that the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) said last night, and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) said to-night exactly the same thing. Why should Mr. Padbury, who is not here to speak for himself, be attacked for having said that a board should be appointed?

The Minister for Lands: He said there should be a board of trained men appointed.

Mr. LINDSAY: And the members to whom I have alluded said the same thing. I agree that the Minister for Lands has the hardest job in Australia, and I believe he is trying to do it well; but I say he was wrong in his reply to Mr. Padbury, and that Mr. Padbury's criticism should have been allowed to stand. Mr. Padbury said, further, that 28 settlers had been shifted from the Abba River.

The Minister for Lands: No, he never mentioned the Abba River.

Mr. LINDSAY: Well, Busselton. But you object to Mr. Padbury's criticism.

The Premier: As you say, Mr. Padbury not being here to speak for himself, it is shocking to make any comments on him. He ought to be put in a glass case.

Mr. LINDSAY: The position is that the settlers were shifted, not to start linking up blocks, for the blocks were linked up long before the settlers went on them. The officer responsible said he would not have put any settlers on that area if he could have got land elsewhere. He also told us that the blocks were surveyed in the usual way. As against that, the blocks have since been bracketed, which shows that a larger area was required. Now a third block has been bracketed with the other two.

The Minister for Lands: Those blocks were never linked up before.

Mr. LINDSAY: Of what acreage were they?

The Minister for Lands: From 82 acres to 160 acres.

Mr. LINDSAY: Well, I read in the Press that the Premier, the Minister for Works, and the Minister for Lands went to Busselton to see about those areas, and that certain things were done. I agree that those things should have been done.

The Minister for Lands: Then there was no concealment.

Mr. LINDSAY: No, certainly not.

The Minister for Lands: Well, Mr. Padbury said there was.

Mr. LINDSAY: The member for Nelson said that 10s. sustenance was not sufficient for a man and his family to live upon. I am not prepared to say that it is, but I say that the group settler has received far more than the wheat settler. In a portion of my own electorate until quite recently scores of settlers, married men with children, were living on 6s. 8d. a day under the Industries Assistance Board. Any man who goes on the land thinking he will get the full value of his labour might just as well stay off the land. The only way to be successful on the land is to put one's whole heart into it. That is how all successful farmers have become successful. As regards that particular district, I heard some mention made of the year 1911. Serious trouble was experienced in the wheat belt from 1911 to 1914, this being due partly to the primitive methods of farming and the want of capital and experience on the part of the settlers, but the principal reason was that in that period we experienced the greatest drought in the history of Australia. For four years we had a succession of the driest years that the State had ever known. We in this State have dry cycles and wet cycles. We have just passed through another dry cycle, and in my opinion we shall get them every 11 years. In my district the rainfall during the last four years was 3in. below the average, and in the new areas, owing to the newness and looseness of the soil, the primitive methods employed and the want of proper machinery, the settlers in many instances have not had profitable returns. The settlers I am speaking of had their sustenance reduced, not because there was anything wrong with the personal equation, but because there was something wrong with the seasons. A few months ago it seemed to me that everybody who had anything to do with that land was pessimistic. The time for pessimists has gone. That time was four years ago, when we settled the country, but now is the time to help those settlers. The departmental pessimism was disheartening to the settlers. By giving them 6s. 8d. a day, the bank authorities not only disheartened them but made criminals of some of them. In the circumstances, one must expect such things to occur. There is a hardy annual to which I wish to refer—the question of light lands. Quite a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since I referred to light lands during the Address-in-reply debate last year. I give credit to the Minister

for Lands because, though he is opposed to me politically, he sometimes accepts my advice. As I suggested, he sent an officer, Mr. Bostock, around the districts and that officer has collected information from the men best able to give it. The information has been availed of, and the report on our light lands has already proved of great service to the State. In the Ejandring district, which he first visited, some hundreds of thousands of acres have been selected. Only three years ago the Railway Advisory Board, in going through that country to choose a route for a railway decided that, owing to the poorness of a lot of the land, the railway should run from Pithara eastward. If the line had been built from Pithara eastward, the country in the near future would have been face to face with additional large expenditure to build another 40 or 50 miles of new railway. That, however, will not now be required. The Minister for Lands, by sending out Mr. Bostock, has done work which will beneficially affect the country's finances. I do not intend to criticise the report of the Advisory Board in recommending a line from Kalkalling to Bullfinch, except to say that I was greatly surprised to learn the nature of their report. When the Advisory Board went out, I was under the impression that they were going to inquire not only into that particular country, but also into the country north of it. I believe that if the board had taken the whole of that district into consideration, the railway would have gone not to Bullfinch, but to Carrabin, and that another railway would have run from Lake Mollerin to junction at Bullfinch, so that the whole of the country would have been served. It is useless to criticise the report of the Advisory Board, but in my opinion a mistake has been made. We shall have another railway into Bullfinch, and the country that the board were sent out specially to serve will require a railway. One gentleman has stated that the rainfall at Bullfinch was 10 inches. That is not correct. I do not say that the Bullfinch district cannot grow wheat. Speaking from memory, the rainfall at Bullfinch is 11.43 inches a year. It is a remarkable fact that a well-known and established district has a rainfall of only 11 points more than has Bullfinch, but there is this difference, that the winter rainfall at Bullfinch is 7.43 inches, while that of the other district is 78 points more. The question to be decided is whether the rainfall at Bullfinch is sufficient on which to grow wheat. I honestly believe it is.

Doubtless in some years very poor results will be obtained but, speaking generally, the average rainfall is more than sufficient to give payable results. I know of a crop of 23 bushels that was grown on 7.23 inches of rain, and if it can be done in that district, I believe that satisfactory crops, though perhaps not quite so heavy, can be grown at Bullfinch. The other day I asked a question about that country. Last session the Minister for Lands stated that north of Bencubbin 208,000 acres has been classified. That land has all been thrown open for selection. Not long ago the Honorary Minister visited Wilgoyne with me and opened a reservoir there. That reservoir is 17 miles north of Kalkalling, and, as the Minister can tell members, the trouble of the settlers is that the whole of the country for 10 miles north has been selected. I consider that the Railway Advisory Board should go into that country and decide upon a route for the future. There is a great deal more optimism about light land to-day than there was 12 months ago. We have at Wongan Hills a State farm comprising land that on more than one occasion had been described as worthless. Last year I went over that farm and saw where the crops had been put in. It was ordinary rough ploughing of rough scrub, and yet that land produced an average of 17 bushels to the acre. The State average for last year was 9.7 bushels.

