

to the administration of our most important statute, but as I intend to bring before the House a Bill to amend the Electoral Act, I shall not pursue the matter much further at present. The Government did not miss an opportunity to pack doubtful electorates with sustenance workers, and seats were won by so doing. In this way extraordinary use was made of the section of the Act providing for voting by nomads. Again, in almost every electorate in which a Labour candidate stood, special expenditure grants, etc., were made to ensure his return. Members will therefore realise that Mr. Fraser's praise should have been given to a Government that used all the State's resources available to secure the return of its supporters. Probably he expects similar assistance to be extended to him in his contest in West Province next year, but in that expectation he will probably be disappointed. The electors cannot be fooled for all time.

We in Western Australia are faced with many drawbacks. The wheat industry is in a parlous condition. The Premier and the Minister for Lands have gone to the Eastern States to attend a wheat conference. I am gratified that the Premier took an adviser with him. From my discussions with Mr. Wise on deputations, I am satisfied that he has a wonderful grasp of the wheat position, and if anybody can do anything to assist the industry, he is the man. I feel sure that he is sincere in his efforts and certainly I expect him to achieve success. Still, we have many drawbacks to face. Some time ago we passed an income tax measure, which is going to prove very harsh in its operations. Had two or three amendments been included the position would have been rectified, and I am afraid such amendments will have to be made to the Act in the near future. Producers and pastoralists generally have suffered severely. The current season will apparently be a bumper one, not only in the wheat areas but in the South-West. I have no doubt that, with all the soaking the subsoil has had, we shall have a wonderful wheat harvest. Let us hope that the efforts of combined Governments will result in such a price being fixed for wheat as will cover the cost of producing it, and leave something for the living and out-of-pocket expenses of those that are engaged in the industry. I should like to see it

made possible for those people to secure a price that will help them to make up some of the leeway brought about by the low prices that have been ruling. With this talk on different matters, I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. G. B. Wood, debate adjourned.

### BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,500,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 8th August, 1939.*

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

### MOTION—CONDOLENCE.

*The Late Miss M. A. Holman, M.L.A.*

**THE ACTING PREMIER** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.33]: I move—

That this House desires to place upon record its profound sense of the loss sustained in the passing, under such tragic circumstances, of the late Miss Mary Alice Holman, a member of this Chamber, and that an expression of the sincerest sympathy of members be conveyed to her relatives by Mr. Speaker.

It is with the deepest regret I move this motion expressing our sense of the great loss sustained by Western Australia and by this House in the death of the late hon. member. The late Miss Holman was a member of this Chamber for 14 years, succeeding her late father in the year 1925. It is notable that Miss Holman was the first Labour woman member to be elected to any Parliament in Australia. It may be said that the deceased lady had a unique record in the position occupied by her even outside Parliament. She was in this State the General President of the Women's Labour Organisation, as well as being General President of the Women's Labour Organisation of Australia. Further, in the year 1930 she achieved the distinction of being appointed Substitute Delegate for the Commonwealth of Australia to the League of Nations Assembly at Geneva. May I say, too, that she had unique opportunities of equipping herself for public life. As assistant to her father, even during her youth, she acquired an intimate knowledge of industrial organisation, administration and industrial law. The notable inherent qualities she possessed were the foundation of very considerable cultural expansion. She was an assiduous student, very bright, and possessed outstanding social qualities. In addition to the serious work that she did for the community, her abilities as a musician and her social qualities were always at the disposal of worthy organisations and of people in need. It does seem a severe misfortune that a life so bright and of such value to the community should be cut off in the midst of its days. That is an added reason why on this occasion we experience the keenest regret. May I say also, in view of her public life, that her training enabled her to take a most wide and comprehensive view of questions affecting mankind generally; and this was as it should have been. Her life was indeed a life devoted to the service of the community. To her family she was most devoted, and that is an attitude which we look upon as the first duty of everyone. In her public life she worked assiduously in the interests of those she represented. From that aspect her activities were State-wide. It may be said that she was a friend to everybody and everybody's friend. To-day we mourn her loss, and our sorrow is intensified when we call to mind the loss sustained by her family. Therefore in this motion, Mr.

Speaker, you are desired to convey to the deceased lady's family the sincerest sympathy of hon. members. I move the motion, feeling sure that there must be sincere sorrow and enduring regret that a life of such value should be, as I have said, cut short in the midst of its days.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [4.38]: It is with profound regret that I associate myself with the remarks of the hon. gentleman who has moved the motion. To see one who worked so strenuously in the interests of the State as Miss Holman did, cut off in the prime of life, especially under such distressing circumstances, is indeed lamentable. The hon. gentleman has said all that it is possible to say in appreciation of the deceased lady. It is perfectly true that Miss Holman came to this House admirably equipped to represent the interests she did represent. Probably few people in Western Australia know more of the timber industry than she knew, and she worked assiduously for the welfare of those engaged in that industry. During the long period over which she was a member of this Chamber she endeared herself to all sides of the House. It is with deep regret that we hear of the passing of a member who was for so long with us here. I wish to associate myself especially with the transmission of this motion to the members of the late Miss Holman's family. We can only hope that the expressions uttered in this Chamber will be some consolation to her relatives, to whom she was greatly endeared. Indeed, she was really a mother to her family. I knew her mother and father very well, and can testify that she was an extraordinarily good daughter. I repeat that I hope the carrying of the motion may afford some little consolation to the deceased lady's relatives.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [4.40]: The members on this side of the House desire to join with the Acting Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in their expressions of deep regret at the passing of the late Miss Holman. It is not too much to say that her tragic accident cast a gloom over the whole community. We all know that in her long representation of her constituency she achieved a notable record, and we would like, Mr. Speaker, to be associated with the expressions of sympathy which are

to be conveyed from this House to Miss Holman's relatives.

Question passed; members standing.

### REGULATIONS—COPIES FOR MEMBERS.

**MR. LAMBERT** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [4.48]: With respect to regulations and by-laws laid on the Table of the House, I think, Mr. Speaker, I would be in order in suggesting that members be provided with a copy of such regulations and by-laws.

**MR. SPEAKER**: The hon. member is not in order in making that recommendation at the moment. We are taking notices.

**MR. LAMBERT**: I will deal with the matter at a later date.

After the Minister for Justice had presented papers,

**MR. LAMBERT**: I desire to offer formal objection. I think I have a right to do that, and the House has a right to say whether those papers shall be laid on the Table.

**MR. SPEAKER**: The hon. member would be quite in order in voting against the motion to table papers.

**MR. LAMBERT**: I think I have a right to vote against the motion.

**MR. SPEAKER**: But not now, because it has already been decided that the papers shall be tabled.

### QUESTION—WOOROLOO STATE FARM.

**Hon. C. G. LATHAM** asked the Minister for Health: 1, What area of land is contained in the Wooroloo State Farm? 2, What amount has been expended on the farm since April, 1930? 3, What has been the total expenditure since April, 1933?

