

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 19th August, 1926.

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The PREMIER replied: 1, The working plan aims at a sustained yield of tuart for Government requirements, and with this object the volume of timber to be cut annually is limited. 2, An assessment of the timber remaining at the end of the first five years' period, now completed, is proceeding. Future operations will depend on the position as shown by this assessment.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### Ninth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. COVERLEY** (Kimberley) [4.35]: In making my contribution to the debate, I, in common with other members, have some old grievances to air and a few new ones to bring forward. In doing so, I am actuated by the best intentions to benefit those who live some 2,000 miles from the seat of government. I trust I will not be misunderstood. My criticism and advice are merely rendered for the purpose I have indicated. At the outset I wish to let the Government know that their administration of the affairs of the North has been appreciated by those who have been neglected for a long period. I thank Ministers who have indicated a sincere desire to do their duty in promoting the welfare of the northern portions of the State, and have afforded the people there an opportunity of seeing them personally. The visits paid by Ministers to the North have been greatly appreciated. I, too, appreciate their forethought in taking with them the heads of various departments concerned in the administration of our affairs in the North. It is necessary for those officials to gain some first-hand knowledge of those remote parts, in order that their administrative work may be carried out more efficiently. We of the far North know and understand that no one can gain much knowledge as the result of a mere casual visit to those outlying parts. On the other hand, we realise that at least some knowledge and information must be gained by such visits. Knowing the Minister for Works as I do—he is one of the most sincere and progressive men in public life to-day—I know that good will result from his visit to the distant North. While appreciating the visits we have had, I hope the Government will understand that we look forward to those visits being repeated, for with each visit added knowledge and a greater appreciation of our difficulties will be gained

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

## QUESTION—I.A.B. SETTLERS AND STATE INSURANCE.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Have the Government issued instructions that settlers who are assisted by the Industries Assistance Board must, in future, compulsorily effect the whole of their crop insurances against fire and hail with the recently established State Insurance Department? 2, Have these settlers, in the past, exercised the right to effect these insurances with whichever of the companies operating in this State they preferred? 3, If so, why are they now denied that right?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The arrangements for insurance of crops of assisted settlers for the ensuing season were made by the board with the approval of the Minister. 2, Yes; at the board's discretion and subject to its control. 3, The right of determining with which office an assisted settler shall insure his crops against fire is vested by statute in the board.

## QUESTION—TIMBER MILL, WONNERUP.

Mr. BARNARD asked the Premier: 1, What is the reason for the closing down of the small timber mill at Wonnerup? 2, Is it the intention of the Forests Department to re-open it at an early date?

by Ministers. I am confident that, as the result of what he saw in the North and the North-West, the Minister for Works will join with me and other members representing those wide-flung areas, in bringing influence to bear upon the Treasurer so that more lenient treatment will be extended to our needs. I congratulate the Government on behalf of the pearlers for the amended legislation dealing with the pearling industry and for the prompt attention they gave to remedial measures to cope with illicit pearl fishing. "Dummying," however, is still being carried on. This is fast crippling the industry, sending honest men, who will not stoop to make easy money, out of the business, robbing the Government of taxation, and enriching the pockets of Asiatics. Unless more drastic legislation be passed, it will be better for the Government to close down on the industry for a couple of years, so that there may be a general clean up. As I understand the Pearling Act is being dealt with by the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. W. Hickey), there is no need to say more on that point at the present juncture. I will content myself with advising the Government to give every possible assistance to the Honorary Minister, so that he may be able to minimise illicit pearl dealing. I have a few old grievances to ventilate regarding the pastoral industry. The first relates to the re-appraisal of holdings, which is neither fair nor equitable to the smaller leaseholders. I expect the Government to do something to assist those who are not getting a fair deal. The holders of small pastoral leases are at a great disadvantage compared with those controlling larger areas, some of which are leased by companies. These larger holdings include the bulk of the river frontages and the well-grassed flats. The small leaseholders have to pay the same rental as their more fortunate co-pastoralists, but have greater costs to shoulder in the cartage of their supplies and in their droving work as well. Those extra costs could be obviated if the Government would appoint someone to act as a land board to show that an alteration of the rents was necessary. The resident magistrate in a district could conduct the inquiry for the land board. The result would be that the Government would be informed that the small pastoralists were labouring in the face of unfair competition from the larger companies. The pastoral industry is at a low ebb at present, and this is due to many

causes over which the Government may have no control. Various ideas are entertained as to the explanation, but I have never heard anyone in public life say, nor yet have I seen it suggested in the public Press, that the present condition of the industry is due to mismanagement and the employment of black labour. In my opinion that is one explanation. The position will not be relieved unless the Government take steps to minimise the employment of black labour. That practice depreciates the value of stock. I recognise that the Government have done a lot to assist the small pastoralists in the East Kimberley district by the introduction of stud bulls and by financial aid as well. There are certain anomalies, however, that should be removed. There is a line of demarcation between East Kimberley and West Kimberley; it is known as the pleuro-pneumonia line. In the first place, the line was provided in order to retard the introduction of the tick pest from the East Kimberleys to the West Kimberleys. With the passing of the years, tick became established in the West as well as in the East. At the time the authorities saw fit to change the name of the line from the "tick line" to the "pleuro-pneumonia line." If there is pleuro-pneumonia in East Kimberley, this imaginary line will not prevent its being introduced into West Kimberley. Anyone with a knowledge of cattle raising on unfenced country knows that an intermixing of herds occurs. It is a well-known fact that the intermixing of herds occurs from well over the border of the Northern Territory right through East Kimberley, into West Kimberley and past the Fitzroy Crossing. If the disease exists in East Kimberley, I cannot see why it does not exist in West Kimberley, because one mob of cattle mixing with another must spread it. So I urge the Minister to send North the Chief Inspector of Stock or one of his staff to inquire into the anomaly with a view to abolishing this pleuro-pneumonia line or moving it further west to the junction of the Hall's Creek-Wyndham road. That would leave the cattle market open to the competition of both East and West Kimberley, and would be only an act of justice to the cattle growers. The cattle on several stations on the prohibited side of the pleuro line have never shown any sign of disease. In the Kimberley country we have a few returned soldiers, who have engaged in cattle raising, and they are having a very hard battle, due mainly to the state of the cattle

market. According to the Governor's Speech, the Federal Government have made available to the State a sum of £796,000 to be employed in writing down liabilities under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. The soldiers in the Kimberleys have done exceptionally good work in the way of developing their holdings, fencing them and sinking wells, and I think they are entitled to a share of the money. I hope that the Minister for Lands will direct the attention of the board responsible for re-valuing the holdings to this fact and that some concession will be given to these men. They are justly entitled to it on account of their good work, which is certainly better than that of most of the big companies in the East Kimberley. I have a small grievance affecting the Department of the Minister for Education. I realise that he has many places to attend to; country towns as well as the metropolitan area are continually asking for advanced education, additional equipment and better facilities generally, but some consideration should be given to the children of the North-West. Situated so far from the metropolis the disadvantages under which they labour are very real. The Minister might well give instructions for the provision of improved furniture and dual desks in the schools. The tropical climate is somewhat trying, and most of the children have to sit in desks that are too small for them. The practice seems to be that if there is any furniture of no use to any other school, it is dumped in the North. Anything appears to be good enough for us.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will be all right as the Premier is looking pleasant.

Mr. COVERLEY: I observe that he is smiling and I hope he will get the Minister for Education to accede to this request. The children of the North also suffer from a disadvantage with regard to the scholarship examinations. In the North the cool weather does not set in until May and the scholarship examinations are held in October. Consequently the children in the settled areas have a start of eight to 10 weeks in studying for the examination, and thus the children of the North suffer from a handicap that is no fault of their own. It would be reasonable for the Minister to allocate say three special scholarships for the North-West. We in the Kimberleys would not complain of any disadvantage as compared with the North-West, but the

children of the North-West as well as those of the Kimberleys are at a disadvantage as against the children of the South-West. If three scholarships were reserved for the North-West, it would be only just to the children of the North, to whom we look to carry on the work in those remote parts. No people are so well fitted for this work as are those born in the North. I believe three scholarships could be provided for at a cost of £90, and I feel sure that this paltry sum will not deter the Government from doing justice to the North. I join with other members in sympathising with the Honorary Minister (Hon. S. W. Munsie) who is in ill-health. I have been endeavouring to get a medical practitioner appointed to the township of Hall's Creek. So far I have been unsuccessful, but I am living in hopes that an appointment will be made before long. The industry that the people of the North follow often entails serious accidents. True, we have an A.I.M. Nursing Home at Hall's Creek that has done exceptionally good work and is highly appreciated by the residents. But we want something more; we want a doctor. I have often listened to members of this House preferring requests for medical or hospital assistance, but the urgency of their requests is not to be compared with that of the people of Hall's Creek. The people there are isolated and yet are without a doctor. If the people of the metropolitan area were denied medical service, there would be a revolution inside of 10 minutes. Hall's Creek is 240 miles distant from a doctor, and members who know the crude methods of transport on which we have to rely when an accident occurs will realise that the question demands serious consideration. I know there are great demands upon the Health Department, but I hope the Minister will find it possible to grant this request. Reference is made in the Speech to surveys being conducted in the Kimberleys. This is the second year over which the surveys have extended, and though blocks are being surveyed for tropical agriculture, we have no idea what the Government intend to do with them when they are cut up. The North offers great possibilities and in the Kimberleys the experimental stage has already been passed. It has been proved that rice will grow prolifically. At Port George IV. Mission Station approximately 40 bushels of rice per acre was obtained. The mission station

authorities, however, have very crude methods of cleaning the rice, and it would be money well spent if the Government provided them with machinery.

Mr. Sampson: Would it be a commercial proposition?

Mr. COVERLEY: The Drysdale Mission, situated between Wyndham and Derby, grows enough rice to feed the 300 natives on the station, and on one occasion 250 bags were available for sale. Unfortunately the lugger carrying the rice to Wyndham was wrecked. The coast up there is dangerous and has not been well surveyed. It has been proved that rice will grow well in these places. Cotton growing has also been proved a success on one of the stations.

Mr. Sampson: It would be interesting to get particulars of the yield per acre.

Mr. COVERLEY: I have already stated what has been done on one mission station. If people were assisted, an improvement could be effected on these results. There is one station in East Kimberley that went in for cotton growing. The people planted 34 acres, and I understand the yield was approximately 12 tons of cotton. I do not know whether that was good or otherwise. The cotton was a beautiful sight when growing. The industry is one that might well repay any assistance given to it. On this particular station the people grow practically every kind of tropical fruit, such as paw-paws, bananas and mangoes. The Government will require to be careful how they allot the blocks that have been surveyed. They should first see that they get the right class of settler. This can be done by throwing open the blocks for selection by those who would be most likely to make a success of the venture. I had no intention of speaking on the Federal proposals concerning the North-West until I saw the outline of the scheme in the "West Australian" yesterday. I am altogether opposed to the suggestion. I take this opportunity of warning the public that the proposals are loaded. The Government Resident who would preside over the council would be nominated by the Federal Government. In all probability he would be some broken-down politician from Melbourne, who would know nothing about the local conditions, and care less so long as he drew a fat salary. The council itself would consist of four members, three of whom

would be nominated by the Federal Government. The members elected to the House of Representatives would have no vote there. Reference is made in those proposals to railways, harbours, and means of communication. At present the Federal Government control all telephone, telegraph and mail services, etc., but with regard to the mail services they have really done nothing for the North. A little while ago I presented a petition through Mr. Green, M.H.R., for an extension of the mail service in West Kimberley. This, as usual, was turned down. The excuse was that the Federal Government could not stand the financial strain, and that the extension would serve only half a dozen people. The convenience that it meant to these people was overlooked. All that was asked for was an extension of 50 miles, and this would have saved a 100-mile ride for numbers of small cattle growers. The Federal people did not know what it meant, and so they made finance the excuse for refusing the request.