The Minister for Lands: The season up there last year was a good one.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am not so sure about that.

The Minister for Lands: The heaviest crops in the State were grown up there.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am surprised to hear that statement.

The Minister for Lands: I saw the returns only the other day.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am sure the Minister is wrong. Morawa and Perenjori had the best crops, but from Dalwallinu, through Pithara and Wongan Hills to my own district, the season was very dry.

The Minister for Lands: You are some distance from the part I mentioned.

Mr. LINDSAY: The dry years are the most suitable for the sand plain country. When dealing with the classification of this country in future, I hope it will be recognised that, even though it does not grow tall trees, it nevertheless is land. We have proved that conclusively with second class land in the wheat belt, and I can assure the House that broom bush, mallee and small

jam country in the dry areas will produce better crops year in and year out in average seasons than will forest country. In the eastern portion there is practically no sand plain, the bulk of it being second class land.

The Minister for Lands: After the next election, when we are back here again, I shall have some millions of acres and will want railways to serve it.

Mr. LINDSAY: There is little to worry about regarding the light land because people are taking it up as fast as they can grab it. In my district there is practically not an acre to be had.

Mr. Griffiths: The same applies to my district.

Mr. LINDSAY: It is a remarkable fact that there is more light land under crop in the Dowerin district than in any other part of the State, and yet that land has produced more wheat in the last two years than has any other similar area.

The Minister for Lands: That is what made me send an officer out.

Mr. LINDSAY: Plan 33/80 showing large areas of that light land, which some members considered worthless, produced last year 1,200,000 bushels of wheat. That plan showed the highest yield of any land in the State, not only last year but the year before. Though the average yield for the State was 9.7 bushels, the average yield over the huge areas I have mentioned was just under 11 bushels.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then what are you complaining about?

Mr. LINDSAY: I am not complaining and neither are the people I represent.

The Minister for Lands: Because they have a good Government who are taking active steps to settle the country.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Government have not treated my district too badly.

The Minister for Lands: We do not treat any country district badly.

Mr. LINDSAY: It would be a poor old Government that did not do something to increase the production of the State, and the only place where production can be increased is in the country districts. I wish to express a few views to the Honorary Minister who is in charge of country water supplies. For many years I have been fighting to secure a water supply for the east end of my electorate. The Government have found the money to provide that water supply, and have

agreed to construct it. I was very disappointed when I learned the very high price to be charged for the water, but in spite of that disadvantage, I hope a majority of the settlers will agree to take it. Still, I cannot understand why they are being charged  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the money expended on that work. To-day the Government are borrowing money at  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.

The Premier: No,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Mr. LINDSAY: Well,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. It is not the working expenses that count in such a scheme; it is the capital cost, and when the Government add 1 per cent. to the interest, it makes a considerable difference. It is not right that the Government should make a profit out of those people, and the high rate of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. should not be charged.

The Premier: We are not charging interest on the head works for a period of years.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Honorary Minister told us distinctly that the time had come when water schemes would not be constructed, except at the cost of the settlers using them.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Since I spoke to you, we have given the matter further consideration.

The Premier: We are not charging interest or sinking fund on the head works during the first three years.

Mr. LINDSAY: I hope the Minister will make an announcement to the settlers concerned, because they are greatly worried at the prospect of having to meet a cost of £50. If they are informed that it is going to cost them not more than £45, they will feel greatly relieved. If the Minister can make an announcement of a favourable nature, the people will no doubt be extremely grateful.

The Premier: We have been specially generous to them.

Mr. LINDSAY: I wish to refer to the question of cows on group settlements and the statement made by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith). I am surprised at his remarks.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They are true.

Mr. LINDSAY: All the figures that appear in the report of the Royal Commission on this question are my figures. They took a long time to prepare. Time will prove that they are correct. I have spent a lot of time in finding out what a cow is

worth. Last year the member for Nelson said that a cow was worth £3 a month. Now he says one is worth only £6 a year. In my most pessimistic moments regarding group settlement, I never once suggested that a cow was worth less than £15 10s. a year. My experience of cows is that none can be any good if it gives only £6 worth of cream in a year. If a cow yields only that quantity of cream, it is the fault of the feeding and not the breeding. I was recently in Melbourne, and visited the Werribee State farm. They have 500 acres of irrigated land there. It is run as a dairy farm. Part of the irrigation is devoted to lucerne, and part of it to pasture grasses. Notwithstanding that the cows are up to their knees in grass all day, at night they are put into the stables and they are fed on up to 14lbs. of concentrates, according to the quantity of milk they produce.

The Minister for Lands: On the Peel estate 250 cows gave a return of £1 6s. per month for five months.

Mr. LINDSAY: That was very low. A cow is a milking machine. Unless the food is stuffed into her, people cannot expect to get the milk out of her. On the group settlements we have not yet got a balanced ration. To feed a cow on nothing else but subterranean clover is like a man trying to exist on dry bread. A man must have a little butter with his bread. We cannot expect cows to do well on subterranean clover only. On the Werribee farm the cows are eating greenstuff all day long, and yet at night are fed on concentrated food such as chaff and dry lucerne. It is found that it is necessary to feed them well in this fashion in order to make a profit out of them. Until it is realised by the group settlement scheme that the cow is really a milking machine, profitable results will never be obtained. I shall have an opportunity of dealing with other matters during the session. As I said before, I may not be here next session. The same fate may befall other members. Notwithstanding what one may say about other members in a political way, I must say I have made a lot of good friends in this Chamber, and I will be sorry should any one of them not be here in the future. I am not speaking politically when I say that at the next election I shall endeavour, no matter who opposes me, to win my seat. Apart from our political views we can all be friends.