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH** replied: 1, Approximately 1,200 acres. 2, £56,617, including—Salaries and wages, £8,744; contingencies, including £683 implements and breeding stock, £11,677; clearing, etc., by Lands Department, £36,196; total, £56,617. 3, £41,829, including—Salaries and wages, £6,069; contingencies, including £492 implements and breeding stock, £7,522; clearing, etc., by Lands Department, £28,238; total, £41,829.

### QUESTIONS (2)—DRAINAGE.

#### Claremont School Grounds.

**MR. NORTH** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education: Is the question of draining and surfacing school grounds in the Claremont electorate still under review?

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH** replied: Yes.

#### Butler's Swamp.

**MR. NORTH** asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is Butler's Swamp partially or wholly under his control? 2, Has the Minister been approached by the Claremont Municipality or the Nedlands Road Board regarding—(a) beautifying this area, (b) removing dead trees, (c) draining the swamp?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS** replied: 1, No. 2, No such requests have been made for a number of years by the bodies mentioned.

### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the Acting Premier ordered: That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the Acting Premier ordered: That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all motions and orders of the day.

### BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,500,000.

#### Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Acting Premier resolved:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

*Message.*

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

*Appointment of Chairman of Committees.*

**THE ACTING PREMIER** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.57]: As it is necessary at this stage to appoint a Chairman of Committees, I move—

That the member for Murchison (Mr. W. M. Marshall) be appointed Chairman of Committees.

Question put and passed.

*In Committee of Supply.*

The House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

The **CHAIRMAN**: I desire to thank honourable members for their generosity in promoting me to the position of Chairman of Committees. I assure members that in all my decisions there will be impartiality with fair play and justice, and in return I appeal to members to assist me by treating the business of the Committee with every regard to decorum, brightness and dignity.

**THE ACTING PREMIER** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.0]: I congratulate you, Sir, upon your appointment as Chairman of Committees. Already you are respected by members, and I am confident that as time proceeds that respect will be increased. I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year ending on 30th June, 1940, a sum not exceeding £2,500,000.

In submitting the motion I am following the procedure usually adopted at the beginning of the session, to secure Supply with which to carry on the operations of the State until the Estimates are passed. The Committee may rest assured that the work of preparing the Estimates is well in hand. The Premier will be present to introduce the Budget, at an early date. Meanwhile, under this Bill, we are asking for Supply as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	1,750,000
General Loan Fund .. ..	450,000
Treasurer's Advance .. ..	300,000
<b>Total .. ..</b>	<b>£2,500,000</b>

The Government expects that this amount will suffice for the next two months. The total sum involved is the same as that which was asked for last year. The amount under the heading of Consolidated Revenue Fund is £50,000 more, and the amount under the heading of General Loan Fund is £50,000 less than was provided last year. For the first three months of the last financial year the expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund was £1,734,193, exclusive of expenditure under special Acts such as interest, and sinking fund contributions, etc. The amount required from General Loan Fund will cover the loan expenditure for the first three months of the current financial year. The money will be used to the best advantage, and as many men as possible will be employed on useful work. The Treasurer's advance is required to meet expenditure which, for the time being, cannot be charged against votes, or otherwise cleared, and we are, therefore, asking for the customary amount, namely £300,000. It was estimated last financial year that there would be a deficit of £19,346. The actual deficit was £220,442, or an increase over the estimate of £201,096. I propose to treat this as a formal request for Supply that is necessary for the first three months of the year. The information I have given is, I think, sufficient for the purpose. Information concerning the future can be given when the Estimates are introduced. The Premier has promised that they will be brought down at the earliest possible date.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [5.5]: I also wish to offer you, Mr. Marshall, my congratulations upon your elevation to the position of Chairman of Committees. Knowing you as I have done for a lengthy period I feel sure that you will occupy your new post with the dignity you have always observed on the floor of the House. I sincerely hope we shall be a happy family under your control in Committee.

The **CHAIRMAN**: Order! Will the Leader of the Opposition kindly resume his seat? I wish to point out that it is disorderly for any member to refer to any other member by name. No member loses his identity as such because he is elected to some official capacity by resolution of the House. The same thing can be said when

a member is elected to act as a Minister of the Crown. Standing Order 151 provides—

The several rules for maintaining order in debates shall be observed in every Committee of the whole House.

Standing Order 130 reads as follows:—

No member shall refer to any other member by name, except for the purpose of distinguishing him from other members returned for the same electoral district.

In this Chamber there is only one member for each electoral district. I am aware that for a considerable number of years the practice of referring to a member by name has been permitted, and as a private member I have noticed the extent to which the position has sometimes been aggravated. I wish members to understand that whilst I occupy the Chair I shall not permit any reference to any member by his name.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am sorry if I offended against the Standing Orders, and was not aware that I had referred to any member by name. I do not know whether your remarks, Sir, were made for my benefit or not, but I can assure you that I will observe the Standing Orders as I have ever done, with the same meticulous care that any other member would display. I propose to offer no objection to the passing of the Supply Bill. As I have said repeatedly on previous occasions, I am of opinion that Parliament has no control over the finances of the State. To-day we are called upon to pass Supply amounting to £2,500,000. We do not know how the money will be spent, but we do know it will be collected by way of taxation and from those utilities that are given to the people of the State. We have to answer to the public when the general elections come round again, but I do not know that we can offer any very good excuse for the high taxation we expect people to meet. In my belief, Parliament should meet earlier than it does. Already one month's expenditure has been unlawfully incurred, because no authority has existed for the expenditure of any public funds since the 30th June last. The right thing to do would be to call Parliament together earlier in the year, and to have the Estimates brought down before the 30th June so that we might know exactly what money was to be spent. I know the present procedure has been followed for many years, and will probably be continued despite my protest this afternoon. I draw

attention to this question because I believe the finances of the State during the current year will be such that it will take the Government all its time to meet its commitments. I do not propose to deal with the financial position as a whole at this juncture because I will make reference to it in my speech on the Address-in-reply. In the authority that Parliament has been asked to grant appears an amount of £450,000 from General Loan Fund. This is to cover the loan expenditure for the first three months of the year, July to September inclusive. It seems as if we might anticipate that close on £2,000,000 of loan moneys will be available. I am doubtful whether that large sum will be forthcoming for expenditure by the Government. Ministers are asking for a great deal of money. I know that considerable sums are required for the carrying on of affairs of State, and providing employment for those who cannot get it elsewhere, but I warn the Government it will have to be very careful. It seems that when departmental heads go to Ministers with requests for further expenditure they have little difficulty in getting the money. I would refer to two instances. Evidently the Department of Native Affairs has persuaded the Government to purchase without authority the Carrolup Estate and make it available as a native settlement. I agree that the natives should be housed as well as possible. On the other hand, the Government possesses many properties that could be used for the purpose without such expenditure. Recently we have seen certain statements in the Press to the effect that the Government had purchased a farm at Wokalup for £9,000. The farm at Whitby Falls has been used for a number of years and a large sum of money has been expended there. According to the Press reports, the excuse offered by the Government for the Wokalup expenditure is that insufficient land is available at Whitby Falls. I know the farm well.