Mr. Marshall: How long ago was that?

Mr. COVERLEY: Two months ago. Recently I had further evidence of the lack of sympathetic administration of the North. When the Tanami goldfields were first discovered, they were thought to be in Western Australia. In 1910 the State Government put down wells along the route from Hall's Creek to the field. Later on it was discovered that Tanami was in the Northern Territory, and the State Government handed over the wells to the Administrator of the Northern Territory. As in most other cases at the time, these wells were sadly neglected. The woodwork rotted and fell in, the buckets leaked, and the ropes were either lost or stolen. When the Tanami fields revived, there was a big influx of prospectors to the district. Finding the wells out of order, one prospector sent a telegram to the Director of Federal Works, Darwin, in these terms—"When will the wells on the Tanami road be done up? At present they are likely to fall in. The buckets and troughs are in a leaky condition." After a few days the Director replied, "All travellers are expected to assist in keeping the wells and equipment in good order." The people of the Kimberleys have no faith in the Federal administration of affairs up there. The Federal Government must afford better evidence of their administrative abilities before we agree to hand over any portion of our territory. I hope the State Government will keep an eye on any suggestion that emanates from them.

A committee of inquiry or royal commission comprising residents of the North-West should be appointed to inquire into the whole question and formulate a scheme for development. The aerial mail service runs from Perth to Derby. There is also a fortnightly steamer service from Fremantle to that port. From Derby over the Fitzroy Crossing, on to Hall's Creek, and in to Wyndham, right through the centre of the cattle areas, there is a paltry monthly service for part of the way, none at all for another part of the way, and a monthly service for the rest of the way. The aerial service, as it is, has been of great benefit to the people of the Kimberleys, but an extension to Wyndham is badly needed. Apparently the Federal Government could not find the money to extend the mail service to Wyndham. If they are sincere in their desire to develop the Kimberleys one of the first things they should do would be to extend the aerial service from Derby to Wyndham. Restricted as it is, the aerial service has revolutionised the Kimberleys, but if an extension were made to Wyndham it would serve an even more useful purpose. I thank the State Government for their sympathetic administration of the North-West, particularly with regard to the purchase of a new motor vessel. I urge them to expedite an order for another vessel. When that comes along, when the aerial mail service is extended to Wyndham, when there has been a certain amount of road development, and two new motor ships as well as the "Kangaroo" are trading along the coast, we shall have what we have been longing for, namely, an efficient boat service and satisfactory means of transport, the lack of which has held up the North for some time.

**MR. MILLINGTON** (Leederville) [5.13]: I am impressed not only with the range of subjects dealt with in the Speech, but also with the number of allied subjects that have been referred to by members during the debate. The three leaders of the parties in the House have spoken. There was a suggestion on the part of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party of contemptuousness concerning the matters dealt with in the Speech. Nevertheless the Speech has provided much material for discussion, not only by those two leaders, who affected to see nothing good in it, but also by many other members who have spoken. Instead of expecting something entirely new this year, we should rather have regard to

those important permanent matters which have to be dealt with by Governments. The Speech is a record of the actions of the Ministry during the year. Necessarily, most of the subjects dealt with are of a recurring character. If the Leader of the Opposition desires a new legislative programme—which I very much doubt—he has only to advertise and he will get a programme containing every possible new idea supported by the most scientific reasons. Undoubtedly this Speech is creditable to the Government who have produced it. Though the Opposition Leader said there was nothing in it, he immediately proceeded to discuss its second paragraph, dealing with the per capita payments. Undoubtedly his remarks were a most valuable contribution to the discussion, a contribution which in my opinion will have to be insistently emphasised. There are some matters to which attention must be drawn continually. Undoubtedly a feeling exists in this State that the Federal Government are not in sympathy with the special requirements of Western Australia, particularly its financial requirements. The framers of the Federal Constitution, while definitely setting down certain things, left in abeyance, left to the discretion of future Governments, many other matters, which are not being interpreted in the generous spirit that the framers of the Constitution evidently intended. Now that the time has come for these matters to be dealt with, our chief complaint is that whereas full consideration should and could be given to the States, there is a disposition on the part of the Federal Government to ignore the desires of not only Western Australia but the other States as well. An attempt is being made to grasp more power for the Commonwealth Parliament and to concentrate authority in the Federal Government. The importance of the question has been fully grasped by the Government of this State, and the Premier and other Ministers have resisted, in a manner which is appreciated by the Western Australian people, the attempted encroachments of the Federal Government on State preserves. I congratulate the Opposition Leader on the most informative speech he has delivered. Its sentiments will, I am sure, be endorsed by the people of the State. Not only in Western Australia but in every State of the Commonwealth the position as stated by the Leader of the Opposition should be emphasised. It is not a matter of party Government, but a matter which, as the Australian people are beginning to see, must

be dealt with firmly by the populations and Governments of all the States. The Governor's Speech also deals with the State finances. I do not think either the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the Country Party will suggest that because the question of finance is showing signs of age, it is not still a matter of vital importance and one calling for special attention. There appears to be a conspiracy of silence among the Opposition every time the financial question comes up for consideration. I regard that silence as an indication that, to a degree, members opposite are satisfied with the manner in which the finances of the State have been administered by the present Government. When things were not so good, during the years from 1911 to 1914 and onwards through the war period, the case was otherwise. Despite all explanations of what in those days particularly was known as the deficit, there was a continuous cry that the bad condition of the finances was due to Labour administration. I have a suspicion now that if the finances were not so satisfactory, the full blame would be thrown on "Labour administration." It must also be remembered that during the past two years the Government have been faced with considerable increases in expenditure, in the same way as businesses and industries throughout the State have been affected. There were large increases which could not be foreseen when the last Budget was being prepared. I shall say nothing about the manner in which the Premier's forecast has been verified, except that the figures in the aggregate correspond. What I am concerned with is that although the Premier has had to meet obligations which could not be anticipated, the Opposition, whose business it is to criticise, have not been able to suggest effectively that the finances have been administered in any but a capable manner. We must also bear in mind that in a young State like Western Australia something more is required than mere economy. It is not advisable or desirable that Western Australian Governments should start out merely with the idea of making ends meet. The industries of our State are young, and in such a position that they should receive the utmost consideration from any Government happening to be in power. The position of the State's development is such that Governments are bound to extend generous treatment towards industries needing assistance. Certainly the Treasurer must exercise care and have regard for economy, but it would be

disastrous, in the present position of Western Australia, if the Government adopted the view that their business was to close down on all expenditure, rather than the view that this is a young and expanding State. If the Government want to inspire confidence and energy in the citizens of the State, they must show confidence and enterprise themselves. We have passed the period when our people were inclined to take rather a dismal view of Western Australia's future. We have got over the somewhat severe times which were the result of drought and war. We have reached the stage when confidence in the State is re-established. We are all apt to think that distant fields are green, that in some way Western Australia is handicapped relatively to the Eastern States. It is true that in the matter of secondary industries, and also in other respects, Western Australia has been made to feel that it is not exactly the equal of the East; but from a necessarily brief and cursory review of the Eastern States I have returned with a strong impression that where as in some directions they have an advantage over Western Australia, there are compensations which fully justify the view that our State is likely to make as much progress in the near future as ours. The Eastern States seem to be in a condition of arrested development. They have passed through periods of prosperity, and now appear to have fallen down on the job. Take the case of South Australia, a country which largely depends on its agricultural industry just as Western Australia does. There is not the same disposition on the part of South Australian people to expand, to take risks for the sake of development, as there is in this country. The South Australian who wants to speculate in the farming industry does not go into undeveloped country, but prefers to purchase a farm already developed. South Australia has got farming down to a business proposition. The question of what can be paid for a given area of land with a view to profitably farming it has been reduced to a hard business calculation. As a consequence, the continued exchanges of existing holdings have raised the prices of farming lands considerably beyond the price of similar lands in Western Australia. In deed, there are cases in which land of a certain quality has changed hands in South Australia at nearly double the price which the same quality of land would bring in Western Australia.

Mr. Lindsay: Three times the price.

Mr. MILLINGTON: A farmer who has come here from South Australia tells me that there he sold land suitable for mixed farming at as high a price as £22 per acre, and that here he has bought nearly three times the area at £7 per acre, and he declares that his Western Australian land is quite equal to that which he disposed of in South Australia.

Mr. Stubbs: And the rainfall here is more certain.

Mr. MILLINGTON: In compensation for our less fortunate position in point of secondary industries, we have the advantage that wheat growing is fast becoming a business proposition here, and that in this respect we are well situated. The capital cost of our land—a great factor in the cost of production—is so much below the capital cost of land in the Eastern States that we shall be in a position to produce more cheaply in future—having regard to all charges, overhead, capital and otherwise—than the Eastern States. Farming is becoming our principal industry, and therefore we have every reason to look hopefully towards the prospects of developing the State and of satisfying not only our own people, but other people, that Western Australia can hold its own in the industry upon which it chiefly depends. Also, in this State there is a disposition on the part of the farming and pastoral communities to adopt the most up-to-date methods. Our very existence depends on that disposition, and it is pleasing to note that those engaged in the two great primary industries are sufficiently up to date to enable us to say that those industries are in safe hands. In view of all the circumstances, we are justified in predicting that, in respect of those industries, Western Australia will easily hold its own; for, whereas in the Eastern States those industries have virtually reached a standstill, in Western Australia they have a most promising future. So, when people are inclined to take a doleful view of the future of the State, we should remember that those in the primary industries are rapidly progressing, and that the Government are doing all they can to further their progress. Therefore I say we are justified in our conviction that Western Australia has entered upon a period of prosperity. In view of that, the Government are entitled to enact their progressive policy. It is no longer for us to worry unduly about our finances. Rather should we take the view that the Government must be essentially progressive. They are entitled to

be optimists, for they have something with which to back their optimism. It is satisfactory to note that our increased revenue is such that, despite the inevitable increase in expenditure, there is no longer any cause for alarm; and we can take the view that Western Australia has turned the financial corner, that full confidence has been re-established, and that of all the States of the Commonwealth ours has the most promising future. Even the Opposition have taken a friendly view of the record of the Government. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) bears the reputation of being a most honest man; in fact his honesty is equalled only by his inconsistency. He was so honest as to candidly admit the capable way in which the Government were conducting the affairs of the State. His inconsistency was shown when he expressed the hope that they would meet with calamity in March next. He was both congratulatory and regretful; indeed, his speech was a series of congratulatory regrets. The present Labour Government are not faced with the indifferent season of 1911 and the drought and war of 1914. They are reaping their just deserts and have before them an era of prosperity. No amount of misrepresentation could now alarm the people of the State into fearing the consequences likely to follow from Labour administration.