**MR. A. WANSBROUGH** (Albany) [9.20]: The air was rather warm just now. I propose to pour a little oil on the troubled waters. I desire to congratulate the Government upon the success they have achieved during their two years of office. I hope that results during the current year will be even better. Credit is due to the Treasury officials for the promptness with which they enabled the financial results to be made known to the public. I do not propose to dress windows, but to ventilate some grievances affecting my district. I wish to thank the Government for their financial assistance towards the centenary celebrations in Albany next year. This event will celebrate the first settlement of Western Australia. As member for the district it will be my pleasing duty to welcome all the members of this Chamber on that occasion. It is our duty to do justice to those brave men and women who were responsible for the foundation of the State. I wish to convey to the Minister for Railways our appreciation for the consideration he has extended to the Albany Woollen Mills by the purchase of materials for the departments under his control. I extend these thanks to him on behalf of the company.

**Mr. Teesdale:** It is pretty rotten to have to depend upon one man.

**Mr. A. WANSBROUGH:** It is a disgrace to Western Australia that 90 per cent. of the products of this mill are sent to the other States. It is a downright shame.

**Mr. Sampson:** Neither prophets nor products have any honour in their own country.

**Mr. A. WANSBROUGH:** During the Address-in-reply last session I expressed regret that no mention was made in the Speech of the construction of the Denmark-Nornalup railway, to serve the group settlers in that district. On behalf of those people I now offer my sincere thanks to the Government, and my appreciation that after many years of promises from previous Governments that work is now in progress.

**Mr. Sampson:** I thought the Albany people were a little doubtful about it.

**Mr. A. WANSBROUGH:** They were doubtful for a while.

**Hon. G. Taylor:** I thought they were always whining.

**Mr. A. WANSBROUGH:** Some people are always whining, but I am not responsible

for that. I regretted to note the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in his criticism of the Speech. It would appear that everything in the garden was not as it should be in the eyes of the Opposition. Anyone would think from the remarks of the hon. member, and from those of the Leader of the Country Party that the State was in a condition of turmoil. That is not so. Although the Speech was long, and it was unpleasant for members to have to stand in the gallery for half an hour, there was much of a useful nature in it, and information to which the electors were entitled. They cannot get it through the Press or from their representatives.

**Mr. Angelo:** It was a history of the past.

**Hon. G. Taylor:** It was a fair history of the past four or five years.

**Mr. A. WANSBROUGH:** Newcomers who are constantly arriving in the State and making their homes here are also entitled to the information. I am glad to note that during the session we shall be called upon to deal with many important matters. Especially am I pleased to know that we shall have brought down Bills dealing with State insurance, hospitals, and central markets, three measures that are long overdue. Right through my electorate people are asking when we are going to have State insurance. I hope the Bill will be on general lines.

**Mr. Brown:** Not like New South Wales.

**Mr. Teesdale:** It is pleasant to note!

**Mr. A. WANSBROUGH:** It is pleasing to note the reference in the Speech to the Boy-up Brook-Cranbrook railway. I join with the member for Nelson in congratulating the Government upon the decision they have arrived at. Many promises have been made concerning this railway, which is long overdue. I hope we shall soon have an opportunity to discuss the Bill. I regret that no mention has been made of the Manjimup-Mt. Barker railway. As most of this line will pass through my electorate, I rather hope we may yet be able to kill two birds with the one stone. I am glad that experimental farms in dry areas have received consideration. I regret that the plots that were started by the Leader of the Opposition in my district have not been given more consideration. It is true that the King River settlement plot and another plot in the vicinity have received slight attention, but two other plots have been allowed to revert to their virgin state. I hope it will be the policy of the Agricultural Department to

continue those experiments. It will be money well spent in the interests of the State and of taxpayers generally. There is a lot of land in Western Australia needing attention in this way. No mention is made in the Speech of the long promised railway to the Needilup area. In 1913 the settlers were definitely promised that railway. I hope before the session closes the Premier will be able to assure the House that some assistance will be given to those settlers. Notwithstanding the adverse reports on the land, the settlers who went out there in 1910 have won through. Yet they are asked to cart their products 25 and 30 miles to a railway. I do trust that proper consideration will be extended to them very soon. It is a matter for regret that the reports on the land lying between the Stirling Range and the Salt River district are not what one might hope they would be. I expected that the officer who went out there to investigate would consult settlers who have been on that area for three generations. I am not going to utter a long list of complaints, because I know the Minister for Lands is a very busy man. Nevertheless, I must say it is a crying shame to see that large belt of country lying practically unused, while the reports declare that a good deal of it is fit for closer settlement. I would undertake to place 1,000 farmers, each on 1,000 acres, there and give them first class land. Yet that area has been condemned.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Condemned by the Railways Advisory Board?

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: No; by a field surveyor. I have to make an appeal to the Minister for Water Supply and Drainage on behalf of settlers affected by the Torbay-Grassmere drainage scheme. I realise that finance is the bugbear of all Ministers. But I do urge the Minister concerned to take some action in the interests of those settlers. Owing to certain works carried out by the Water Supply and Drainage Department 10 or 12 years ago, the growing period in the Torbay-Grassmere locality has been reduced to four months in the year. This is due to flooding of the lands as a result of the works. Where we had 20ft. of water ten years ago, we have 4ft. 6in. to-day. That is on the sea side of the flood gates. On the land side of the flood gates we now have 16ft. of water. The current has been cut off, and so the area on the land side of the drains is constantly flooded. It is pleasing to note from the Gov-

ernor's Speech that much attention has been given and will be given to the question of water supply in country districts, and I desire to submit to the Minister a proposal which I regard as worthy of consideration. In my electorate there is what is known as the Two People water supply, situated some 20 miles south-east of Albany. That supply serves the town of Albany and also the shipping, and yet there are 1,250,000 gallons of water running to waste from it every day in the year. Moreover, it is first-class water. During the last summer or two the residents of Katanning and Wagin and surrounding districts have not had sufficient water for domestic purposes, much less a supply of water which would enable them to carry stock on their holdings. Yet all this water is running to waste. At the opening of this session I asked the Minister for Railways the following question:—

1, What was the approximate quantity of water railed to Katanning and Wagin for railway purposes during the year 1925-26? 2, What was the approximate cost of haulage? 3, Was water supplied to settlers on the Wagin - Newdegate, Narrogin - Corrigin, and Narembeen sections during the same period? 4, If so, what was the approximate quantity? The Minister replied—

1, (a) To Katanning, 5,000,000 gallons. (b) To Wagin, 5,375,000 gallons. 2, (a) £8,757, (b) £9,604. 3, Yes. 4, Wagin-Newdegate section, 26,000 gallons. Narrogin-Corrigin section, 13,000 gallons. Narrogin-Narembeen section, 617,000 gallons.