The Minister for Mines: Insufficient suitable land for the purpose required is not available.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I presume the Minister for Mines is referring to buildings. There is a large piece of land on the flat between the road and the hills that is undoubtedly of considerable value. I believe it could be put to better use.

The Minister for Mines: We still have it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But it has not been put to its full use. Despite this land being available, the Government has spent £9,000 in purchasing from some company the land to which I have referred at Wokalup. The item is a small one in a total of £11,000,000, which will probably be spent during the coming year, but we shall have to look after the small sums as well as take care of the large ones. I believe that Ministers will look after the large amounts, though we must remember that many small sums mount up to considerable dimensions. A responsibility rests upon every member to do justice to those upon whom governmental expenditure must be made, to see that we do not unnecessarily take money from the people by way of taxation, as well as deprive the ordinary individual of the opportunity to find employment outside the realms of Government undertakings. A third of this money has already been spent, and the Government is looking forward next Friday to finding the large amount that will be required for salaries and wages, etc. I shall not, therefore, oppose the motion, but hope that the Government will take to heart the remarks I have made in respect to expenditure.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [5.13]: This Bill must be passed so that the Government may carry on the business of the country. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I feel that in the stringent times through which we are passing, times that on present indications are likely to continue for some while, the opportunity should be taken to set out more clearly how these monies are to be expended. When he brings down the Budget the Premier will, of course, tell the House in some detail how much money he expects to secure, what he proposes to do with it, how much loan money he hopes to raise and what he intends to do with it. In respect to the two Supply Bills that deal with the period between the beginning of the financial year and the introduction of the Budget, these have been brought down more or less as a matter of form. Some resumé showing how the money will be spent ought to be given to the Committee. We are asked to provide £450,000 from Loan Fund, and might well be told what undertakings the Government has in mind and how the money is to be apportioned to the different projects. Regarding the financial administration of

the State, it seems extremely desirable that, in respect of all matters, those who contribute shall be assured that the best possible use is made of the State's resources. At the present juncture in particular, the State may be called upon to provide a certain amount of assistance for those associated with the wheat-growing industry. The suggestion has already been made, and it may be inevitable, that a proportion of the money provided for the relief of those people must come from State revenue. When Supply Bills are presented at this stage of a session, if details are given to members, they should be informed as to what reserves are being made in order to meet the drastic position in which the wheat-growing industry now stands, and also enlightened as to how those reserves stand in relation to the general expenditure of the State. I hope we can establish a practice in connection with Supply Bills by which the necessity for members to receive some information will be recognised, so that they will be able to follow what the Government is doing when spending such a large sum of money.

**THE ACTING PREMIER** (Hon. H. Milington—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [5.17]: Two questions were raised by the Leader of the Opposition. One related to the acquisition of land which at one time, I understand, was a reserve for natives. That transaction will be explained by the Minister concerned when he introduces his departmental Estimates. Members will agree there has been sufficient criticism of the Department of Native Affairs to indicate that the country generally desires the Government to do something better than has been done in the past. In that connection I do not at this juncture propose to offer any excuse. The hon. member also referred to the purchase of land at Wokalup. I think there has also been some criticism regarding the mental hospitals. I know that people in the South-West have suggested that an experimental farm was required for the purpose of demonstrating the advantages of irrigation, and also of contrasting farming methods in that area with dry-farming. The property in question will provide for both requirements. As to the points raised by the member for West Perth, I presume he does not at this stage expect me to go into de-

tails. The issues involved are to be discussed at a special conference convened by the Commonwealth Government, and I assure the Committee that to date no special arrangements have been made. There is a general idea that something definite must be done, but members will hardly expect me to provide a declaration of policy when considering the Supply Bill, seeing that that policy has not yet been determined. Whatever is to be done, whether from revenue or otherwise, will be announced by the Government in due course, but certainly not to-day.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

*In Committee of Ways and Means.*

The House resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

**THE ACTING PREMIER** (Hon. H. Milington—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.20]: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1940, a sum not exceeding £1,750,000 be granted out of Consolidated Revenue, £450,000 from the General Loan Fund, and £300,000 from the Public Accounts for the purpose of temporary advances to be made by the Treasurer.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [5.22]: I have to confess that my curiosity has not been entirely stilled by the reply of the Minister. We are to spend £450,000 in advance of the Loan Estimates, and it should be quite possible for the Minister to give the Committee some idea of the loan works upon which the money is to be spent. The matter is one of interest to members, and I should imagine that the Minister for Works in particular would have no difficulty in supplying a list of at least some of the works on which the money will be expended. As it is, members are entirely in the dark. Our minds may revert to the Estimates presented last year, but I do not know what loan undertakings have been completed and what works are in progress. The Minister would assist members if he would give them some idea of what works are still in progress, and thus require the expenditure of further funds.

**THE ACTING PREMIER** (Hon. H. Milington—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.24]: Had I the slightest idea that members would be interested in the schedule of works, I could have presented one to them, and it would have kept members occupied for quite a while. From memory, I know there are many works in progress for which amounts have to be provided from Loan funds each year. They are works that extend over a period of years, such as the Canning Dam. That undertaking has to be continued. Then there is the work carried out by the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department. Apart from the main scheme, of which we have heard so much and which is to cost £1,000,000 or more, members will realise that there are extensions to be carried out in various directions. For instance, the extensions to the Midland-Guildford district are in progress at present. Other extensions have to be carried out as the city expands, and that class of work has had to be undertaken in Wembley, Nedlands and elsewhere. Those works are in progress. Then, again, country water supplies have to be provided. Members will understand that the question is not one relating to a specific work but to continuous operations. The money in question will be required to carry on the extensions I have referred to, and that work has to go on from month to month. When one section of the work is completed, new operations have to be put in hand in order to absorb the unemployed. There is nothing mysterious about the whole matter. The State's activities do not stop dead on a given date; they go on. Consequently, the Government must have further funds with which to carry on the ordinary services of the State, and to continue the authorised undertakings from Loan Revenue. The loan works affected by the Supply Bill are the ordinary ones that have been in progress for some time and the procedure adopted is that which has been followed over a period of years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Are we discussing the resolution regarding the Committee of Ways and Means?

The CHAIRMAN: We are sitting as a Committee of Ways and Means.

**MR. RAPHAEL** (Victoria Park) [5.26]: I hope the Committee will agree to the question without further discussion or de-

lay. The position of the unemployed in my electorate is desperate. The Government is using every endeavour to cope with the unemployment caused by private employers putting men off. If there is any suggestion of holding up action on the part of the Government in its endeavour to find employment for men even on major works throughout the State, the only result will be to make increasingly difficult the absorption of men in employment. I hope the Leader of the National Party (Mr. McDONALD) will allow Supply to be granted, if only from that standpoint.