Hon. G. Taylor interjected.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I can quite understand that the hon. member might not take so optimistic a view as some others would. He can tell of the times when Laverton was one of the noted towns of the goldfields, and when it represented a rapidly expanding industry. However, he is still young enough to glory in the fact that although Western Australia is faced with the decline of the gold-mining industry, there is a corresponding expansion in other primary industries. We have now reached the stage where Western Australia can get a fair deal from its Governments, and its Governments can get a fair deal from the people. Consequently the outlook is bright, we have no time for croakers, and our optimism is fully justified. There are included in this very creditable record of the Government other matters entitled to serious notice. My friends, the members representing the North, are fully alive to the importance of developing that great country. The Government have been handicapped with regard to that question. To-day the position is more problematical than ever, owing to the proposals of the Federal Government. The present State

Government have gone out of their way to inform themselves as to the potentialities of the North-West. They have paid the closest attention to representations by members representing the North, and only the enormous financial liabilities that would have to be incurred have prevented the Government from propounding a scheme for the development of that country. We are all anxious that mistakes should be avoided, but I am confident the Government have in hand the problem of developing the North, and I know they will be sufficiently enterprising to unhesitatingly embark upon any scheme offering a probability of success. I am sure the question will be kept prominently before the Government by members representing the North. Although coming from a metropolitan constituency, I am deeply sympathetic with the North-West and keenly alive to its possibilities. Any scheme for its development will have my enthusiastic support, and, I am sure, that of other metropolitan members. It is an obligation upon all of us. Although I have not had an opportunity to visit the North, I am distinctly hopeful of the prospects of that vast country. Presumably, this is one of the questions contemptuously referred to by those who say there is nothing new in the Speech delivered by His Excellency. Prominence was given in that Speech to the question of migration. I do not for a moment believe that the Leader of the Opposition would say this is a subject of no interest. Land settlement, of course, is the oldest question in this State, but none the less it is of absorbing interest. Is there any country in the world where a progressive land settlement policy is more essential than in Western Australia? Do any of us yet realise the possibilities of land settlement in this State? Of course, in the early days of any new country, land settlement is comparatively easy. Up to a certain stage the land settles itself. In later stages the problem is much more difficult. In a State such as this, we cannot afford to sit down and allow land settlement merely to take its own course. The Government have to frame an approved policy for the fostering of land settlement. Only recently have we come to realise the value of some of our light land. I am sure members representing country districts give the Government full credit for being most sympathetic to any proposal for testing the value of those lands. In South Australia and other States there is not the same sym-

pathetic assistance given to the development of doubtful areas. We are ahead of South Australia in this respect. Here we realise the necessity for expansion, and any practical proposals put before the Government by country members receive the most sympathetic consideration of Ministers. At one time it was thought that some of our light lands were valueless, but to-day it is realised how foolish that idea was. I passed over outback goldfields country many years ago and similar country also, and, like many others, did not realise the wonderful pastoral possibilities that existed there. With the decline of the mining industry there will certainly be an expansion in that part of the State far greater than any of us at present realise. In the old days we looked upon Southern Cross as the desert; we know now what it is capable of producing so far as agriculture is concerned. There is no doubt about the quality of the soil on the goldfields, and who is to say, with the advancement of science, what we may expect in the way of production in that part of the State. Experiments in the goldfields have proved what the land there is like and we may yet be shown that some kind of shrub such as salt bush, will be capable of cultivation in those parts.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is fine sheep country as it is.

Mr. MULLINGTON: Even the Nullabor Plains, I was assured by a practical pastoralist from South Australia, may be turned into profitable use provided the water difficulty can be overcome. When we hear those men who are the stay-at-home kind, declare that the outback country is no good, and compare their opinion with that of men of vision, we cannot but be impressed by the opinions of the latter in respect of the possibilities of the Eastern Goldfields country. We are justified in assuming that with the advancement of science, and the opportunities for experimenting, as well as with the enterprise that has been displayed in recent years, the possibilities of Western Australia from an agricultural and pastoral point of view, are enormous. So in regard to land settlement, even if money has to be expended and even if the ledger does not balance, there is no reason why the Government should not be congratulated on this enterprise and the experiments they are carrying out in the hope of bringing about that expansion that we all desire to see. The Leader of the

Opposition will agree that some credit is due even to the Labour Government for the manner in which they have faced the various problems. The subject of group settlement, if it has been productive of nothing else, has certainly been responsible for some long discussions here. I think that more interesting stories have been told in connection with that question than members ever heard before.

Hon. G. Taylor: Did you hear the member for Murchison last night?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, and members representing the South-West also. Group settlement has come to stay, and in this respect we must give full credit to those responsible for the initiation of the scheme.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will justify itself just as wheat cultivation has done.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It being in the nature of an experiment I would have preferred to see that experiment carried out on a smaller scale. But we are in it now, and must see it through. It is a vast experiment but I am convinced that it will be responsible for bringing into productivity land in the South-West that otherwise might never have been touched. That country is not easily capable of settlement, particularly the swamp lands, which require a big scheme and the expenditure of considerable sums of money in the initial stages. The present Government have not slowed down on the work; they have done their utmost against great difficulties to carry on and satisfy the settlers. Of course it is impossible to satisfy all, but has there ever been any big problem undertaken which has given satisfaction to everyone. I should say that the representatives of the country districts are prepared to give credit to the Minister for Lands for his sympathetic administration of the Lands Department.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MILLINGTON: Let me refer to the question of the supply of wire netting and the manner in which it has been handled by the Minister. The matter was taken up by the Federal Government, but they were oblivious of the conditions that existed over here. The Minister for Lands had sufficient enterprise to take the risk of supplying the netting to those who needed it. It meant that if netting was not to be supplied there would have been no crops to speak of this year. Representatives of the farming districts will give full credit to the Minister

for the sympathetic way in which he listened to the requests of the people on the land. This has always been a characteristic of the Minister whenever just and reasonable claims of the community have been brought under his notice. These remarks also apply to Ministers in charge of other departments. The Governor's Speech discloses a magnificent record of achievement. I have listened to many speeches delivered at the opening of Parliament but it has never been possible to compare any other with that to which we listened at the opening of the present session. Sometimes an attempt is made to contemptuously review this document which sets out the record of the most capable Government that has been in charge of the affairs of this State, and in saying this, I include previous Labour Governments.

Mr. Latham: Tell us something new that they started.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It is not the Government's business to start fantastic schemes which the hon. member himself would be the first to condemn.

Mr. Latham: No, they are carrying on a jolly good policy.

Mr. MILLINGTON: They are carrying on the actual affairs of the State and nothing fantastic. They have actually done the job. If those members who represent country districts are not pointing out this fact I will take the opportunity to do so. I stood beside the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) whilst the Governor was reading the Speech in another place. There was no doubt about the dignified manner and the cultured diction of His Excellency as he read the document. It sounded like a poem. The member for Canning, who is not easily moved, was impelled to remark, "That's the stuff."

Mr. Mann: Did he smile when he said it?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I never before saw him so delighted. We all have such short memories. What was recorded in the Speech has been going on for two years and we have to be reminded of the achievements of the Government. It may be an old business certainly, but it is under new management, and that new management has livened things up considerably and has shown an enterprising dash which has completely upset those who used to carry on under the old style. Of course we cannot expect our friends to admit that, but the

records show that under the new management the business of the State has advanced marvellously. As soon as we have fixed up the Federal and State relationships we shall find the Minister for Works very sympathetic. Up to date he has been poverty stricken, but immediately he gets the funds that he expects to receive, he will make things move.

Mr. Latham: There is no doubt he has a lot of promises to fulfil.

Mr. MILLINGTON: He has everything in train, and immediately funds are made available the spending machinery will move, and the people who want main roads and water supplies will have their requests attended to. There will then be no unemployed; everybody will be fully occupied.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is quite a number to find work for.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The reference in the Speech to the Agricultural College meets with the approval of our friends opposite. That is a new project and it is important to those who realise the value of such an institution in a young country. We know what has been done elsewhere and when we consider that we are in competition with other parts of the world, if we are to exist against that competition, we must bring ourselves up to date. Those who engage in agricultural pursuits must have every advantage so far as training is concerned, and the value of an agricultural college will prove itself to be more than those with short vision realise. I congratulate the Government on the advance they are making in respect of the dissemination of knowledge. Too long have the country districts been neglected, not only in regard to agricultural education, but education generally, and though I represent a metropolitan constituency, anything that will tend towards the betterment of education in the country will always receive my enthusiastic support. The people outback are entitled to the best that can be given to them, and the present Government, it will be found, will not adopt a parsimonious attitude. The reference to agricultural water supplies is an interesting as well as a new subject. We have had sufficient enterprise to launch out with a more advanced policy than that of our predecessors.

Mr. Latham: Exactly the same policy.

Mr. MILLINGTON: They have been doing what others have been talking about for

years. Instead of being in the air, the water works are on the rocks.

Lion. G. Taylor: That is where you will land the country if you do not look out.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Government have constructed reservoirs, and that must be a matter of great satisfaction to the farmers.

Mr. Latham: One only has been finished to date.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am afraid the member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham) has shown more enthusiasm on the question of water supplies in the outer areas than have a good many farmers. The thing that amazes me about the present Government is the way they have attended to the affairs of the country in so many varied directions.

Mr. Mann: You are going so far that we are commencing to doubt your sincerity.

Mr. Sampson: "Methinks he doth protest too much."

Mr. MILLINGTON: Not at all.

Mr. Sampson: You are protesting altogether too vigorously.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The next subject I will deal with represents one of the biggest problems that has been tackled by the Government, a problem that is more difficult than that of finance or of land settlement. I refer to industrial relationships.

Mr. Mann: I thought you were going to refer to the Cambridge-street trams.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The industrial problem has been faced in Australia more than anywhere else, but even here it is a long way from being solved. I have been closely associated with this problem for many years past. In Australia the machinery has been created for controlling the problem whereas other countries have left it much to chance. I remember a conference, convened by Sir James Mitchell when he was Premier, the object of which was to consider this problem. Representatives of the unions and of the Employers' Federation discussed the necessity for amending our arbitration laws. Both sides agreed that the Act was inefficient and had become obsolete. They also agreed that a permanent court should be set up instead of the old part-time arrangement. Another point on which they were agreed was that subsidiary courts should be set up to deal with matters of interpretation and so forth. But the task of giving effect to these decisions was left over for the present Government to undertake. The work of the present Administration will have a far-reaching effect throughout the State. It has often been said that the best way to deal with indus-

trial troubles is to make provision to overcome points of difference before they are magnified into open breaches between the parties concerned. Already the advantages of the amended legislation are apparent, not only to the workers, but to the employers, who recognise the steps taken in the direction of industrial peace. If the Government were to do nothing more than they have already achieved in their amendments to the Arbitration Act and the Workers' Compensation Act, they would have amply justified their existence. Their work will never be forgotten by the people, and their efforts will always stand to the credit of present-day Ministers. The legislation is as up-to-date as, if, indeed, it does not represent a great advance upon, similar legislation in other parts.

Hon. G. Taylor: So long as both sides adhere to the decisions of the courts, it will be all right. Unless that is the result, failure must follow.

Mr. MILLINGTON: From the results we have seen so far, I should say it will be all right.

Hon. G. Taylor: I hope so, at any rate.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Much satisfaction has been expressed by representatives of unions and of the employers alike regarding the extended scope of the Arbitration Court and the subsidiary tribunals. So much for the administration and legislation of the Government. I do not take the view that because the mining industry has been showing signs of declining, no effort should be made to stop the downward tendency. The industry has done much for Western Australia.

Hon. G. Taylor: For all Australia.

Mr. MILLINGTON: From personal experience, I know the dangers of the occupation. Because of the large numbers of men employed in the industry we should not stand idly by and allow it to collapse. Were that to happen, it would indeed be a calamity. With a gradual decline an opportunity is afforded to place miners in other industries.