The cost of water to the settlers would be represented by rail freight. To me the state of affairs disclosed by those answers seems intolerable, especially as within 100 miles as the crow flies 456,250,000 gallons of water are running to waste every year. I urgently appeal to the Minister to investigate that source of supply with a view to its conservation. The water could be conserved on the heights of the Porongorup or Stirling Ranges, and thence placed at the disposal of the people by gravitation even as far as Kondinin. The cost involved would be much less than that of rain catchments. If my suggestion were carried out, great benefits would accrue to the districts in question and to the State as a whole. I sincerely hope that the Minister will give the matter his serious consideration. This may be the last opportunity I shall have of speaking on the Address-in-reply, as I understand that my head is to be cut off in March; and I must make another endeavour to show hon. members that the system of rates obtaining



in our Railway Department is not beneficial to the State as a whole. For that purpose I propose to read certain remarks made by the mover and seconder of a motion in favour of the zone system at a recent inter-district conference held at Tambellup. The zone boundaries proposed were as follows:—Albany, from Wagin east and south to Albany; Bunbury, north of Wagin to and including Brookton; Fremantle, north of Brookton. I know the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) will not agree to the suggestion made, but I propose to show him where his district is losing trade. The mover of the motion said that prior to the war all products from overseas produced at Wagin and east and south thereof were shipped via Albany, and that wheat was drawn direct from sidings and stations to the ship's hold without delay or demurrage charges being incurred. He claimed that if this could be done prior to the war, it could be done to-day. He said it had also to be remembered that those things were done prior to the laying of the heavy rail road, when small engines such as "O" class and "Oa" class were the heaviest goods engines allowed to run between Wagin and Albany. In those days that class of engine could keep two or three boats working the clock round without delay in haulage to the ship's side, and without demurrage to either ship or cargo. The mover went on to say that of course we were told to-day the Albany zone did not produce sufficient wheat to permit of ships calling for parcels. Such statements, he contended, were not correct; and to prove this he read a return furnished by the Railway Department, showing the quantity of wheat stacked at stations and sidings between Boyerine and Albany, and also the quantity railed to the three ports, up to and including the 8th February of this year—

	bags
Katanning Mill .. .. .	74,717
Pingrup line .. .. .	10,600
Ongerup line .. .. .	11,850
Boyerine, Woodanilling, and Moor- jebing .. .. .	9,700
Albany .. .. .	40,000
Railed ex Ongerup to Bunbury ..	7,266
Railed ex Ongerup to Fremantle ..	7,981
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total production in area ..	161,114

The mover went on to say that the 32,150 bags stacked at siding had flown, together with 50,000 bags produced in and near Wagin and 100,000 bags produced on the Lake Grace line, making a grand total of

311,114 bags; yet only 40,000 bags had found their way to the natural port, Albany.

The Minister for Lands: Where did the balance go?

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: The mover further stated that Albany raised no objection to Wagin and Katanning taking 160,000 bags for gristing, but that it naturally expected the products from that wheat, if shipped overseas, to go through the natural port.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Bunbury is, according to distance, the natural port of Wagin, is it not?

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: From a railway point of view, that is not so. The seconder of the motion said that the information he had, confirmed the statements made by the mover. He said he could not understand the attitude adopted by the Railway Department in permitting long haulage, nor could he understand the attitude adopted by the exporters of our products overseas. He submitted a return showing the load of F and Fs engines between Wagin and Bunbury, also between Wagin and Albany, over the ruling grades. The return showed that the ruling grade on the Wagin-Bunbury section to be: F, 235 tons; Fs, 266 tons. The load over the ruling grade between Wagin-Albany was: F class, 380 tons; Fs, 426 tons, or a difference in favour of Albany per train of 145 and 160 tons. The paying freight for the Wagin-Bunbury section, on the F class engine, would be 155 tons at 11s. 10d. per ton, making a total of £91 14s. 2d. per train.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The trouble is that the department make no discrimination but charge so much per train mile.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: I will deal with that later. I am sorry there is not a single Country Party member in the Chamber now. This is information they should have. This delegate went on to say:

The paying freight on the Wagin-Albany section on an "F" class engine would be 250 tons at 12s. 6d. per ton, or a total earning of £156 5s. per train, making a credit to Albany over Bunbury per train of £64 10s. 8d. To haul 1,175 tons gross weight to Bunbury, it would take five trains with an "F" class engine. To haul 1,140 tons to Albany (gross weight only), three trains would be required, thus showing a saving of two trains and their crews. By the terminating of the first train from Wagin at Mt. Barker the other two trains could take the 1,140 tons into Albany, thus again making a saving of a train mileage of 76 miles between Wagin and Albany, which meant, from a railway standpoint, two

and a half trains against five trains to Bunbury; or a total of 372 miles in all. A corresponding credit in favour of Albany would also be the result with the "Fs" engine. Instead of increasing the rates as suggested, a rebate of the 8d. per ton difference between the freight to Bunbury as against Albany should be made by the Railway Department. If this was so, the railways would then show a profit per train of £56 4s. Already this season some 7,266 bags have been railed from the Ongerup line to Bunbury at an additional cost to the producer of 3s. 4d. per ton as against Ongerup to Albany. Some 7,981 bags have also been railed to Fremantle from Ongerup line, with additional cost of 8s. 2d. per ton, than would have been the case had this wheat been shipped via Albany. It was idle to say the producer did not have to pay the additional cost, together with the additional demurrage charges raised by both railway and shipping. By shipping via Albany, trucks would not be under load for so long a period as when shipped to other ports, which really meant trucks would be released at Albany at least 12 hours sooner than at Fremantle or Bunbury. The duty of the conference was to protect the producers from the position in which they found themselves. Conference was justified in exposing the method being adopted by the Westralian Farmers' wheat pool in centralising the export of wheat and other products. Conference must agree to the subject going before the Minister for Railways, with a view to protecting the producer and consumer, and the State revenue, as he felt that the Minister would lend a sympathetic ear.