Mr. Needham: He cannot stop it.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The Government should receive every assistance in its attempt to absorb men in employment. The problem is a big one and has become increasingly difficult during the past few months. The action of private employers in dismissing men has forced the Government to provide work even in directions that it may not have desired.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [5.28]: Any idea that I desired to defer, or hamper, any Loan works exists solely in the imagination of the member for Victoria Park. I am not aware of any large number of dismissals by private enterprise. On the other hand, employers are endeavouring to keep their men at work. I attended a meeting of employers to-day that had been convened for that very purpose. I wish to thank the Minister for telling members something about the Loan works in progress. Had he not done so, I might have gone down town and been asked what were the works upon which we were to spend upwards of £500,000 that we are now asked to sanction. I could only have answered that I did not know, as the Minister had not told the Committee.

Mr. Raphael: You would not have said that.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister referred to several works, including the Canning Dam, but he did not mention the Waroona Reservoir. Perhaps he overlooked the latter work when speaking on the spur of the moment, and I cannot blame him for overlooking it.

The Acting Premier: I will give you the schedule.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Will you do so if we adjourn the debate?

The Acting Premier: No, later on.

Mr. McDONALD: If we are asked to agree to the expenditure of £500,000, we should be told how the money is to be spent.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

### *All Stages.*

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced passed through all stages without debate, and transmitted to the Council.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### *Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd August.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [5.34]: On behalf of the Opposition, I desire to join with the Government in expressing profound regret at the passing of two of Australia's great men—the late Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. J. A. Lyons, and the Premier of Tasmania, the Hon. A. G. Ogilvie. I knew both gentlemen very well. Each rendered great service to Australia. The late Mr. Lyons was not only Premier of Tasmania, but he was also Prime Minister of Australia for a record number of years, or almost a record number of years. I met Mr. Ogilvie on several occasions. Both gentlemen gave of their very best at a time when Australia was passing through its greatest crisis, economic and financial, and there is no doubt their services assisted Australia in weathering the storm. I do not think people generally realise the great strain imposed upon men who hold public positions. I am sure that the worries associated with public life are more trying than the ordinary person understands, and it is on account of the exacting nature of their duties that so many men closely associated with public life pass away at a comparatively early age. I also desire to express my regret at the passing of a man who occupied a seat in this House for no less than 25 years; I refer to the late Mr. MacCallum Smith. Twenty-five years is a very long period in which to serve one's country, and he served it very well. He was a very generous and open-hearted man, and I am sure the State will be the poorer for his passing. I desire also to mention the passing of Professor Whitfeld. He was



a young man's man; there is no doubt about that. He performed a wonderful service for the University, and I expect it will be very difficult to get a man who will fill the Vice-Chancellor's seat as well as he filled it during the last few years. I know that he was loved by all students, and have no doubt that many of them will look back with great pride upon the fact that they were associated with him during their University career.

Turning to a more pleasant subject, I desire to congratulate members who have been returned to this House. There are a few changes. I remember that in the closing hours of last session I pointed out that some of us would be sure to fall by the wayside and would be replaced by others. I assure the new members that we on this side of the House welcome them here. We believe they have come into the House imbued with the idea of serving the country just as did their predecessors. While we regret to see changes—except changes of Government—we hope that the newcomers will find their work interesting, and that their deliberations will be of benefit to the State. I particularly wish to refer to the loss we sustained by the defeat at the poll of the Hon. P. D. Ferguson.

The Minister for Mines: He will stage a come-back.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I sincerely hope he will. After all, I suppose the public are the best judges. We in the House are not permitted to make mistakes, but the public are, and I think that on this occasion the public did. I hope they will take the first opportunity to rectify the error, an opportunity that will be afforded them in the course of a few weeks. I congratulate the new member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat). I have listened to a few maiden speeches in this House from time to time, and that of the hon. member impressed me very much. He made a speech worthy of a country member.

Mr. Raphael: You should get him on your side.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He would probably fill a seat on this side of the House far better than on that side. The present time would be opportune for him to do so, because he would be untainted by the old dogmas for which members on that side of the House have stood for so many years. He impressed me with his knowledge of country

conditions, and his consideration for the welfare of the people in the country.

Member: He has lived all his life there.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He impressed me with his anxiety to do something to improve the conditions of country people. For the past six years we on this side of the House have tried to impress on the Government a realisation of what it owes to the people in the outback. We have at least a very ready disciple in the member for Mt. Magnet.

Mr. Hegney interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, I am not going to extend congratulations to the Government. I think it probably deserves—

Mr. Thorn: Censure!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, commiseration. The Government will find it very difficult to carry out its pre-election promises, and particularly the undertakings given just prior to the elections.

Mr. Fox: Such as?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I feel sure that had we on this side of the House been returned we would have found the Treasury, if not quite empty, then very close to it. So it was not a bad idea to give the Government that spent every shilling prior to the election an opportunity to make good itself some of its foolhardy promises. I have nothing about which to complain. I fully expected that the people would realise it would be in the interests of the State to have a change, but I am, of course, willing to bow to the will of the people. They are quite capable of making mistakes. They are permitted to do so. Only members of this House are not allowed to make mistakes. I have, therefore, no complaint to make in respect of the decision of the people and I do not feel any ill-will towards the hon. members occupying the Treasury Benches.

I tender my congratulations to the two new Ministers. Both of them I know very well. I know the Minister for Railways and Justice particularly well. I had his company for a few weeks when travelling through the country with him, and I went through his district. I believe it will not be his fault if he does not make a success of the job. Certainly it will not be for want of trying. I have not had the same experience of the Minister for the North-West, but from the knowledge I have gained of him in the House, I believe he will prove himself capable of giving effect to the deci-

sions of his Government. I regret that the party found it necessary to drop from the Cabinet the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith), because he was an outstanding man in this House. His discussions at all times were enlightening, and he had a perfect grip of his subject. Although he has been relegated to a subordinate position for the time being, I know he will still give the very best service he can to the State, just as he did in his Ministerial capacity. I would be very glad to have him as a colleague, because I know he is quite competent to deal with any matter submitted to him.

Mr. Hegney interjected..

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Well, I got a bite, anyway! I have no personal feelings in the matter; but I do think we ought to say "Thank you" to a man who does a good job, and show our appreciation of his work. Too many of the outside public to-day treat members of Parliament quite differently from the manner that might be expected. I have been here long enough to know that. Generally speaking, members—I do not care on which side of the House they are—should be treated with respect. We are all attempting to do our best in the most sensible way. Recently I read a report of a meeting that was held in Perth. I do not desire to go into that question at any length, but when I hear of the applause given to an individual who starts saying things that are disgusting and disgraceful about men of whom he knows very little, I feel that it is time I at least stood up in this House to defend the characters and reputations of hon. members.

Mr. Stubbs: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not propose to make a lengthy speech this afternoon. This is the first occasion, I suppose, on which a Leader of the Opposition has had to make a speech on the Address-in-reply in the absence of the Premier. I am pleased in one respect that the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture have been able to get away to attend the Canberra conference. In my opinion no more important conference has been convened than that which is to be opened on Thursday. Particularly will it be of importance to the wheatgrowers of Western Australia, and I sincerely hope that the deliberations will have the effect of securing for the wheat industry in our State a greater stability and

a better feeling all round than we have known for some time past.