Hon. G. Taylor: We know the calamity that follows when even one mine closes down.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is so. I have known of fairly large towns depending upon one mine alone. It is generally recognised that in the outer centres a mine can maintain a community of some 500 souls. Should such a mine cease operations, the homes of those people are rendered practically useless and the men are thrown on the labour market until they can be absorbed in other directions. In these circumstances it is easy to

understand why members generally are anxious to avoid anything like a serious collapse of mining, such as was threatened a little while ago. Whatever support I can render will be available when any attempt is made to revive and reconstruct our gold mining industry, together with improved methods of treatment. Members on the Opposition side of the House will not complain regarding the Government's railway proposals. In these days a member of Parliament is almost required to apologise for representing people instead of territory, but notwithstanding that I represent a metropolitan constituency, I am anxious to give every assistance to schemes that will help to develop the country districts. It can be claimed that no city member has opposed the construction of a railway once he was satisfied that it was necessary for the development of a rural area. In return we ask the country representatives to see that the metropolitan members receive a fair deal and sympathetic treatment when urgent requirements are brought before the House. One question of great importance is mentioned in the Governor's Speech. I desire to give the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) every credit for the energetic and capable manner in which he has advocated the establishment of central markets. I have interested myself in that question and appreciate the importance of it. There are many market gardeners in the Osborne Park district and they tell me that without the provision of a central market, it is and will be most difficult to earn a livelihood. We realise that the industry is becoming sweated. If we are not careful we shall have in such areas a community of mean whites who, instead of earning at least the basic living wage, will be compelled to live under conditions that will represent not only a menace but give us cause for shame. Market gardeners without reasonable facilities for disposing of their products are in much the same position as workers without an opportunity to labour.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are plenty of buyers if only the market gardeners can get to them.

Mr. MILLINGTON: We have discussed this question with the producers and there is one point on which all growers from Albany to Geraldton are unanimous. They all agree that the establishment of a central market will have a wonderful effect upon the industry. While it is agreed that in one sense the creation of centralised markets will mean a monopoly, the growers stress

the necessity for space being available in the markets where trading by private treaty can be carried on. We discussed the question with the Minister for Agriculture and found him entirely sympathetic. In the past we have argued as to whether there should be municipal or Government control. When a vote was taken regarding the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into this question, it was obvious that members would not agree to confer power upon the City Council to establish markets. There is no doubt that prejudice existed respecting the council. Of course, legislation restricting their powers would have been provided, but the fact remains that there was no disposition at all to grant the City Council the powers desired. An endeavour was made to arrive at an agreement regarding the question of control. The position was placed before the Minister, who said that the matter would be discussed by Cabinet. Now we know that Cabinet has decided to introduce a measure to establish a public trust with power to construct and control public markets.

Hon. G. Taylor: And to borrow money?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. Many advantages will accrue from such a provision and many of those concerned, with whom I have discussed it, agree that it preserves the principle of public control and public ownership.

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

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Government have promised to introduce a Bill for the establishment of a central market in Perth. This is an urgent matter requiring the attention of all members, and particularly those representing the district that will be most affected. There has been a good deal of discussion over various more or less suitable sites. The site in Marquis-street was acquired in 1911, but despite all promises it has remained unutilised. Existing marketing arrangements in the metropolitan area are completely out of date and unsuited for a city such as Perth. I hope that during the present session authority will be given for the establishment of new markets.

Hon. G. Taylor: In Marquis-street?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I cannot say where the markets should be, but all those interested in the question seem to regard the Marquis-street site as suitable. However, we have arrived at a stage where we should eliminate anything and everything that has been responsible for delay.

Mr. Sampson: We must not eliminate the kerbstone markets.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am not prepared to go into that question. I do not wish to touch upon anything controversial. What I want to see is unanimity in respect both of control and site. Given that, the details can be discussed when the time arrives. I do plead that nothing should be allowed to further delay the erection of suitable markets. One matter of vital interest to which I would direct attention is the electorate of Leederville. It is with one exception the most populous, and without any exception the most important, in the State.

Mr. Richardson: Oh, dicken!

Mr. MILLINGTON: According to official statistics the adult population has now reached 13,300. Since the last elections it has increased by between 3,000 and 4,000, and it will be of interest to the Minister for Migration to learn that during last year two Leederville mothers qualified for the King's bounty. I may also say that Leederville is the electorate responsible for the most beautiful lady in Australia. And now that it has been decided that she is the most beautiful and cultured lady in Australia, it goes without saying that "Miss Australia" will soon be acclaimed the most beautiful lady in the world.

Mr. Lindsay: It is time you had a look at the London girls.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I have made inquiries and I find that this popular young lady is only 19 years of age, so she is in no danger of any serious competition. Also I may mention that Leederville is the home ground of the West Perth football club.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is nothing very flattering in that.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It affords Leederville an added claim to notoriety. Moreover I may say that club are sure to be the minor premiers this year and, despite what the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe and others may contend, they are pretty sure to be the premiers of Western Australia. If the electorate was in need of any further grounds for notoriety, I can assure members that in Osborne Park there are to be found the finest milkers in the States. At the last election two questions were particularly exercising the minds of the people in the Leederville electorate. One was that of water supply. It was the most discussed question in the metropolitan area. The present Administration, through the Minister for Works, has been responsible for revolutionising the water supply in my electorate.

The problem was taken in hand in the most capable manner by the Minister, with the result that during the last two summers very few complaints were heard. I congratulate the Minister on having brought our water supplies up to date. Not only has all reticulation been attended to, but the question of future supplies has been grappled with by the Minister. Having regard to the growing population it will be necessary to see that existing supplies are extended so as to ensure the people against any scarcity. In attending to this, the Minister has shown most commendable enterprise. Two years ago, the water supply in the metropolitan area was an outstanding grievance, but the Government have, as far as possible, overcome the difficulty. Another question agitating the people of Leederville at the last election arose from the fact that for 20 years West Leederville had been denied a tramway service. I now publicly congratulate the Government and the Minister for Railways on the fact that the line has been started.

Mr. Teesdale: You always seem to have something to be thankful for.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, I have. Now that the Government have attended to the needs of my district, the least I can do is to publicly proclaim the fact.

Mr. Teesdale: Your seat must now be pretty safe.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I have already predicted that the West Perth football club will be this year's premiers, and I may say I confidently expect that at the next election Leederville will repeat its decision of two years ago. I have taken this opportunity to express my belief that the Government have made an earnest and successful endeavour to accomplish all that was expected of them. Representing as I do the second most populous electorate and the most important in the State, I am confident that the people of that electorate warmly appreciate the manner in which the affairs of the State are being administered and the beneficial nature of the legislation enacted by the present Government. I believe the people of the State have every confidence in the Government and will take the earliest opportunity of expressing that confidence in the most tangible form.

MR. MANN (Perth) [7.40]: The Premier in opening his remarks on the Address-in-reply said he expected that most members would speak on the debate and also that

they would wander a good deal and touch upon almost every point of the compass.

Mr. Teesdale: God knows, they have too!

Mr. MANN: The member for Leederville certainly vindicated the Premier's prediction. The Premier also said that the Government would accept any helpful criticism; but he suggested that the Government themselves were the best judges of what acts they should be criticised for. He was hopeful, he said, that any criticism of their acts would be of a favourable nature. 'It is very easy for onlookers to criticise the players in a game, even though those onlookers could not possibly do as well as the players. I trust that any criticism I may offer will be accepted by the Premier as helpful. At all events I put it forward in that spirit. The Minister for Railways, addressing a meeting of the Metropolitan Council at the Trades Hall recently, is reported to have said that the first interest of a country was the production of wealth.

The Minister for Railways: You subscribe to that?

Mr. MANN: Yes. He said also that reforms and improvements were more easily made in a country that was prosperous, and were impossible when stagnation existed. I subscribe to that also. The Minister was reported to have said that the success of a Government was judged by their financial administration. He claimed that the Government of which he was a member had successfully administered the affairs of the country since they had been in office. He particularly emphasised his own administration.

Mr. Richardson: Naturally.

Mr. MANN: But there are several viewpoints from which success may be considered, and I am inclined to view the success of the Government's administration as reflected in the condition of the people within the State, their prosperity and contentedness. In this respect I am afraid the Government have not been as successful as was expected, and probably not as successful as they themselves hoped to be. From the time of their taking office there has been a constant increase of unemployment and a constant increase of casual employment. When I speak of casual employment I refer to those men who get a month's work and are out of work for a month, then a fortnight's work and out of work for a month, and I do not include them amongst the unemployed. We have had an excess of unemployment. I do not sug-

gest that the Government have not done their utmost to find work, but it is not possible for the Government to be the employers of all men. That is where I think the Government have to some extent failed. They have been endeavouring to absorb all the unemployed, rather than to push on with a development policy, as a result of which private employers would have provided work for many men.

The Minister for Justice: Apparently you did not hear the speech by the Minister for Lands the other night.

Mr. MANN: I know and appreciate the work of the Minister for Lands as well as that of other Ministers. I am satisfied the Minister for Lands has continued the policy of the previous Government and probably has extended it, too, with considerable success. But that does not alter the fact that there has been an increase of unemployment.

The Minister for Works: Yes, it does.

Mr. MANN: On the 13th February of this year a meeting of unemployed was held at the Trades Hall. Thus before the wheat carting had been completed, probably before the harvesting had been finished, there was a meeting of unemployed in Perth. Mr. Kennelly and Mr. Barker took charge of the meeting and arranged a deputation to the Premier.

Mr. Panton: Was that the day when you were deposed as leader?

Mr. MANN: On the 2nd March of this year a Federal Royal Commission on National Insurance sat in Perth to inquire into the question of insurance against unemployment. Several of the witnesses who gave evidence could not be considered at all biased or prejudiced against the present Government, so we are forced to accept their evidence as reliable. Among the witnesses was Patrick James Mooney, secretary to the Metropolitan Council of the A.L.P., Western Australian branch, who said—

There were about 10,400 members, the majority of whom belonged to the railway and shop assistants' unions in this branch, which included only the Perth area. About 800 to 1,000 members were now unemployed. About 500 of these were unskilled workers. These men were out of work not owing to sickness but directly owing to slackness of trade. There were about 1,000 members of the shop assistants' union, and a fair number of them were unemployed. The A.W.U., whose members were all unskilled workers, had between 400 and 500 men unemployed. Witness attributed the cause of unemployment to the fact that harvesting had finished and shipping was

not busy, and these factors contributed to a general slackness of trade.

Another witness who gave evidence was Arthur James Watts, secretary of the Western Australian branch of the A.W.U. He told the Commission there were 9,000 members in his union, scattered throughout the State and about 1,000 members were unemployed, approximately 400 of them being in the metropolitan area. He had never before known unemployment to be so bad at that season of the year. Mr. Mooney gave evidence of 1,500 men and Mr. Watts of 1,000 men being unemployed at that time—March.

Mr. Lamond: All the shearers and shedhands engaged in the North at the present time would have been in the metropolitan area in March.

Mr. Richardson: The hon. member has referred to only two unions.

Mr. MANN: Another witness was Henry Victor Simons, organising secretary of the Amalgamated Engineers' Union. His members numbered 1,700 and 32 of them were unemployed. Mr. Trainer, secretary of the Plumbers and Sheetmetal Workers' Union, gave evidence that a large number of his members were unemployed.

Mr. Panton: Those are the same men that Mooney spoke of.

Mr. MANN: No.

Mr. Panton: Yes; their unions are all affiliated with the metropolitan council.

Mr. MANN: Mr. Mooney said that 800 to 1,000 of the members were unemployed and 500 of them were unskilled workers.

Mr. Panton: Men attached to the council, of which he was secretary. All the unions you have mentioned are affiliated with the council.

Mr. MANN: He said those men were out of work owing to slackness of trade. To show there has been an increase of unemployment, I am relying on the evidence of men who are secretaries of unions, who are in touch with their fellow workers all the time, and would not give evidence with any prejudice or bias against the present Government. This is the problem the Government have to grapple with, because it is impossible for the State to be prosperous when there are such large numbers of men out of work. Consider the economic loss if we have 2,000 unemployed men in Perth. With an earning capacity of probably £5 per week each, there would be £10,000 a week lost to the State. I have taken some trouble to look up figures and I find that since 1921 the population of this State has increased

by 34,000, of which 32,000 are in the metropolitan area, and only 2,000 in the country districts. Consequently, for every individual that has settled in the country, 17 have settled in the metropolitan area. If we had unemployment in 1921, no one would be optimistic enough to believe that our secondary industries in the city had advanced sufficiently to absorb 17 persons to every one who settled in the country. That is a point I wish to stress.