Mr. Marshall: It is a pity that some of the delegates to the Primary Producers' Conference are not here to see how their Parliamentary representatives deal with the business.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: Yes, I wished to put this information before them.

Mr. Sampson: There are representatives of producers here.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: This matter was put before the Minister by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), and I propose to read the reply forwarded by the Secretary for Railways. It was as follows:—

Your letter dated 22nd inst. to hand, but the copy of the memo. mentioned as being attached did not reach this office. However, I am directed that representations have already been made to the Hon. Minister for Railways on the lines of the notes forwarded, and, in addition, a resolution of the conference has also been received, suggesting that the zone boundaries be defined as:—

Albany zone—Wagin and Lake Grace and south thereof.

Bunbury zone—North of Wagin to Brookton.

Fremantle zone—North of Brookton.

(2.) The Commissioner does not think he could do better than quote the report submitted

to the Hon. Minister in connection with the proposition put forward by the Great Southern Inter-district Conference:—

"What the Great Southern Inter-district Conference desires is that the southern portion of the State be divided up into districts or zones, each having a port as outlet for the wheat grown within the boundaries of such zone. If this request is acceded to the question must be asked: 'Which is a station's natural port.' If it be claimed that the port nearest by rail be the one, the boundaries suggested by conference will need to be amended, since Wagin and the stations to the eastward are closer to Bunbury than Albany. In view of this it is hard to see how we could fix boundaries so arbitrarily without strong protest—based on logical ground—from those interested in shipping wheat. The sponsors of the zone system claim that the railways will benefit by the improved method of working by hauling Wagin wheat to Albany instead of to Bunbury, but this claim is dissipated upon close analysis. Leaving aside the question of train loads for that time being the advocates for the scheme miss this vital point, i.e., that after the wheat has been discharged at Bunbury, the empties are available to meet timber and coal orders. Such a fact in itself is sufficient to discount the request of Mr. Ingham for an allowance of 7d. per ton on wheat shipped to Albany.

"Without wishing to deal at any length with the subject of train loads to either port, it might be advisable to compare the goods load of an 'F' class engine between Wagin-Albany and Wagin-Bunbury:—

To Albany.—Wagin-Mount Barker, 380 tons; Mount Barker-Albany, 605 tons.

To Bunbury.—Wagin-Collie, 380 tons; Collie-Brunswick Junction, 275 tons; Brunswick Junction-Bunbury, 850 tons.

"The bad pinch on the Collie-Brunswick Junction section is, as you know, between Allanson and Penrith, but even here an 'F' class, assisted by an 'P' or 'K,' can be made up to 470 tons, and as the bad grade is only over a short distance, this method is largely availed of with resultant economical working. A consideration of these factors, therefore, suggests that the solution arrived at by the conference by means of simple arithmetic may not be a correct one."

(3.) I am glad to add that a proposal now under review is that the "special grain" rate be applied only to export wheat consigned to the nearest port. Freight on export wheat railed other than to the nearest port, to be assessed at the ordinary "grain" rate. However, before any such method could be adopted it would be necessary to come to some understanding with the Great Southern Conference people, as the "nearest port" definition conflicts somewhat with the conference resolution.

The question was taken up by the Albany Vigilance and Ratepayers' Association, and the following reply to the Commissioner's statements was sent to Mr. Thomson:—

In Saturday's issue of the "Advertiser" appears a communication that passed between the Commissioner for Railways and yourself,

upon the zone system recently discussed by the Great Southern Inter-District Conference. The Commissioner's reply is indeed interesting from a railway point of view. Apparently, economy is not a factor in railway working or management, and in his usual way he draws a red herring across the track by casting aside the financial aspect. The argument put up by the conference was based upon single engine load, and will stand investigation, both from an economic and railway point of view. The Commissioner carefully evades the revenue to be derived per train, £64 10s. 8d., together with a saving of train mileage of 372 miles for every 1,140 tons hauled to Albany as against Bunbury. It is all very well for the Commissioner to draw the red trail, and to say that by the banking of a train between Allanson and Penrith, the train load can be increased to 470 tons. This is only a short distance of 12 miles, with an increase of 75 per cent. Surely the Commissioner also knows that by banking of a train between Moojebing and Broome Hill, a distance of 18 miles, with an increase of 50 per cent., the load would be 604 tons. With an increase of 75 per cent. as is allowed between Collic and Penrith, the load between Moojebing and Broome Hill would be 704 tons, as against his figures between Collic and Penrith, 470 tons. The ruling grade between Broome Hill and Mt. Barker, 65 miles, is 481 tons, as against 470 tons, Penrith to Brunswick Junction, 15 miles; Brunswick to Bunbury, 16 miles, as against Mt. Barker to Albany, 38 miles. The Commissioner also states in his communication that the sponsors of the zone system claim that the railways will benefit by the improved method. (There is nothing improved; they are facts borne out by regulation.) But this claim is dissipated upon close analysis, i.e., making empties available to meet timber and coal orders. (It would be interesting to know the percentage of empties required ex Bunbury for timber and coal orders, daily.) The Commissioner's statement is not sufficient to discount the request for the allowance of 8d. per ton on wheat shipped ex Albany. No reference is made by the Commissioner to the statement respecting the release of trucks at Albany as against Fremantle or Bunbury. So, therefore, the statement is not challenged. In paragraph (3) the Commissioner again draws the herring across the trail, in his reference to the special grain rate being made to apply to wheat consigned to the nearest port only. No such request was made by the conference. Conference was strongly against any increase in freights. Nor did conference make any reference to the nearest port. Had they done so, it certainly would have conflicted with the motion agreed upon, i.e., Albany zone: Wagin-Lake Grace and south thereof. Conference also realised that under the Railway Act, the Commissioner became a common carrier and could not define boundaries, but realised that it was essentially a matter for discussion and agreement between the Commissioner and shippers of export produce, in the interest of the producer and the State in general. The tonnage quoted here are based upon "Fs" engine load, as is so in the Commissioner's communication, and it would be interesting to hear the Commissioner's views thereon.