There are really only two subjects I propose to discuss. The first is the financial position, and I do not intend to go fully into that because I shall reserve my remarks for a future occasion when the Estimates are before us. I was glad to have the promise from the Minister this afternoon that the Estimates would be introduced at an early date. The second question to which I shall allude is the position of the primary industries of the State, and particularly the wheat industry. With regard to the finances, it is very disappointing to members on this side of the House, and I suppose it is equally disappointing to members sitting on the Government benches, to find that though the Estimates forecasted a deficit of £19,000, that that amount should have increased to no less a sum than over £220,000. Certainly that requires some explanation. Naturally I do not expect the Minister for Works who submitted the Supply Bill this afternoon to have all the figures at his disposal. At the same time we ought to have been informed why the Treasurer's estimate of 12 months ago was so far out. The total amount to be raised by the Loan Council this year on behalf of the Commonwealth and the States is set down at £41,000,000, or £10,000,000 in excess of last year's borrowings. Of this sum the Commonwealth will require £10,000,000 for defence purposes, while the financing of Budget deficits of the various States will absorb £2,500,000. Of the balance, £20,000,000 is to be allotted to State public works, and £8,500,000 to semi-governmental bodies. It will not be an easy matter to raise such a huge loan, remembering the difficulty experienced over the flotation of the last two issues, both of which were underwritten by the Commonwealth Bank, and which had to find a considerable portion of the money. For this reason I trust that the Government will be very careful in its expenditure. More especially should we to-day turn our attention towards providing employment rather than spending money in material for works. We should if possible avoid that. While I agree that the present period cannot be said to be similar to that through which we passed in 1931-32, I believe that the conditions are not altogether dissimilar since business shows signs of falling off, which in itself is an indication that money is scarce. Further, it

may be pointed out than when Governments go on the market for money, they must offer an attractive rate of interest, and the consequence is that the bank rates increase and it becomes more difficult for private borrowers to provide employment. Then it is that more people look to the Government for work. I am more particularly interested because of the higher rates charged by banks to farmers and pastoralists at a period when those higher rates cannot be paid. It is impossible for a farmer or a pastoralist to pay  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., particularly when the industries are not returning sufficient even to pay the cost of production. When Governments take whatever money is available for investment, very little is left for the private individual who may desire to increase his operations. So the position for the individual becomes much more difficult than if finance were freer. I am aware that the Minister for Labour (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke) has set himself out to evolve an elaborate scheme for increasing manufactures in the State. The object is worthy, and I applaud him, but I assure him that he is going to encounter serious difficulties. When he introduced the Bill with the high-sounding name last year to provide for a bureau of industry, I pointed out then that what he had in view was not an easy matter because our taxation was higher in comparison with that of the other States, and our population was smaller. Moreover, our working conditions are no better, and therefore those industries that were already established in the other States had only but to slightly increase their expenditure to enable them to cope with all the demands of Western Australia. If Governments are to take up all the capital that is available for investment, then the secondary industries will not be able to increase their establishments. Of the £41,000,000 it is proposed to raise this year, an amount of £20,000,000, as I have already pointed out, is to be allotted to the States for public works, and, £5,500,000 to semi-governmental bodies. Repeatedly have I protested against the raising of money by semi-governmental bodies, and I have drawn attention to this action seriously endangering the Financial Agreement as well as the proper functioning of the Loan Council. This method of financing State requirements has reached serious proportions. The money so raised has been required for what are really public works,

undertakings such as metropolitan water supplies, harbour construction, and the like. Such borrowings also have the effect of leaving little for what is genuine governmental expenditure as we know it in Western Australia.

The Acting Premier: Those borrowings have been toned down somewhat.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Suppose those semi-governmental bodies say that they will not take any notice of the Loan Council? The only way by which the difficulty can be overcome is by an amendment of the law, but in that direction I anticipate some difficulty. I am not too sure that we would not need a referendum on the question, just as was done when the Financial Agreement was entered into. The Federal Government passed an Act to provide for the question being referred to the people. So we see that there will be some difficulty in controlling those bodies that borrow outside the Loan Council. The Premier has given us to understand that an agreement was reached at the last meeting of the Loan Council enabling that body to exercise control over such borrowings. The extent to which that decision will tighten up control beyond that which the existing gentlemen's agreement provides is dependent, of course, upon the willingness of future State Governments to conform to the new arrangement. But as I have said, it seems to me that nothing short of an amendment of the Financial Agreement itself will effectively bind any State that desires to scrap the agreement.

There is some consolation that we can derive from the big loan it is intended to raise, and it is that of the £10,000,000 that will be required for defence purposes, approximately £1,200,000 will be expended in Western Australia on army, naval and air force works. That will relieve the State Government to a considerable extent inasmuch as it will provide employment for a good many people, although a good proportion of the money will be required for material. I happened to be at Pearce Aerodrome a little while ago, and noticed there that a good deal of work was going on and that many artisans were engaged. I am hopeful that the defence expenditure will relieve the situation in Western Australia to some extent. One does not like to create a scare, but we cannot avoid experiencing a feeling of unrest because of the existing situation in Europe, a situation

that may at any moment embarrass us out here. A month or two ago I had the opportunity of inspecting the defence works under construction and approaching completion at Singapore. The idea there is that if Britain should be engaged in war with Europe we will have some difficulty in maintaining our own defence. It is a question whether the British Government can spend money quickly enough to protect Australia. The bitter feeling that exists between the Japanese and the British people points to the necessity for speeding up Australia's defence programme.

Increased expenditure occasioned by the adoption of such a course and the financing of a domestic wheat stabilisation scheme represent contingencies that may seriously embarrass all Governments in the near future. I should like members to turn to the financial statement which appeared in the "West Australian" early in July, from which it will be seen that the financial emergency tax yielded £1,215,000. When we introduced the legislation we had little idea of the enormous amount of revenue that the tax would produce. When the Labour Government assumed office there was no idea even then that the tax would produce so much money. Money will be required to assist the wheatgrower. My opinion is that it is not right to borrow for that purpose. Borrowing to assist the wheatgrower should really be the last resort. My belief is that a quarter of a million could be taken from financial emergency tax proceeds for this purpose. With careful control of expenditure there would, I believe, be sufficient money to see the Government through. Therefore I hope that when the Estimates are being prepared consideration will be given to the views I have expressed on the phase. I have already pointed out that the more easily money is obtained, the more easily is it spent. A Minister has to be extremely hard. He has to learn often to say no when he would like to say yes. When the Estimates are before the Chamber I shall give some items of expenditure which in my opinion were not justified at the time. There can be much better control of expenditure than there has been. An Administration that can take from one source of taxation alone more money than previously was collected from all sources, and then can have a deficit of £220,000, has something to explain.