The Minister for Justice: A lot of that increase would be due to births.

Mr. Lindsay: There are births in the country as well as in the city.

Mr. MANN: That does not affect the figures. While the metropolitan population in the Commonwealth generally has been increasing, there has been a decline in the number of persons employed in primary production. The decline in this State is due chiefly to the loss of population in the mining districts. In Western Australia in 1919 there were 142,000 people in the metropolitan area, which number has increased to 176,000. One factor that makes for unemployment and results in workers remaining only temporarily in the country districts is the lack of homes. If a thousand men leave the metropolitan area and go to the country during the coming harvest, there are no homes to which they can take their wives and families. The men have to live in the best accommodation that the farmers can provide and, when the harvest operations are over, they will have no alternative to returning to the city. They will probably send their earnings to their homes each week and when they return to the city they will have only their last week's wages. If there were cottages in the country to which such men could take their families, we would have 500 men who are going out to work on the farms taking their families with them. When their work was over they would probably be out of employment for a few weeks until seeding started, and then would have another two or three months' work. That would be followed by two or three months of slackness, during which time they would get a little work on the roads, at fencing, or at rabbiting, and would not return to the city. It is impossible to rent a cottage between Perth and Southern Cross. There are no spec. builders providing cottages, and the men themselves have not the means to build homes. This is where the Government should step in. If the Government spent £100,000 or more in building 500 workers' cottages—

cheap places on the lines of the group cottages—between Geraldton and Katanning, they would have 500 families leaving the metropolitan area and settling permanently in the country.

Mr. Lamond: You would not give them as good homes as they have in the town.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member has not grasped the point. The type of cottage I suggest would suit these men and would involve a rental of not more than 10s. or 12s. a week. If cottages were built on the lines of those in the metropolitan area, the rent would be 25s. or 30s. a week. These workers cannot afford to pay such high rent. All they want is a comfortable cottage on five acres of land, and given that they could carry on well. A small rental of 10s. or 12s. a week would pay interest and ultimately would extinguish the capital cost. The Government would have 500 happy and contented families living in the country rather than in the back streets of the metropolis where they were half their time out of work and half their time lacking sufficient food.

Mr. Marshall: You are late in waking up to this proposal.

Mr. MANN: The Government that I supported started it, and built some cottages at Kununoppin and other towns.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: They have insufficient cottages for the railway men.

Mr. MANN: I have not the figures up to date for the State, but I have figures for the Commonwealth, showing the production for last year. The Commonwealth produced wealth to the extent of 392 millions, 81 millions being from agriculture, 102 millions from the pastoral industry, 42 millions from dairying, 11 millions from forestry, 22 millions from mining and 132 millions from manufacturing. While there has been a decrease in the number of persons employed in primary production there has been a steady increase in those employed in manufacturing. If we had during the last six or seven years gone on keeping up our average of those employed in primary industries, we should have been able to make room for larger numbers of persons in our factories in the metropolitan area. But we have not been able to sustain the numbers; rather have they been reduced. That is the reason for unemployment in the metropolitan area. The Government are wrong to compel men to register for employment in Perth.

The Minister for Railways: We did not do that.

Mr. MANN: If a man applies for a job in the country, he is told that the unemployed are picked up in Perth.

The Minister for Railways: No. During the last fortnight we picked up men in Wagin and Narrogin to work on the Wagin-Bowelling line.

Mr. MANN: Men required on the Dwarda railway and on relaying work have all been picked up in Perth.

The Minister for Railways: They do not need to register in the city. Labour bureaux are established all over the country.

The Minister for Works: There was not a man sent out to the Norseman railway from Perth.

Mr. MANN: We would naturally expect, with unemployed on the goldfields, that the men would be recruited from that centre. I am, however, speaking of the unemployed within 150 miles of Perth. It would be advisable to have registry offices in the different country centres.

The Minister for Railways: We have them there.

Mr. MANN: It is strange that the men flock in to Perth. They spend their last week's wages in the train fare, and arrive in the city without a shilling. They register for employment, and the next week they are asking for rations. They say they prefer work, but if there is no work they throw themselves on the mercy of the Government.

The Minister for Railways: If they register in the country, a definite percentage is taken for work in their particular district.

Mr. MANN: That is not generally known. It is understood they have to register in Perth.

The Minister for Railways: That is not so.

Mr. MANN: I have been in touch with the men, and I know they flock to Perth immediately their country jobs cease.

Mr. Teesdale: None come from the North.

The Minister for Lands: If they did, there would be no one left there.

Mr. MANN: Finding work for men for six or eight weeks on the tramlines, or some other casual job does not greatly relieve the position. It is like giving a

dope to a man who has a pain and whose sufferings are alleviated only temporarily.

The Minister for Railways: What are you to do with the men who are required temporarily in the agricultural industry?

Mr. MANN: I have offered one suggestion for overcoming the difficulty, namely, that of constructing 500 or 600 cheap workers' cottages in the agricultural districts.

Mr. Panton: Would they not starve in the country as well as in the town?

Mr. MANN: It would not be necessary for them to starve there. I know of two or three men who went out wheat lumping some few years ago, and they took their wives and families with them and lived in tents. They earned perhaps £40 or £50 and then put up a humpy. During slack times they battled through by rabbiting and taking fencing contracts, until the next year, and now they have their own little cottages, a cow and pigs and poultry. If they are out of work for a month or two in the winter they have no rent to pay, no wood to buy, and they can get through until work starts again.

Mr. Brown: In some of the country towns there is unemployment to-day. Even the local men cannot get work.

Mr. MANN: That may be happening in districts where the farmers are not enterprising. When farmers are desirous of developing their holdings they will avail themselves of the unemployed.

Mr. Brown: There are many unemployed along the Great Southern railway.

Mr. MANN: That is why the Great Southern has not progressed as other parts of the State have done.

Mr. Stubbs: That is not true.

Mr. Brown: It is nonsense.

Mr. MANN: There is a general desire amongst the youths who are growing up to enter into city trades. They are encouraged by their parents to do so. These people often come to me with their boys, and ask me to help to get them into motor garages and electrical shops.

The Minister for Lands: Do not we all like to keep our children at home?

Mr. MANN: When we see the inevitable coming, what is the use of trying to fight against it? This is going on all through Australia. The South Australian Government recently endeavoured to ascertain

why Victoria was supplying their market with so many manufactured goods. A Royal Commission was appointed. This took evidence in South Australia and Victoria. I will read a few lines from the evidence that was given. John Aener, on behalf of the Dangar Shoe Co., claimed that the factories now in Australia could make in six months enough boots and shoes to supply the Australian demand for a whole year. The English manufacturer, he said, enjoyed the advantage over the Australian manufacturer in regard to installation expenses. The day would come when Australia would require an export market, and he had in mind such countries as New Zealand, the South Sea Islands, and the East. Local manufacturers monopolised the Australian market with the exception of about 5 per cent. Competition was very keen, and they could produce enough boots, 15,000,000 pairs, in six months to supply the Australian requirements for a year. The alternative was for factories to be idle for periods, but to run efficiently they should work up to their full capacity. At present they were working only at about half that speed.

The Minister for Railways: They get over that by changing the fashions in boots and shoes.

Mr. MANN: Mr. Harkness gave evidence in the same strain. Another gentleman gave evidence regarding the tanning industry. Mr. Osborne, representing Hackett Bros. Ltd., argued that business had increased in Victoria during the last few years because Melbourne was the home of boot manufacturers so far as Australia was concerned. If that is the position in the Eastern States, where they have large and well-established factories, and they find that they are unable to keep their workers fully employed, what is the use of our trying to build up an unhealthy city population when there is no hope of finding constant employment for it? We have to push the people out into the country. We must do this in a way that will be suitable to them, and will render them more comfortable and satisfied than they are in the city. What applies to boot-making applies also to woollen mills. Most of the woollen mills in Victoria are working only two-thirds of the machinery half-time. They have only the Australian market to supply. They cannot compete in overseas markets, and their output is greater than the demand.

Mr. Lutey: The Albany mills are working full time and exporting 90 per cent. of their products.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: That is so.

Mr. MANN: While that is the position in our secondary industries, I now wish to show the position in regard to the market for our primary production. Here I have the report of a statement made by Mr. A. B. Alexander, M.P., secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Congress of Great Britain. It is headed "British Imports. £500,000,000 a year for Produce." The report reads as follows:—

Mr. Alexander opened the discussion, and said that in 1923 England paid £483,000,000 for imported produce. Included in this amount was for bacon £71,000,000, for beef £48,000,000, for butter £77,000,000, for lamb £13,000,000, for mutton £16,000,000, for cheese £28,000,000, and for milk £2,500,000.

There is a market for our goods, and especially for the butter from the groups. However, the trade will need organisation. I am sure that if we apply ourselves to getting the people into the country districts and into primary production, there will be less unemployment. The people will be engaged in industries having markets for their goods. In the country employment is continuous, whilst in the city it is casual and often altogether lacking. I think I have said enough on that matter. I make my remarks in no spirit of carping criticism, but with a desire to put an end to the position of continual unemployment that I and others have to face from day to day. We see men whose hearts are really breaking with the desire to get work, though I admit that there are some persons who are almost always unemployed, and are glad to be organised with the genuine unemployed. Undoubtedly there are large numbers of men anxious to get work and unable to get it. I desire to congratulate the Government on developing their tramway system. It is necessary that the people of the metropolitan area should have adequate means of transport. The motor buses do to some extent serve districts where there are no trams, but the bus form of transport is not as economical for travellers as the trams are. Moreover, in the thickly frequented streets the buses occupy too much space for the passengers they convey. The time will come when the city of Perth will have to confine motor traffic to certain streets. A Royal Commission which has been inquiring into this subject in Melbourne reports that two men riding in a tram take up 6.8 square feet of space, while

two men in a motor car take up 37. Therefore the Melbourne authorities are prohibiting motor cars from using certain crowded streets. It is more economical to build tramways before the streets are laid down. If a street has been laid down with bitumen or asphalt, and then has to be torn up to put a tram in, the work becomes very costly. I congratulate the Government on extending the trams in districts where they are needed.

The Minister for Railways: The reason you have mentioned is why we duplicated that road to Victoria Park a little earlier than otherwise we might have done.

Mr. MANN: There is a matter on which I must take the Minister for Railways to task, and that is in connection with his permitting Mr. Kenneally to interfere with the administration of the Commissioner of Railways. I refer to the fact that Mr. Kenneally instructed certain railway employees, the Engine-drivers and Firemen's Union, not to do certain work.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: On whose authority do you say that?

Mr. MANN: I have here a copy of the notice which was posted up. It reads—

Engine-drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Union. No. 10 Trades Hall, Perth. 19th February, 1926.

The Minister for Lands: That is the old thing.

Mr. MANN: It may be old, but yet it is new.

The general committee has given attention to the question of the coupling and uncoupling of engines on Fremantle passenger trains by enginemmen. Deputations have waited on the departmental officers with a view to having this question adjusted so that the traffic men would perform the work which correctly belongs to them. As negotiations have failed in this direction, it has been decided that, commencing from Monday next, 22nd inst., enginemmen are not to do coupling or uncoupling of engines, and that it is to be performed by the traffic staff employed on the Fremantle platform. I have been directed to forward this intimation to the metropolitan branches in order that, by having it posted in the notice case, members will know of the managing body's decision in connection therewith, and to request that all drivers and firemen give due attention to the matter. (Signed) J. J. Kenneally, General Secretary.