Since then a further report has been received from the Railway Department, showing that 11,819 additional bags were railed from Katanning during June. That was at an additional cost of 8s. 2d. to the producers. These are thoroughly authentic and reliable figures. Although this information was placed before the Commissioner of Railways, no attempt has been made to refute the statements which must stand as correct. In these circumstances, the time has arrived when the Minister for Railways and the Commissioner should review the whole situation seriously. If we are to be asked by the wheat producers to build 1,200 trucks each year, in order to haul wheat 200 miles further than is necessary, it will be a scandalous shame. The shortage in trucks last year was brought about by the long haulage, and the Westralian Farmers' wheat pool was responsible for the position.

Mr. Lindsay: That is a definite statement to make.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: I meant it to be definite.

Mr. Lindsay: You say that the Westralian Farmers were responsible?

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: Yes, owing to the long haulage. The position to-day is this: Bunbury is receiving trade justly due to Albany, while Fremantle is receiving trade due to Bunbury. In consequence Bunbury is losing 70 per cent. of its trade, and Albany is losing 90 per cent. All this for the purpose of bolstering up centralisation and supporting the Westralian Farmers Ltd. in their wheat-pooling scheme. I am afraid our friends on the Opposition crossbenches, who profess to watch the interests of the primary producers but who are not in their seats to-night, have not much sympathy with the primary producers. In conclusion I am pleased to note that during the recess several members of the Country Party have visited the group settlements in my electorate. Primarily we were led to believe from the speeches of their leader that their visit was for the purpose of gaining knowledge and to ascertain the conditions on the group settlements. If that was the main object of their visit, I do regret that they did not see fit to advise me of their coming, or to advise me of the complaints they received whilst in my district.

Mr. Lindsay: They were down there to form a union.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: I was not aware that they were in my district until they were leaving again. It is most unfair

that they should have paid such a visit without notifying me. If I have not done my duty to the group settlers in my electorate, they will know what to do with me at the next election.

Mr. Lindsay: Why should the members of the party have told you they were going?

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: If they wanted to gather information they ought to have told me of their projected visit. I should have been only too pleased to escort them round and see to it that they got all the information they required. Had they done that, there would have been no reason for the Leader of the Country Party on his return to have taken a deputation to the Minister upon a matter appertaining to my district. In any case it is only right and proper that when one member enters another member's electorate and there receives a complaint, he should forward it to the sitting member. Invariably have I done that when visiting other members' electorates. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) has admitted that they went down there to organise. It is coming to a pretty pass when they want to drag the group settlers into their politics. The procedure adopted was unbecoming of the Leader of the Country Party and his supporters. If they wish to organise, they are at liberty to do so, but why camouflage the position? During the last four or five weeks some of the most irresponsible statements have been made in the group country. Since that party visited the district, I have had more trouble trying to correct untrue statements than I had in the previous two years. Only to-day a member introduced a deputation to the Minister after I had received a reply from the Minister on the very point discussed by the deputation. I do not want any honour and glory, but certainly every man should get that to which he is justly entitled, and I strongly object to members coming into my electorate and making trouble. The organiser left behind in the electorate by the visiting party is not capable of telling the truth, or anything like it. He is going round declaring to the group settlers that they have no security of tenure. Actually those settlers have more security than has the man under the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. G. Taylor: They have more security than we here have.

Mr. Marshall: And we will appreciate it next March.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: That organiser is going round telling the settlers that the Labour Party refused to support Sir James Mitchell. If the Labour Party had not supported Sir James Mitchell the group settlements would never have been initiated. I regret that such vicious and irresponsible statements should have been made regarding group settlements, not only by members of the Country Party, but also by the president of the Primary Producers' Association. I ask those responsible for such statements where were they when the scheme was inaugurated? The settlers are being told that the scheme was Sir James Mitchell's policy alone.

Mr. Sampson: So it was.

The Minister for Lands: Sir James Mitchell introduced the system.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: Why cannot the Country Party organiser down there tell the truth? I have enough to do without going about correcting all his mis-statements. Every time he sees me he is down on his knees with a request that I shall get this or that for him. Yet he is doing all he can to introduce dissension and drive the settlers off the groups. For this he is drawing £2 per day. When I visit Denmark he is the first to chase me with some petty grievance. I have said all I want to say on this occasion.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [10.10]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	20

Majority against	..	..	11
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AYES.	
Mr. Brown	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. North	(Teller.)
Noes.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Millington
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Panton
Mr. Heron	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holman	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [10.14] : I wish to refer to one or two small matters, some relating to my own district, others of State-wide importance. First, I wish to thank the Minister for Health in his absence for having promised to introduce this session a measure that will enable the whole of the people in my district, numbering some 17,000 persons, to instal a modern type of sewerage at reasonable cost and very quickly. The measure provides that any householder in the district may be compelled to instal a septic tank; also it makes provision for the borrowing by the local authorities of the necessary funds to finance the project. Under this scheme the householder will secure modern sewerage conditions at a cost little more than the existing pan rate. This will be a great boon to the district, and will be the means of saving, probably, an outlay of £500,000 which would have been necessary to instal deep drainage. I am glad that events have so come to pass that four local bodies are prepared to step into line with Perth, Fremantle and Subiaco. It has taken four or five years of constant persuasion and argument, to say nothing of numerous deputations, to bring about this end. In the past we have had in Cottesloe practically only one export and that has been night soil, and the only import has been flies. But this industry is not at all important or desirable, and I hope this proposal will be the means of settling it once for all. For years there has been a constant shifting of the sanitary sites, and this scheme will obviate the necessity for anything of that kind in future. The only possible hitches ahead of the scheme are, firstly, whether the Minister will introduce the Bill and, secondly, whether the local bodies will carry out its provisions when they are empowered to do so. Regarding the Electricity Department, antiquation charges which hitherto have always been charged on that concern have been abolished this year. Whereas last year the concern showed a profit of a few hundred pounds, this year it will show a profit of £12,000 or £13,000, but no provision has been made for antiquation charges. This is a serious matter because when such moneys are required to pay off the next big loan, they will not be available, and it will be impossible to finance further extensions except by means of additional loans. I regret that the antiquation charges have been abolished. I cannot understand the reason for