To assist the wheatgrower may embarrass the Government somewhat, but not to assist him means good-bye to the industry. It is touch and go to-day. Unless assisted, the farmers are liable to walk off their holdings, as they are simply working for nothing. To-day the price of wheat is 1s. 2d. per bushel, indeed a low figure. I do not think wheat has ever before fallen to so low a price in Western Australia as it has dropped to this year. I cannot imagine the cause, unless it be that wheat production has increased so greatly throughout the world that the surplus has become very large indeed. To-day it is a problem merely to make sales of wheat. Several weeks ago Western Australia had 6,000,000 bushels of wheat unsold. Since then, I understand, considerable sales have been effected. However, we shall probably start the new season with a surplus of 3,000,000 bushels unsold. That is 3,000,000 bushels on top of the incoming harvest, which means a most embarrassing position for people handling Western Australian wheat. Doubtless the Government will be occasioned some embarrassment as well. People engaged in the wheatgrowing industry cannot continue without some assistance. So far assistance has been rendered chiefly by outside concerns, though some has been given by the Government. The difference between cost of production and sale price has to be met by somebody. Somebody must find that money. In the past it has been found by people who give the farmer credit. However, those people cannot continue on those lines indefinitely. If the State does assist the wheat farmer, some limit must be placed on production. As soon as there is a fixed price for wheat, there will be inducement to the farmers, over a period of years, to increase their output. With the stabilised price suggested in this morning's "West Australian," 2s. 4d., there will probably be increased production. This season Nature has been extremely kind to Western Australia. The probabilities are that we shall have an abundant harvest. The average yield is likely to be the largest ever obtained in this State. Instead of 36,000,000 bushels as we had last year, we may have about 43,000,000. I was glad to see the announcement that the Commonwealth is prepared to join the State Governments in meeting the difference between sale price, plus flour

tax, and 3s. 4d. per bushel. I suppose the 3s. 4d. is the price at ports. If it is, the farmer will be much better off than he is at present.

I pointed out previously that revenue seems to come in to the Government very well. Last year there was a fair revenue. The Government cannot expect so much revenue this year, which will be affected by seasonal conditions and low prices. On top of those factors there is curtailment of loan expenditure. The deficit for the expired financial year was £220,000, as compared with £10,700 for the previous year. Despite increased taxation receipts amounting to £192,000, the total revenue fell short of the estimate by £90,000. From Departmental and Utilities there was £90,000 less than estimated. The position has been brought about by the failure of the Railway Department to return the revenue estimated. On the other hand, expenditure exceeded the estimate by £112,000. The Railway Department seems to have been farthest out in its forecast. Its expenditure was £112,000 above its estimate. The tramways expended some £26,000 more than estimated, and Electricity Supply was nearly £13,000 over. The Commissioner of Railways is unfortunate: he seems to be in charge of the only department which cannot keep anywhere near its estimates. I do not know the reason. I hope the Minister for Railways will be able to tell us why the Commissioner has been so far out in his estimates for last year. There was no justification for it.

Mr. Marshall: There was the increase in the basic wage.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is wonderful how a little knowledge will lead one into mistakes. When the Estimates were introduced, that rise in the basic wage had already taken effect! The first 1s. 1d. had been in operation for ten weeks before the Estimates were introduced, and the last increase of 1s. 1d. did not take effect until April. If the Commissioner of Railways were to advance the increase in the basic wage as an excuse for the decreased returns, he would have a huge wages bill. Of course, that contention is wrong: it was not so. The amount involved would be comparatively small, something in the vicinity of £30,000. That would be the proportion for which he could take credit to offset the increased expenditure.

The Minister for Works: The financial result is easily accounted for because of the reduced earnings.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The claim regarding reduced earnings could be advanced quite justifiably because I know that the customary quantity of wheat was not conveyed to the ports, and there was a loss of about £105,000 on ordinary goods and passenger traffic. On the other hand, not long ago Parliament was asked to pass an Act regarding road transport for the benefit of the railways. Yet the financial results from the railway system are retrogressing despite the protection granted. Obviously there is something radically wrong. Perhaps the Commissioner of Railways will derive great benefit from his trip abroad. When I visited the Straits Settlements, I found that the Commissioner of Railways there himself negotiates with his customers, and if he ascertains that there is a line of goods offering that he can handle if reduced freights are levied, he offers reduced freights accordingly. In Western Australia we have hard and fast rules, and the department will not budge one iota. Those who have freight that can be conveyed over the railways can pay the charges demanded, or do what they like with goods. The railways constitute a business concern, and it is about time that the Commissioner of Railways realised that fact and went out after business.

Mr. Withers: That is all too true.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course it is. The same applies to the passenger traffic. I am not a railway man, and I do not like to indulge in criticism for fear I make a mistake. I know that I have stood on the roadside and watched the passenger traffic between Midland Junction and Fremantle. I am convinced that it would pay handsomely to run a few small coaches over the route instead of the large trains. I have seen three passengers transported by a train composed of five large coaches.

Mr. Rodoreda: That has gone on for years.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We have reached the stage at which we cannot force much more revenue from the public, but we can control expenditure. The Commissioner of Railways must get away from the old ideas that have obtained in past decades, and realise that the railways constitute a purely business concern. When I visited Java and Malaya, I noted that no State

Transport Co-ordination Acts operated there for the protection of the railways, but those railways were expected to compete with other forms of transport. If the Commissioner of Railways there went to a business house and discussed haulage matters, he could come to an amicable arrangement with those concerned. So long as a fair deal is given to both interests involved, I believe we can obviate the loss in our railway revenue. Certainly the Commissioner of Railways is very unlucky in being in charge of the three concerns that incurred increased expenditure.

Earlier this afternoon I referred to the conference that is to take place in the Eastern States shortly when the position of the wheat farmers will be discussed, and I certainly hope it will prove successful. I have already mentioned the idea underlying the effort. According to to-day's "West Australian," the object is to arrive at a minimum price of wheat at 2s. 4d. a bushel at the siding. In arriving at that position, the sale price will have to be taken into consideration plus the flour tax, the amount of which is not fixed because it varies according to the price of wheat. I take it that the difference will be made up by the Commonwealth and State Governments on a fifty-fifty basis. I hope the Government will accept the proposition that will be submitted. Possibly approximately £450,000, or a little more, may have to be found by the State Government to bring the minimum price of wheat up to 2s. 4d. a bushel at sidings. When one goes through the country areas and notes the position of the farmers, one is forced to the conclusion that every step possible should be taken to encourage the people to stay on the land. Their position is desperate. The banks have practically stopped credits. In some of the older districts that have been established for 30 or 40 years, farmers who have held the freehold of their properties for many years have walked off their holdings. What outlook is there for them? Most of them have proceeded to the goldfields in the hope of finding employment. After having given all their time, devoted all their energies and absorbed all their life's savings in developing their farms, the position of such men is heartbreaking when they are forced off their holdings through no fault of their own. I defy anyone to carry on operations on the land and at the

same time to make ends meet, when they have to depend on the world market for their commodity prices. I hope something definite will be done in the interests of the farmers. I desire to make another suggestion to the Government. I believe that Commonwealth rural relief money could be made available for the assistance of farmers. In the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the wheat, flour and bread industries reference is made to the directions in which money was being used for the relief of industry. In some States funds were made available to provide for interest. A charge of 3 per cent. against the farmers was made, and the difference between that and the bank rate was provided out of the Rural Relief Fund. Such a scheme might be of great assistance to some farmers in Western Australia. I propose to quote figures to indicate that it is quite impossible for the men on the land to pay their interest charges.