Mr. Panton: That was the general committee, not Kenneally.

Mr. MANN: I blame the official who took the responsibility. The Commissioner of Railways replied as follows:—

Perth. 20th February, 1926. Dear Sir,—My attention has been drawn to a notice is-

sued by you, dated 19th inst., and exhibited at East Perth loco. depot on the subject of coupling and uncoupling engines. No doubt you will recognise that the notice in question in itself constitutes a direct attempt at what is known as "job control," in that it incites members of your union to disobey lawful orders relating to their work issued by the responsible authority under the Government Railways Act, 1904. The practice now in vogue—against which you are inciting your members to revolt—has been in operation for very many years, and is certainly now exactly as it was in 1921, when the conditions of employment of your members were last settled by the Arbitration Court. If your organisation has any reason to desire any alteration of the conditions of employment, your course is to approach the Arbitration Court for an amendment of the agreement registered at the Arbitration Court, which now controls the situation . . . . .

The Minister for Railways: That is just what was done.

Mr. MANN: It was done in the end, but the Minister permitted this to go on.

The Minister for Railways: Nothing of kind. As soon as the men refused to do that particular work, they were suspended. Afterwards the matter was referred to the Arbitration Court, and settled.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you had to put on other men to do the work these men refused to do.

The Minister for Railways: One can only suspend men who do not carry out their duties. This was an industrial dispute.

Mr. MANN: That condition of affairs continued, and there were daily statements in the Press from the 22nd February to the 12th March. Each day the papers contained something like this—

The trouble which arose between the Commissioner of Railways (Col. Pope) and the Engine-drivers and Firemen's Union regarding the uncoupling of engines attached to passenger trains on arrival at Fremantle seems to have become one between the Government and the union. Negotiations took place yesterday afternoon with representatives of the union and the Premier (Mr. P. Collier) and the Minister for Railways (Mr. J. C. Willcock). As a result of these negotiations the fines which would have been imposed on members of engine crews which had refused to perform the duty requested of them were not deducted from the ordinary pay. The Minister for Railways stated this morning he did not expect to meet the union representatives again for a day or two.

The Minister for Railways: The Minister for Railways stuck to the policy of the Government and said, "This matter has to go to the Arbitration Court, because it is an in-

dustrial dispute." And that is what happened. That was the only way the matter could be settled.

Mr. MANN: Surely the Minister for Railways has sufficient machinery to control his department without letting Mr. Kenneally, who is a leader in the Labour movement, step over his, the Minister's head and take charge of the conduct of the railways.

The Minister for Railways: These men were suspended because they refused duty. The matter developed into an industrial dispute.

Mr. MANN: While the Minister was taking action against the men, could he not have taken some action against Mr. Kenneally?

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. MANN: The Minister could have taken action, though it might have been a little extreme.

The Minister for Railways: You are like Mr. Bruce, who goes around saying that something should be done.

Mr. MANN: This went on until one of the weekly papers began to refer to Mr. Kenneally as "Commissioner Kenneally."

Mr. Panton: "The power behind the throne."

Mr. Richardson: What authority had Kenneally to put up the notice?

Mr. MANN: Suppose Mr. Kenneally had put up a notice that no trains whatever were to run, would the Minister have sat quietly? I seriously put it to the Minister that he ought not to permit any outsider to usurp his functions as Minister controlling the Railway Department.

The Minister for Railways: Any man who obeyed the command of the outside authority was suspended or fined. The Arbitration Court settled this industrial dispute.

Mr. Lindsay: Some cases were settled by the Minister without reference to the Arbitration Court.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. MANN: I think it my duty to bring this matter to the notice of the Minister. I am sorry that my attacks are mostly directed towards the Minister for Railways. I have yet another matter to bring to his attention.

Mr. Marshall: This is the Minister's unlucky week.

Mr. MANN: Speaking recently at the Trades Hall, the Minister referred to what he had done for the employees under his control, and pointed out that the 6d. per

day increase all round, which was granted last year, involved a total expenditure of £60,000.

The Minister for Railways: That was following an arbitration award.

Mr. MANN: I am coming to that.

Mr. Davy: If it was following an arbitration award, why did the Minister claim credit for it?

The Minister for Railways: I was not claiming any credit.

Mr. Davy: You claimed it as a political achievement that you had raised the railway men's wages. If it was the court that did it, how could you claim any credit for it?

Mr. MANN: The Minister said he was following the award of the Arbitration Court. He also stated—

Eight thousand men were employed in the Railway Department, and a penny a day addition to wages increased the total by £10,000 a year. The success or otherwise of a Government was usually judged by its financial administration, and it would be realised that in dealing with such a large department the financial aspect of alterations in conditions had always to be seriously considered. It would be found that out of a total increased wage disbursement of £225,000, just about 75 per cent., or £167,000 of the amount involved, was absorbed by departments under his control. In many instances, although based on Arbitration Court decisions, the increases were granted as a matter of justice, without the unnecessary delays and consequent loss of value of the increases which would have taken place had the matter been listed for decision by the court.

The Minister for Railways: Tell me what is wrong with that.

Mr. MANN: The Minister said he had been following awards of the court. I am pointing out now that he took action without referring to the court.

The Minister for Railways: No. The court gave an award, and why should another crowd of men be sent to the court to get the same award?

Mr. MANN: The point I take exception to is this—

In conclusion the Minister said: "This brings me to the point as to whether the Labour Government is successful. Is it worth while to work and fight to have a Labour Government and to retain them when they are in power? Labour supporters and canvassers are sometimes discouraged when asked by people who should vote Labour: 'What has Labour done? It makes no difference who is in power.' When Ministers have all addressed the council, detailing only some of the activities of the Government, and have pointed out benefits

which workers have received from legislative and administrative actions, there will be a complete answer to those who are too apathetic even to inquire what has been done."

The Minister for Railways: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Davy: You say now the court did it, but there you told them that you did it.

The Minister for Mines: Do you approve of those increases or not?

Mr. MANN: I do not approve of Ministers giving increases with a view to collecting votes.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes, vote catching.

Mr. MANN: That is the way the Minister put it to the union. He put it to them that because he had given these increases they were bound to vote for the Government.

Mr. Davy: And now he says that the court gave them.

The Minister for Railways: You are doing me a great service in repeating that statement. It is propaganda work.

Mr. Davy: But you say the court did it!

The Minister for Railways: And we created the court that did it. You helped to pass the Bill that contained the basic wage provision that enabled it to be done!

Mr. Davy: Nonsense!

The Minister for Mines: Why dispute it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: If the Minister thinks he is justified in doing that sort of thing, and canvassing for votes, I will let it go at that.

The Minister for Mines: Will you say whether or not you approve of the increases?

Mr. MANN: That is not the point.

Mr. Panton: It is a big point in the envelopes on pay day.

The Minister for Works: The reason why you will not answer the question is that you are afraid you will lose some votes.

Mr. MANN: I have placed the facts before the public and the electors can judge for themselves.

Mr. Marshall: You will want all the assistance you can get when the elections come round.

Hon. G. Taylor: You sat in silence last night when the member for East Perth was tuning you up.

The Minister for Mines: He is like you; he is in the same camp!

Mr. MANN: There is another matter I desire to bring under the notice of the Government because it affects a part of the State where, as in other parts as well, they are somewhat out of favour. Here is a picture

showing some trucks loaded with wheat and under it is printed the following: "God bless Jimmy Mitchell! Look out for the next election!"

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Is that in the South-West?

Mr. MANN: No, at Bullfinch.

Mr. Panton: Will you be able to get the photograph in "Hansard"?

Mr. MANN: Having ventilated these points, I hope Ministers will see to it that there are no recurrences.

## THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon.

A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [8.35]: I do not propose to detain the House very long. Although this is the third Address-in-reply to be debated since the present Government have been in office, I have sought in vain to dissect from the speeches delivered by members sitting in opposition, any cause for complaint against the Administration. With the exception of one point, I could not find anything that called for an answer. Indeed, members opposite have been generous in that each one has complimented the Government upon having done something in his electorate. We are thus able to show something accomplished in every constituency represented by our political opponents. One would have thought that, seeing the present is the last session before the general elections, members opposite would have endeavoured to put up the best case possible against the Government. In the final analysis it is clear that their best endeavours resolve themselves into a series of compliments to the Government. The one point affecting my department that has been adversely criticised concerns the establishment of a State Insurance Department to deal with the question of workers' compensation. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) was deputed to state the case in opposition to that step. Even he does not altogether object to what has been done; his was a qualified objection. His first point was that the power given to the Minister under the Workers' Compensation Act to approve of insurance companies before they could do business under that Act, was interpreted by the Government as giving the Minister power to exercise some control over the rates to be charged by the companies doing business under the Act. The member for West Perth held that that was wrong. He claimed that the right of approval to the Minister was intended only to enable the Minister to ascertain whether the companies were financially sound. He asserted that if

the position of a company was sound, Ministerial approval should follow automatically. If that was in the mind of the hon. member when he approved of that provision in the Act, I suggest to him that it would simply mean handing over the whole of the community to the mercies of the insurance companies. We provided that insurance was to be compulsory. Everyone who had risks under the Act was compelled to insure. Could it be argued that the position the Government were to take up was that we were to say to the companies: "Here is the whole field. We are driving the people to you to do business and you can charge what you like. There is to be no control exercised over the terms and conditions that you may lay down."

Mr. Davy: Everyone is compelled to buy bread! We are in the hands of the bakers!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Everyone is not compelled to buy bread and there are many people who do not buy any from one year's end to the other.

Mr. Davy: I do not think so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You must know there are many such people. Can it be argued that Parliament would be looking after the interests of the community as a whole if they gave such a right to the insurance companies? If that is the view of the member for West Perth, I look upon it in a totally different light. Parliament, I contend, placed the responsibility upon me of seeing that the interests of the community were properly safeguarded. I was not inclined to allow the insurance companies to do business and specify what terms they chose, seeing that the business of insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act had been made compulsory. My attitude led to a conference with the insurance companies at which an agreement was made that, in view of the increased liabilities provided under the Act, the rates were to be increased by 25 per cent. At the end of 12 months the whole of the accounts of the companies were to be open for investigation by the Government Actuary. If that officer thought that the rates provided were too high or too low, he had the right to say whether they should be decreased or increased. The right of appeal to the Auditor General was also provided.

Mr. Davy: What rates did you look into? Did you look into all the covers under the Workers' Compensation Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The hon. member must know that that has been the practice for many years past. All

that information is supplied now to the Government Actuary.

Mr. Davy: Do you say you exercised supervision over all the covers under the Workers' Compensation Act or merely those representing the miners' risks?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The whole of the covers under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Davy: You say you investigated them all?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course we did. We spent a number of evenings in conference and the Government Actuary carried out the investigation.

Mr. Davy: Did you investigate the position regarding domestic servants' risks, gardeners' risks and so on?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Does the hon. member not know that all such information has been in the possession of the Government Actuary's office, since it has been established?

Mr. Davy: You agreed upon everything regarding the risks under the Workers' Compensation Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Davy: Everything was satisfactory, apart from miners' risks.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To whom?

Mr. Davy: To you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The companies would not accept risks for miners' phthisis.

Mr. Davy: Were all the other provisions satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not say that.

Mr. Davy: But you approved, nevertheless.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, for 12 months.

The Minister for Lands: That was before the Miners' Phthisis Act was proclaimed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course it was; the member for West Perth knows that very well. The agreement between the Government and the companies was that the provisions under that Act would not be proclaimed until such time as the companies were given at least a month's notice, enabling them to have a further conference if it was so desired. The member for West Perth says that when the insurance companies declined to do business regarding miners' diseases, if the Government had arranged to take the risk for the mining companies, he would have raised no objec-

tion. This means that he does not really object to State insurance.