abolishing them, unless the practice has been not to set aside such moneys for the purpose. I should not be at all surprised to learn that the antiquation charges provided by Mr. Taylor's department have simply been paid into revenue. If that is the position, it makes no difference whether the system inaugurated this year is continued, or whether provision is made as in the past and the money is paid into revenue. Mr. Taylor's department has made an honest endeavour to meet past expenses and establish a reserve for future requirements, so that when another extension of plant was required, the money would be available to meet it. Having abolished the antiquation charges, we shall be in the unhappy position of having no provision to meet the next loan for extensions to the works. In 12 months' time a couple of hundred thousand pounds will be required to extend the plant. Therefore it is very unsatisfactory that no provision is being made for the purpose. In our railway system a sum of £20,000,000 is invested. The question of the narrow gauge is of vital importance and must sooner or later be faced by the Government. It is easy to ignore the trend of events. Assuming that the attack on Federation is unsuccessful, we shall have the broad gauge connecting Perth with Kalgoorlie, and when that time comes the disabilities under which we labour by having the 3ft. 6in. gauge will be increased rather than decreased. I consider that this is the biggest question before the State at the present time, provided we face it. During the last 20 years it has not been faced. It has been easier to ignore the position and treat it like eternity or secession—something that man cannot grapple with. I have made inquiries to ascertain what has happened in other parts of the world. So far from uniform gauges being common, most countries have had to face a certain amount of difficulty and expense in order to convert and unify their gauges. I suggest there is no more important question before the Commonwealth to-day than that of finding the necessary funds for the unifying of gauges, particularly in those States having the 3ft. 6in. gauge, namely Queensland and Western Australia. Money is being found for roads, and money is also being found to provide a uniform gauge from Brisbane, reaching ultimately to Fremantle. But we have to remember that Western Australia, in the opinion of experts from Europe and of our own statesmen of

both parties, is destined to have a big future, and possibly in course of time we shall have two or three times the mileage we have to-day. If that is so, surely we should face the question which all other nations have faced, namely, that of unifying the gauge. England had the experience of the Great Western railway which was prepared for years and finally one night the 7ft. gauge disappeared and next morning the 4ft. 8½in. gauge was ready for traffic. That was a marvellous performance. In the United States all the western States had gauges of 4ft. or 3ft. 6in. In course of time they had to change over and bring their systems into line with the bigger systems of the eastern States. To-day there are 300,000 miles of railway of uniform gauge in the United States. On the Continent of Europe we find in the great countries there gauges of either 4ft. 8½in. or 4ft. 9in., the rolling stock being interchangeable. It does not sound safe to use rolling stock on both gauges, but it is being done. In Western Australia we have £20,000,000 tied up in a gauge that is not efficient. Throughout the world the 3ft. 6in. gauge is recognised as being inefficient, and yet we are perpetuating it. The reason is that we associate with all our engineering projects the financial side of the question. We never ask what is best for the State; we ask what it will cost, and when we hear the cost, we lay it aside and leave it alone. I should like to place this test on Federation—whether the present Federal Government are prepared to deal with this question in so far as it affects Queensland and Western Australia. The other two States concerned—South Australia and Victoria—have already a broad gauge which is quite efficient, although there are disadvantages on account of the change over from the Commonwealth 4ft. 8½in. to their 5ft. 3in. gauge. If the speeches delivered by Dr. Earle Page in the last two years were made seriously, he should by now have produced some tentative scheme to show that in so many years there would be a prospect of these narrow gauges being converted to the 4ft. 8½in. I do not say it should be done in five years. I do not ask for anything drastic, but he should have propounded some definite scheme, dealing possibly with one main line at a time, so that we could look forward to having in 20 or 30 years a uniform gauge of 4ft. 8½in. throughout the Commonwealth. This question cannot be

neglected. I intend to invite every important newspaper in the State to express an opinion whether it considers Western Australia will be able in the next 25 years to reach its destiny, both as a wheat growing and as a general producing State, if it relies upon its 3ft. 6in. gauge, or whether we shall not have to face the question of changing over to the 4ft. 8½in. gauge. I am aware that South Africa and New Zealand have a 3ft. 6in. gauge and that in South America there is a metre gauge, but if we in the course of the next couple of decades intend to double our mileage of railways, now is the time to face the question of the change over. Seeing that the Federal Government take from us all the money that otherwise would be available for this purpose, we cannot undertake the work ourselves. I take Dr. Earle Page to task for the speeches he has delivered on this question. Over and over again he has told us that Australia's future depends upon transport and power. Regarding transport he said we must have a uniform gauge. What steps have been taken to bring that about? Every year he sees the Governments of Western Australia and Queensland extending their narrow-gauge lines. Yet the most he has suggested has been the line from Kyogle to Brisbane, though there was also some talk of building a line from Port Augusta to Hay, which proposal I understand has been shelved. It is true that Western Australia has not urged the necessity for this work; neither has Queensland. It is true that South Australia has deliberately gone ahead extending her 5ft. 3in. gauge in defiance of the standard laid down by the conference. I am concerned with the fact that amongst the world's most reputable engineers the 3ft. 6in. gauge is considered to be an uneconomic gauge. Against that we have the experience of our own railways, the results from which in the last two or three years have been wonderful. Last session I took the opportunity to say that on actual figures Colonel Pope had done better with his narrow-gauge railways than had some of the Commissioners in the Eastern States with their broad-gauge lines, but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that probably in 20 years' time at the outside, we shall be forced by economic necessity to adopt a broad gauge and, in consequence of not facing the question to-day, we shall be confronted with a cheque of £20,000,000 to