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

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Before the tea adjournment I was referring to assistance that could be rendered to the wheatgrower by utilising money from the Rural Relief Fund provided by the Commonwealth, to make up the difference between the low rate of interest which the farmer would be required to pay and the rate at present charged by the banks. That is one way in which the fund is used by one of the other States now. Another method is to make available money from that fund for the purpose of carrying the farmer on for the year. An amendment of the Act would be required, but it would not take long to put the amendment through if it were understood that the fund was to be used for this purpose. I understand that also is being done in one of the other States now. That would afford the farmers some relief, because it would not really matter if the money were not repaid; the Government would not expect to get it all back. Those farmers who were in a position to repay could do so, and they would not have the burden of interest to contend with. Those are some of the ways in which assistance could be given to the farmer.

With wheat at 1s. 2½d. a bushel, the position of 8,000 farmers in this State is very desperate indeed. On page 45 of the final report of the Royal Commission on

the Wheat, Flour and Bread Industries, appointed by the Federal Government to inquire into those industries, there is set out what it costs to produce a bushel of wheat. I think the figures are accurate. The Commission put the price down at 2s. 4d. a bushel, without taking into consideration the 9d. a bushel that might be earned by side lines. These are the exact costs:—

Labour—1s. 1½d. per bushel.

Maintenance of machinery—5¾d. per bushel.

Rates, taxes, insurance and cartage—8¾d. per bushel.

Those items alone bring the cost of the production of a bushel of wheat up to the sum of 2s. 4d. In addition, there would be a revenue of about 9d. per bushel from side lines.

Mr. Marshall: Does the item of labour include the farmer's profit?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, nor does it include interest. A perusal of the report will show that a bushel of wheat is estimated to produce 28 loaves of bread which, sold at 5½d., represents a return to the baker of 12s. 10d. per bushel.

Mr. Cross: The baker does not get all that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But if a farmer is desirous of exchanging his wheat for bread, for his bushel of wheat he receives 3½ loaves. Therefore, the farmer derives nothing from the wheat that he sells. I admit—the House knows it—that wheat is put into the mill for flour for home consumption at 4s. 8d. a bushel, and that the flour tax increased the price of bread by only one half-penny a loaf. To enable the farmer to carry on his business, he must receive a fixed minimum price at port of not less than 3s. 4d. a bushel. The figures which I quoted from the Commission's report were figures for an average number of farms with an average yield, so they can be accepted almost as accurate. That is the position. It is very little use rendering any assistance to the farmer unless we can guarantee him a price of 3s. 4d. per bushel at port. That would work out at about 2s. 9d. to 2s. 10d. per bushel at sidings. Even so, the farmers would be unable to pay the present rate of interest on a very large sum of money, nor does that price provide for renewals of machinery or provision of duplicate parts.

I am hoping that within the next few days we shall hear the result of the International Conference now sitting in London. I understand 47 countries are represented at the conference and that it is proposed to fix a minimum price of 4s. per bushel for wheat at the port. Naturally, the output of wheat would have to be limited. I quite agree with the suggestion that if a guaranteed price is fixed for wheat we cannot encourage increased production. If we do, we shall not be able to find sufficient money to meet the payments that would have to be met by the State. I have some doubt as to the success of the International Conference. I doubt whether Argentine will agree, because she has available a large surplus for export, as has Canada. Whatever action is taken, however, Australia—and this State particularly—will have to take some hand in fixing the price, otherwise 8,000 farmers will be compelled to leave their homes. The figures I have quoted are taken, as I have said, from the report of the Royal Commission on Wheat, Flour and Bread Industries, and wheat was the dominant factor in the farmer's income.

Recently I had the opportunity of travelling along our north-west coast and was amazed to see the quantity of feed there. It is lamentable, however, to find that the settlers are unable to replenish their stock, for two reasons. One is the difficulty of finance and the other the difficulty of securing the sheep required. I put this suggestion forward—although I know some members of this House and the public will probably disagree with me—that we introduce a Bill this year to prohibit the killing of breeding ewes for 12 months. By so doing we would probably provide a fair number of ewes which to-day are being sent to the slaughter house. The suggestion is well worth considering. We cannot afford to allow our large areas of pastoral country to be without stock. There is no hope for the pastoralists unless they get a chance of replenishing their stock. The liabilities the pastoralists are carrying to-day are far too great for them to discharge, and so the Government will have to do something to assist them. In many countries in the world to-day, particularly in Europe, a law is in force prohibiting the destruction of female stock, especially cattle and sheep. I am talking of breeding ewes, not crossbreds, which would be useless for breeding purposes.

Member: Large numbers of crossbreds are available for slaughtering.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, thousands. While my suggestion, if carried out, would make meat a little dearer, we shall get our money back in stock. It is necessary for the State to guarantee the accounts of pastoralists, so that they may restock their holdings. The pastoralists at present cannot possibly afford to pay the rents for their holdings, and if they are not provided with stock, there is great danger of bush fires destroying not only the ordinary feed, but also the top feed. The matter is very serious and must be given careful consideration. As a matter of fact, there is at present a law on our statute-book prohibiting the killing of female calves up to a certain age, so that all that is necessary is to amend that Act. Even to-day I believe it might be possible to arrange with the Federal Government for some assistance to restock our north-west areas.

Reference is made in the Governor's Speech to legislation it is proposed to introduce this session. One or two of the items are new, but there are some hardy annuals amongst them. Some of them have been fertilised during the interregnum, and I presume we shall have a repetition of what was said last session, namely, that the will of the people must be given effect to. But I do not know that many of these Bills will do much to assist the people.

Mr. Needham interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I notice that the member for Perth has given notice of a Bill that is not going to do much to improve the condition of the workers. It is proposed to abolish—I suppose we can use the word "abolish" because it has been used before on the hustings—the financial emergency tax. I do not know whether the Government ought not to give very serious consideration to that matter, because should the Government intend to relieve the number of taxpayers that will have to be relieved, if proposals are introduced similar to those advanced last year, a great burden will be imposed on the remainder of the taxpayers of the State and this will be the only Government that will have found such a course possible.