Mr. Davy: Yes, I do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I interpret the contention of the hon. member correctly, he asserted that if the Government had given the mining companies the right to insure with the State Insurance Department the risks that the companies refused to take, he would not have raised any objection.

Mr. Davy: Well, you do not interpret my views properly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that be so, how does the member for West Perth view the position of the taxpayers as a whole? That is an obligation imposed upon us when dealing with the insurance companies. It is suggested that we should limit our cover to that section which the companies declined to accept. In other words, the hon. member was willing for the State to accept the unprofitable business, leaving the profitable business to the outside insurance companies.

Mr. Davy: I say there is no branch of the insurance business that has any right to be unprofitable.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What will the people think if they are asked by their Parliamentary representatives to carry such of the obligations imposed by Parliament under the Act as are unprofitable, allowing the private companies to enjoy the profitable business? Is that the attitude that any public man should take up on behalf of the people? Are we to tolerate that sort of thing? Are Ministers, who are sworn to look after the interests of the people, to allow that sort of thing to obtain? If that is the view the member for West Perth takes, I can assure him that we view our responsibilities in a way very different from that in which he regards them. Now we come to the point where the companies, after many conferences both here and in Melbourne, declined to do business at all. We then had recourse to the alternatives that have been outlined in the Press and that the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) read to the House. The complaint is that we have started another trading concern, and that it is contrary to the law of the land because Parliamentary approval should first have been obtained. Parliament passed an Act making it compulsory to insure. The insurance companies declined to do the busi-

ness. Had we said we would not give the mining companies the means to insure, but stood off and let those companies look after themselves, what would have been said about us? It would have been said we had failed in our duty.

Mr. Panton: And the charge would have been justified.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All we have done in starting State insurance has been to give effect to the decision of Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: The mines would have had to close down.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. It would have been tantamount to admitting that, not Parliament, but the insurance companies, should rule the State; that they, instead of those charged with governing the country, were going to decide whether that section of the Workers' Compensation Act was to be made the law of the land. That was the distinct challenge. We have decided that the constituted authority shall be the one to interpret the decision of Parliament. All we have done has been to give effect to the decision of Parliament. Parliament said there must be insurance; and when the insurance companies refused to function, we would have been lacking in our duty had we not given the mining companies the means of doing their insurance. Even the insurance companies themselves did not object to State insurance, so long as we employed their organisation. They proposed to me that the Government should take the risk but use the insurance companies' organisation and pay them a small profit for it. So they had no objection to State insurance. What they did object to was that we should set up an organisation of our own. I do not think any man with any idea whatever of his responsibility to the country could have accepted a proposition such as the companies put up. Even the member for West Perth does not object entirely to State insurance. He qualifies his objection. The insurance companies themselves actually suggested that we should start State insurance, so long as we used their organisation.

Mr. Davy: I would not have objected to your adopting a temporary expedient pending the meeting of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is all we have done. We have merely made provisional arrangements until we can ask

Parliament to approve, which will be done at the first possible opportunity.

Mr. Stubbs: And if Parliament does not approve?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will then consider the position. Parliament will be given clearly to understand what the position is when the Bill is introduced.

Hon. G. Taylor: A row with another place!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The point has been raised that the insurance companies were not given a fair deal, that they were not supplied with the figures disclosed by the medical examination of the miners.

Mr. Davy: That point was not raised by me.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You said the companies had complained.

Mr. Davy: I merely said that they said one thing and that you said another. I did not go into the question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, but you mentioned it. This is the position: after the first conference, when we had agreed on the risk, outside of the miners' diseases, each side undertook to collect all available information with a view to arriving at an equitable figure for the premium for miners' diseases. The companies said they would collect all the data they could get, and I, on behalf of the Government, undertook to do the same. We appointed a committee consisting of the Government Actuary and the Under Secretary for Mines, and we asked the Commissioner of State Insurance in Queensland to nominate an officer to come over here and assist. So we did our part of the bargain, but the insurance companies, as far as I know, did not lift a finger to obtain information. While I have done my part, they have done nothing. Now they complain that they should have had a seat on the committee appointed by the Government. It was never previously suggested to me that they desired a representative on that committee. If they had put forward such a request, no doubt it would have been agreed to. I had no idea that they were not making their own investigations to get the data necessary to arrive at a reasonable figure. It was not until our investigations were concluded, the report of the committee in hand and negotiations broken off with the companies in respect of miners' diseases, that the companies declared they should have had a represen-

tative on that committee. Let me say that the medical examination of the miners had nothing whatever to do with workers' compensation. It was by the merest accident that the examination was taking place just at the time that the Workers' Compensation Act was coming into force. The Miners' Phthisis Act, under which the medical examination was held, was passed years before we came into office. As it chanced it was delayed in its operation, and the medical examination was being completed just at the time these negotiations were in progress. So the medical examinations had nothing to do with the Workers' Compensation Act at all. If there had been no medical examinations, no Miners' Phthisis Act, in what position would the insurance companies have been? They had no right to the figures disclosed by the medical examinations. As a matter of fact, under the law it is incumbent on the Minister for Mines that he shall treat that information as confidential.

Mr. Davy: Yes, information about the individual.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The two Acts were entirely separate and unrelated, and the insurance companies have put up their argument on that point merely because they think it helps them.

Mr. Davy: Could they have obtained the information themselves? Could they have gone into the mines and carried out medical examinations?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We undertook to get all the information we could, and they undertook to do the same.

Mr. Davy: Is it suggested that they had half the facilities that were available to you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Davy: Well, what objection was there to your giving them all the information you had?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As a matter of fact they had the whole of the committee's report in detail the day after I received it. It was certain other information that we held we were not justified in giving out, information that the Minister for Mines is charged by the law to regard as confidential.

Mr. Davy: Is he forbidden by the law to publish the results of the examinations? You complain that the companies refused to carry out a certain undertaking, yet you admit you did not give them all the information that you had. Why?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I gave them all the information given to the Gov-

ernment by the committee. I furnished the committee's report, all the statistics, every detail the committee presented to the Government, together with the reasons why they had arrived at a certain figure. The insurance companies complained that we had entered the field of workers' compensation insurance outside of miners' diseases. Here is a point they have been silent upon: they sent out to their clients notices that they were getting out of the business altogether. They issued notices to local authorities, to business people and generally throughout the country that they were withdrawing from the field of workers' compensation insurance. I was rung up from all over the city the next day and asked if we were making provision to cover by insurance the people affected. Everybody was inquiring as soon as those notices went out from the insurance companies.

Mr. Davy: Did they send you one? I suppose you carry a workers' compensation policy?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, I do not.

Mr. Latham: They did not send those notices to road boards.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, they did; to quite a number of road boards. The Subiaco Municipal Council spoke to my office the first thing next morning. The notices were sent all around. Afterwards, when they got legal advice, the companies withdrew the notices.

Mr. Davy: That was after you had cut them out of the business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said in the House that it was palpable to the merest novice that they could not be cut out.

Mr. Davy: Were their notices out before you withdrew your approval?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When I was rung up and asked to give the cover I was not in a position to give it.

Mr. Davy: But was that before you withdrew your approval?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know, but that has nothing to do with it. They gave notice that they were going to decline to do business.

Mr. Latham: After they received your ultimatum.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Act does not say the Minister shall give approval to companies to do part of the business. It does not say the Minister shall ap-

prove of their taking the fat and leaving the lean for somebody else. It prescribes that the Minister shall approve of companies to do business under the Act, not merely a part of the business. The companies want to do certain business and leave the rest. I am not prepared to let them do that, and I do not think the people would agree to carry the big obligation under insurance while the companies picked the eyes out of the business and declined to accept the obligation that Parliament said they should accept.

Mr. Davy: There are some companies that never took a mining risk.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is different under this Act; this is compulsory insurance.

Mr. Davy: It is exactly the same; they do not cater for that class of business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was only one alternative to setting up business for themselves and that was to let the Act remain a dead letter and throw the miners to the wolves. We were to say to the miners, "No matter what Parliament said you are entitled to, because the insurance companies will not cover you, you must go to the wolves. You are not going to get the benefit Parliament said you should have because the companies will not do the business." Are the companies to be the overlords, to rule the country, to deny the affected miners what they are entitled to? Are we to be dictated to and controlled by the insurance companies?

Mr. Davy: They had no power to do such a thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But they did it.

Mr. Davy: They could not do it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: According to the hon. member's advice, we had no right to engage in this business. If we had not entered the business the companies would have ruled; and the miners would not have received what Parliament said they were entitled to have.

Mr. Davy: Why?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because the hon. member's advice would have been followed.

Mr. Davy: What has insurance to do with compensation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The companies were not prepared to carry the risk.

Mr. Latham: Have you any idea what it is going to cost the State?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No matter what it costs, those men are going to have what Parliament said they were entitled to.

Mr. Latham: As a business proposition, you ought to know what it is going to cost.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not mind what it costs; the miners are going to get what Parliament said they should have.

Mr. Davy: And what about the community?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The insurance companies are not going to rule this country; neither are they going to be the overlords of Parliament. If they will not submit to Parliament, they will not be in the business.

Mr. Latham: You should tell the people what it is going to cost.

Mr. Heron: Oh, keep cool!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No member of this House objected to the provisions applying to miners. They have been agreed to by both Houses. Parliament having agreed that the miners were entitled to the conditions set out in the Act, the Government have adopted the only policy possible to give the miners what Parliament said they should have. The only other point has regard to the letter sent out from the Government Actuary to the different business firms. Objection has been taken to the letter because it came from a Government department. It is admitted that similar letters are sent out by commercial firms every day in the week, that insurance companies do it regularly. But because this went from a Government department, it is considered to be all wrong. On the other hand, Government departments are often accused of not adopting business methods. It has been said that if Government departments would only follow the ordinary commercial lines, those departments would be much more efficient. All that has been done is to follow ordinary business lines. To do what the companies do every day, what the commercial houses do every day. There is nothing wrong with it.

Mr. Davy: That depends upon the point of view.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the member for West Perth says we have made a mess of workers' compensation and of the insurance of miners particularly, my reply is there is no mess and he need have no qualms. Everything is working smoothly. The Government have carried out the whole of the obligations and will stand up to them.

We have taken out of the mines all the men suffering from tuberculosis; the men who now go below are not in danger of having germs coughed out amongst them, and the underground workings will no longer be breeding grounds for disease. We accept the obligations that the Miners' Phthisis Act places upon us. On the other hand, the men whom the medical examination disclosed as having the disease in its early stages have been warned that it is advisable in the interests of their health to get out of the mines. Every one of those men has been offered an inducement by the Government to leave the mines. We have offered such men either settlement on the land or some job. We have not asked them to go out into a cold world and start the battle again from the beginning. We are offering them an inducement to leave the mines, because the doctors have advised them in the great majority of cases that if they will now come into the open air, though it may be impossible to cure them, the disease can be arrested, and their lives will be prolonged for many years.

Mr. Latham: It is the right thing to do.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are more of those than of the others.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, five to one. Thus we are giving them a fighting chance for their lives. We cannot force those men out of the mines. We can only invite them to leave and give them some opportunity to provide for themselves. The whole thing is working smoothly. No mess has been made of it. The only fly in the ointment was the insurance companies' declining to do the business.

Mr. Latham: What about cancelling that approval of yours?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Does the hon. member think I would be justified in approving of the insurance companies doing one section of the business only, taking the profitable part and refusing the risky part?

Mr. Davy: That is the whole point. You are making the non-mining employer bear part of the burden.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am glad the hon. member has reminded me of that because I remember he made that statement in his speech and it is entirely wrong.