£30,000,000 representing the capitalised loans of the intervening period. The question should be considered forthwith. I invite the Government seriously to discuss with the Commissioner of Railways and other experts what can be done. I do not wish to raise the question of defence, because the argument of defence in relation to railways is often employed to cover commercial needs. Quite apart from defence considerations there is no more urgent work demanding the attention of the Federal Government than that of financing a scheme of uniform gauges throughout Australia, not merely to save a few passengers between Perth and Brisbane the inconvenience of stepping across the platform at one or two stations where the break of gauge occurs, but more especially for the transport of our goods. Assuming that any defence emergency did arise, what satisfaction would it be if the Commonwealth could run troops through to Perth and it was then necessary to cope with the difficulties of break of gauge to divert them to Albany? We have heard what the intentions of the Federal Government are with regard to establishing a basis that will give uniform transport and uniform power. Those things at present have been applied only as regards the other States. I have made an interesting discovery concerning the railway gauges in Japan, where the Government are faced with exactly the same problem that we have in this State. The main Government lines in Japan are of the 4ft. 8½in. standard gauge, but there are also 7,000 or 8,000 miles of 3ft. 6in. gauge railways. The Japanese Government have prepared a scheme by which the whole system will be converted within 25 years from its commencement to the standard gauge. I think that will be in 1943. I commend this matter to the Government of this State, so that it may be discussed at the earliest opportunity with the Federal Commissioner of Railways. If we can exercise pressure from this State, and it can also be exercised from Queensland, we may be able to induce the Federal Government to utilise the surplus they get every year, and to spend two or three million pounds a year upon this magnificent project, so that, at the end of 20 years, we may be entirely rid of the disability that is continually growing with us as well as with Queensland. Every 100 miles of new railway

that we build on the 3ft. 6in. gauge will render it more costly to alter the gauge. Seeing that Japan can do this, we might well inquire as to what steps can be taken here. The best information I have been able to gather locally is that if the Federal Government agree to do this, we should take first the main line, say from Perth to Bunbury, then the line from Perth to Geraldton and so on, doing the work in stages.

Mr. Marshall: What about Perth to Meekatharra? Give us a chance.

Mr. NORTH: From the point of view of the State's finances, the project is, of course, impossible. It is a question however, that could receive the consideration of the Government at an early date, if not now, perhaps after the elections. Dr. Earle Page has on many occasions preached to Eastern States audiences on the subject of standardisation of power. He means that throughout Australia every power supply that is run either by hydraulic means or by coal should be operated on the same cycle, and the power delivered at the same voltage, say a uniform voltage of 200. Just as the conference of engineers in the Eastern States came to an agreement as to the special gauge that would suit the Eastern States railways, they have agreed upon a standard power scheme that suits many of the power schemes there, and which provides for a voltage of 200 and a cycle of 50. The voltage in Western Australia is 250 and the cycle is 40. It is a serious disability for this country of ours that every article that is manufactured, whether a kettle, a stove, an urn, a motor or a pump, that is electrically driven, must bear an additional cost because we are out of the picture and not according to the standard. When Dr. Earle Page told his audience that the Government intended not only to standardise the railways for transportation, but to standardise the power scheme, I want to know what he meant by that with regard to Western Australia. Has the Premier ever received a communication from the Eastern States concerning a fat cheque to enable him to complete our present electrical scheme, and replace the appliances of house owners with devices fixed according to the standard voltage? Of course he has received nothing of the kind. Just as we have spent £20,000,000 on our railways, which will have to be altered, so have we spent £1,000,000 on power schemes, although we are told by the conference in the Eastern States

at these are not according to the standard. The Collie scheme will be proceeded with on the present cycle and present voltage, which is not in conformity with the Eastern States standard.

The Minister for Lands: Our advisers and those in Victoria have said that 40 mile is the best for power and light.

Mr. NORTH: I am not attacking anything that has been done here. We are thin our rights in developing the 3ft. 6 in. gauge, and developing our power supplies upon our present basis. Seeing that the Central Government has a surplus, and has arrived at a definite policy in regard to transportation and power, it should either keep silent, or give definite bonuses to the States to bring their own schemes into conformity with the other States. The proximate cost for Western Australia of making the new connections would be about £1,000,000, outside the cost of the plant. When there was the change over at Perth from the direct current to the alternating current, a good deal of plant had to be replaced.

The Minister for Lands: That cost about 0,000.

Mr. NORTH: If the Central Government means what it says, this is what it should do. If we could have a completely standardised railway system and power system throughout Australia, we should come into line with the United States. We would have our climatic conditions to favour us in the economic struggle against the United States, and otherwise be placed on an equal footing with them. We have hamstrung ourselves in regard to our railways, and are now about to hamstring ourselves in the matter of power and voltage. I am sure a State Government will be unable to depart from the existing cycle and voltage unless funds are given by those who have initiated a different policy. I commend these two subjects to members, convinced that they are worthy of notice. They will not be of any practical effect unless we can bring Queensland, or any other State that is suffering from the same disability, into line with ourselves. It makes my heart bleed politically to think that we, as a country, should have to suffer from these terrible economic difficulties, which are going to get worse instead of better. Within the next five years we may have another 2,000 or 3,000 miles of railway. This will double our disabilities and render the cost more prohib-

itive. In looking through the letter in regard to Europe, I find that there are light railways in those countries just as we have here, and a big mileage of them. In Italy they have the sense to build their light lines on exactly the same gauge as the heavy lines. They can run their rolling stock from the light wheat lines on to the main lines throughout the country. That is an important factor. I hope the Premier and the Minister for Railways will consider these matters. Unfortunately, power is still handled by the railways. If I had my way, there would be a Minister for Power, or a Commissioner, who would be divorced from the Minister for Railways. I hope these matters will be seriously considered, not that one penny can be spent towards them out of State money, but in order that they might be brought before those who have collected money through our Customs, and from whom money is due for these purposes to carry out the pledges they have given on the platforms in the Eastern States. My desire is that we should remind them that what they have said about the Eastern States does not apply to Western Australia.

On motion by Mr. Chesson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 17th August, 1926.*

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [4.38]: After every biennial election a few of the older members of this House are missing, and we all regret that some of those who were here