Mr. Cross: What about New Zealand?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Do not talk about taxation in New Zealand. I will give the hon. member figures about taxation in New

Zealand when we are dealing with the Estimates. The New Zealand Government will have to increase its taxation because it is not out of financial difficulties yet. Whereas we complain of a petrol tax of 7½d., the amount is 1s. 2d. in the Dominion. However, I do not think we had better deal with that subject at the moment, but Queensland and Tasmania, the other two Labour Governments in Australia, have found the retention of the emergency tax necessary. After all, it is a logical argument that a man who is in employment should make some small contribution to the man out of employment. To-day the man on part-time work is not getting a fair deal and neither is the man on sustenance at 7s. per week because the cost of living has gone up considerably since 1931. The basic wage has increased and that is fixed on the price of commodities. These particular people are in a very bad way. I know in my own heart that people have not objected to that tax; they are merely anxious that it should be used for the purpose for which it was intended to be used, and that is to assist their fellow workers in their time of unemployment. I therefore appeal to the Government to be careful.

Mr. J. Hegney: That was never the intention. Your Government refused to accept an amendment to the Address-in-Reply on that question.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not want to argue this whole business over again, but no one knows better than the member for Middle Swan that it was a mere platitude put up to this side, because when the change was made was any effect given to the suggestion?

Mr. J. Hegney: You do not want to argue because you cannot.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It was not given effect to; it was a mere platitude. I make the candid admission that it was never intended specifically to provide by legislation that the Government find money for people out of employment, because if such a course were adopted we would probably have some permanent unemployed living entirely on that fund. To differentiate to-day between the deserving and undeserving cases is difficult.

Mr. Holman: Why criticise the Government?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not criticising the Government. I am asking the Gov-



ernment to exercise that caution that is so necessary to-day, because I believe that before this year is out, with the price of wool and wheat down, and the difficulty of finding finance from overseas—because there will be a difficulty this year—there is no doubt that the national income will shrink considerably. Therefore, the Government had better pause before it removes this piece of legislation from the statute-book, and tries to raise  $1\frac{1}{4}$  millions from the higher incomes, while relieving 14,000 taxpayers who are expressing no objection to the payment of the tax. If a man has a wife and a very large family we may be able to do something to relieve him, but the man with a fairly substantial salary and only two children can make some contribution to the man with four or five children who is out of work. I hope the Government will give serious consideration to this matter before it relieves 14,000 taxpayers who are not complaining. I believe it will be in the best interests of the people represented by Labour if the Government gives consideration to my suggestion. I warn the Government that this is not the only increased taxation that the people will have to endure because there is no doubt that the Federal Government will tax the people of this State in order to raise some of the money necessary for expenditure on defence. With that additional expense, industry is likely to suffer. Let us make no mistake: there is nothing else this State depends on except its primary industries. I see the member for Forrest (Mr. Holman) looking keenly at me. I know that some contracts have been let for the sale of timber, but it is difficult to-day to get markets for that product, and we are all aware of the difficulties that will be met in this direction. Wool may be at a little better price, but we have to reckon with the fact that flocks have been depleted to the extent of close on 3,000,000. The gold industry is assisting the country considerably, and I believe that probably this year a further record will be established since the rehabilitation of that industry took place.

The Minister for Mines: You can thank the Government for that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know that the Government had much to do with it. But the Government is entitled to so few blessings that it will not hurt us to be a little generous and commend the Minister

for Mines on the increased production. There is one other matter to which I wish to refer. I understand that a sum is available for the purpose of settling in the northern part of this State a number of refugees who have been forced to leave Europe. I hope that this scheme will not be rejected without serious consideration being given to it. If these people from overseas are prepared to test out the North-West, we should consider giving them the opportunity. Time after time we have heard of the potentialities of the great North-West. This will give us a chance to see what can be done with that part of the State.

Mr. Cross: We had better take care that they do not come to Perth.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am always afraid of giving encouragement on an extensive scale to migration because of the suggestion put forward by the member for Canning (Mr. Cross).

Mr. Thorn: He thinks they might come into competition with him.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have had only one hurried trip through the Kimberleys, but I know the type of country. I have seen such country irrigated in New South Wales. If it is possible to irrigate the flats along the Ord River—if the water is available; I know it is a difficult area—we cannot tell what may be produced there. We have to be very careful, of course, about over-production, and to bear in mind the need to find a market for the goods produced. But 200 settlers could be put there and the scheme tested out. If these people, after having expert advice, are prepared to invest their money in that country, I think it is worth while for us to give them the opportunity they seek. After my visits to Queensland and the Far East—or the Near East, whichever it is called—I believe it is possible for white people to live in the area in question. It might be necessary to deal with some of the swamps and other places from which there might arise a danger of malaria or other fevers, but that difficulty has been overcome easily in other parts of the world and it could be overcome in this country. I understand the soil is all right, though I am not in a position to say whether sufficient water can be stored. The rainfall for a number of years has fallen for about four months in the year. However, these people are prepared to back the experiment with their

own money and I believe it would be a great step forward because they would have to trade with this portion of the State. I agree, however, that we should be careful that they do not come here to compete in an already glutted labour market. Probably some arrangement can be made with those people that if they leave the North they will have to go overseas.

The Minister for Mines: Where would they go?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Is the Minister aware that those people have passports for a period of only 12 months?

The Minister for Mines: But where would they go?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: To the country whence they came.

The Minister for Mines: Could they do that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If they know that they cannot get a home elsewhere, and that it is a condition of their coming to this country that they stay in the North, I believe they will remain there.

The Minister for Mines: I believe you are right.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think we need take that point, but anyhow the Minister himself has provided an answer.

Mr. Holman: What about the migrants who went to Darwin?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I must confess I have not been to Darwin and I do not know anything about those migrants, though I believe there were some people settled in the southern part of the Territory. I hope the Government will give this matter serious consideration. I believe there are great possibilities in the North, and certainly those people who settle there will be able to provide most of their own food requirements. When they reach the stage of having an export surplus, their problem will be something like the one confronting us. I hope the Government will give the matter serious consideration, because I believe those migrants will make good Australians. If the first generation does not, the second generation will, and I believe such a settlement will provide the population of which this country stands in so much need.

I give the Government the assurance that members on this side of the House will expedite all legislation that is in the interests of the people of the State. We reserve to

ourselves the right to criticise any Government proposal and we reserve to ourselves the right to tell the Government where it might be wrong in introducing party legislation that is not in the interests of the State as a whole. Any assistance that we can give to encourage the development of secondary industries will be given, but success in this direction depends upon the loyalty of the people. Admittedly it is difficult to get loyalty when the matter affects one's pocket, and when one has to pay 1d. or 2d. more for a local article, though possibly of a little better quality. I hope the Minister will be successful in his campaign because it is essential in a State like Western Australia, and there are great possibilities where the population is dense enough. If the Government desires our assistance in the matter of legislation, or in any other direction that will further the interests of the State, I hope it will call upon us.

On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 7.54 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 9th August, 1939.*

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

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

#### *Disease in Dairy Cows.*

Hon. H. TUCKEY asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Government aware that in October last the Agricultural Bank sold by auction at Sabina Vale a number of dairy cows concerning which it refused a guarantee of freedom from the disease known as contagious abortion? 2, That as a result of