Mr. Davy: It is not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is wrong because, with the miners' diseases insurance in the State office, there is no additional charge for the other risks.

Mr. Davy: But you wanted the insurance companies to take on an unprofitable business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I wanted the companies to shoulder the obligation Parliament said they should take.

Mr. Davy: If you made them take unprofitable business, the profitable business would have to carry the unprofitable part.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member is going to argue that the Act is to be cut up, that one risk is to be separated from another and that the companies shall not accept the obligations of the Act as a whole, but may take the profitable and discard the unprofitable—

Mr. Davy: That is not the case at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Parliament passed the Act, and it was not for the companies to dissect it or to say they would do as they liked.

Mr. Davy: That is not the point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is the point. There is no hope of the hon. member and I agreeing. He knows my views. I considered the question from the standpoint of the people's interests. That is what I in my office am charged to do. It is not my duty to consider the interests of a company or of a handful of men. Having preserved the interests of the people, the Government are quite satisfied with what they have done. That is the whole answer to the argument raised against the Government's embarking upon State insurance. Let me now refer for a moment to the contention of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) that the defeat of Mr. T. Moore, M.L.C. for Central Province, was due to the rural workers' log that the A.W.U. had served on some of the farmers. I believe that log has been served under the Commonwealth Arbitration Act and that it applies throughout Australia. Now that Mr. Moore has been defeated, I should like to know what the member for Toodyay and his friends propose to do. They represented to the farmers that the Labour movement was responsible for the log, that consequently they should vote against Mr. Moore, and that if they did so everything would be well. Now that Mr. Moore has been defeated what is the member for Toodyay and his friends going to do about that log? Can the successful candidate save the farmers from that log?

Mr. Latham: Politicians have nothing to do with the log.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course not, but the member for Toodyay admitted that that was the reason why Mr. Moore was defeated. He and others went through the country telling the farmers to vote not for Mr. Moore but for his opponent, thus deceiving the farmers. It is up to the farmers to ask those men what they propose to do now. The farmers have followed their advice, Mr. Moore has been defeated, and they should now call upon Mr. Kempton, M.L.C., and the member for Toodyay and the others to give effect to their statements and say what they intend to do.

Mr. Heron: They asked the farmers whether they would vote for Moore and the rural workers' log or for Kempton and cheap farm labour.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is amusing to hear the claim of Country Party members that they are the only ones who understand or have any interest in or look after the men on the land. Out of six members of the Country Party in this House, there are only two farmers, and while they are constantly twitting the Labour movement with being opponents of the farmers, I make a sporting offer that members of the Labour Party can show a greater acreage under crop than can members of the Country Party.

Mr. Brown: But we number only six.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member and his friend argue that we do not understand the men on the land and have no interest in them, but I am satisfied that Labour members in this House have a greater area under crop than have members of the Country Party, and probably know more about the business.

Mr. Davy: Have you land under crop?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and probably nearly as much as has any member of the Country Party.

Mr. Davy: Then I suppose you will be able to vote for the Upper House at the next elections.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope so.

Mr. Davy: And get on the special jury list.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I may even qualify for that.

The Minister for Lands: While in Parliament he is exempt from serving on a jury.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An attempt has been made—with the idea, I believe, of influencing votes in the country,

particularly in the agricultural areas—to fasten on the trade unions the responsibility for McKay's Sunshine harvester firm not starting works in Western Australia. The member for Toodyay argued that because the unions would not accept piecework, McKay's would not establish works here.

Mr. Heron: The member for Katanning had most to say about that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The people should know that regardless of what McKay says or what the trade unions say, and regardless of whether one wants piecework and the other does not, Parliament has set up a tribunal upon whose decision that question depends. It is the court that determines whether there shall be piecework, and not the trade unions or Mr. McKay. In a letter to the Press, addressed to the union, Mr. McKay states that under the Shops and Factories Act of Victoria piecework is permitted. Under the Arbitration Act in this State piecework is permitted, and is worked. It is argued that the trade unions of this State are opposed to piecework. Practically every boot and garment produced in this State is made under piecework, and to-day we are exporting clothing to the other States. Every newspaper in the State is set up under piecework. A great deal of railway construction is done under that system. Nearly all the sleepers are produced under it. A great deal of clearing and hauling in the country, and a lot of road construction, is done under piecework. All shearing is done under the same system. Despite this, it was put forward seriously that the trade unions in this State have set themselves against piecework. There are sections of work in which piecework is neither economical nor suitable. The place to argue that, however, is in the Arbitration Court. If Mr. McKay has faith in his case, and can show that his work can be suitably carried out under piecework, that the men on the job will get as good wages and conditions, or better, than under day work, the only logical thing for him to do is to go to the court and produce his evidence, and there will not be much doubt about the decision of the court.

Hon. G. Taylor: Did he not merely want an assurance from the Trades Hall that he would be allowed to conduct his business here on the same basis as it is conducted in the other States?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What impudence! It is not for trade unions to say how a business shall be carried on.

Mr. Davy: If the trade unions agree, will the Arbitration Court interfere? If they agree, they merely register the agreement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are discussing a case in which there is a disagreement.

Mr. Davy: You say they could not agree because the Arbitration Court is there to fix the matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What nonsense! I did not say that.

Mr. Davy: I understood you to say so.

Mr. Latham: It sounded like it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cited a case in which there is a disagreement. Mr. McKay tried to make the public believe that because the trade unions would not see eye to eye with him, he was unable to start his business here. That is all nonsense.

Hon. G. Taylor: He cannot go to the court until he has started the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He has had men employed in the State for years.

Mr. Latham: Only in assembling.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He does not require to wait until men are employed in manufacturing before applying to the court. When an award is given it is made a common rule. The only trouble with him is that at present there is an award covering that class of work, and this is in operation at Purser & Co.'s works and at the State Implement Works. The court has given its decision, and the award must be operated until it expires. When it expires Mr. McKay will have an opportunity of getting it altered.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is it made a common rule?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every award is made a common rule. We are most anxious to see these industries started. To say that unions, when it can be shown that better wages and conditions are available under a certain system, will refuse to work under that system, amounts to accusing unionists of not possessing ordinary intelligence. In many cases there is an objection to piecework, and to certain systems that the employers would like to have in force. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) for one whole afternoon was with Mr. McKay at the Sunshine works. He spoke to the

foreman and has now solved the whole problem. Numbers of men who are working in the trades have negotiated with employers, men in England and other countries who are engaged in big enterprises and employ hundreds of thousands of men—all are puzzled as to how to solve the problem. Unfortunately they have not the giant intellect of the member for Toodyay, who in one afternoon was able to find a solution for it.

Mr. George: And he had luncheon there, too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. We remember reading the report of the Commission that Lord Moseley sent from England to America. He selected a number of trade unionists from the key industries and sent them to America to examine the conditions under which the men work, particularly the piecework system, the limitation of output, and the training of apprentices, and paid the whole of the expenses himself. Each delegate submitted his report and discussed the whole situation most keenly. Every man put forward his reasons for coming to his conclusion. Some agreed with what they had found, and others disagreed. I have just finished reading the report of the Commission that the "Daily Mail" sent over to America. They appointed a trade union leader to select eight trade unionists from the engineering trade to examine the shops in America, to report on the output and to inquire into the whole situation, and they paid the whole of the expenses. It is generally agreed by the Commission that if the employers of Great Britain would treat their men in the same way as the employers in America do, there would not be much objection to the system that is followed in America being introduced into England. They all agree that the difference between the two countries is that in Great Britain the moment a man on piecework makes big wages, his rate is cut. In America employers do not care how much a man makes, even up to £20 or £30 a week, if they get the return. The American employers do not place piecework employees and day workers side by side, as they do here and in England, so that one shall speed up the other. The pieceworker knows that he gets the full results of his labour, but the day worker knows that he receives only so much a day. One man is made to race the other, and the other man is

called to account if he cannot keep up with the pieceworker. That is largely the cause of the trade unions' objections to the system.

Mr. George: They have any amount of trouble to-day with their industries in America.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The industries there, particularly engineering are very prosperous. A system is in existence under which a man has to account for every minute of the eight hours. He has to make out a docket and charge it up to the job. I have worked under that system. A man only receives a weekly wage, no matter how hard he works. Occasionally a tradesman may have a run of good luck. His machine may be in perfect working order, the weather may be good, and he may get his work done very quickly. Some months later he may have the same job to do again, but his luck will be against him. The time he takes to turn out the second job is compared with the time taken on the first occasion. If he cannot get a clean run he may not finish the job in the same time, and is called upon for an explanation.

Mr. George: Quite right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This naturally means that when a man gets a good run he has to see to it that the time he puts down for the job is the time he can turn it out at under normal conditions, so that on the next occasion he will have something up his sleeve. That all tends to reduce the output. I have often sat at round table conferences with employers in an endeavour to solve this problem, and I have spent many weeks and years in studying it. We are still far from arriving at any agreement concerning it.

Hon. G. Taylor: You did not have lunch in a motor car.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government and every section of the Labour movement are anxious to encourage local industries. We will do all we can to induce new capital to come here for industrial purposes so that we may keep the money here. I welcome the proposal of the Prime Minister that a visit to America should be paid by industrialists from Australia, who would examine the conditions there. I see this is not agreed to in many union quarters, but I hope that trade unions throughout Australia will accept the suggestion and encourage this inquiry. We only want the truth and the facts. We want to build up our industries and create thriving secondary industries as well as primary industries, in order to provide

work for our own people. If America can teach us anything we should not be too proud to learn from it. Some of our people are saying that because the Prime Minister has asked them to nominate more representatives than will be selected, they should nominate only the actual number required to be sent. So long as a choice is made from those who are nominated, it will be quite all right. The Government must have some range of choice. It would never do to take all the representatives from one industry.

Mr. Latham: Or from one State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: More men must be nominated than can be selected. Men from the different industries must be selected in order to give a decent range of inquiry, and ensure that the persons making the inquiry have the necessary knowledge. If the inquiry is made, I hope those who make it will do so with an open mind, determined only to get at the truth with the idea of doing something good and something permanent in the way of developing Australian industry. If the inquiry is entered into in that spirit, it should lead to substantial results for the Commonwealth. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) has said that unemployment has increased since this Government came into office. That is not so. If it were true, I would point out that during the last 11 months of this year, no fewer than 1,400 foreigners have come into the State. They have all found employment. They are in the country displacing our own men.

Mr. Latham: Our people will not stay there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are asking for lower wages than our men would take.

Mr. Latham: I do not think that is right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are being employed largely by their own countrymen on contract, and are working for lower wages, probably two or three of them being in receipt of what one Australian worker would require.

Mr. Latham: The farmers are all paying the same rate.

Mr. George: Are they able to speak English?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Many of them cannot do so.

Mr. George: You do not know the wages they receive.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot find out. There are twice as many of these foreigners as there are unemployed in

Perth. The member for Perth also said that the Government should push on with a development policy instead of employing men on casual work, and that this would overcome the whole difficulty. It is strange he should say that when there is a record acreage under crop, more country developed and more work on broad acres than ever before, and when the Government have schemes in operation and in course of preparation for the development of the State, as he well knows, and for the development of primary industries, such as no other Government has ever taken on, but which we are able to bring down to a solid basis. Had we not been obliged to wait for the Commonwealth and Imperial authorities to give us the necessary approval all these schemes would have been put into operation long ago. They have been in the hands of the Commonwealth Government since the early part of this year. I myself took the detailed plans and specifications over to Melbourne on the 13th January, and they have been lodged with the Federal Minister there ever since. It is no fault of this Government that the work has not been put in hand long ago, nor is it any fault of this Government that those 1,400 foreigners have been admitted to Western Australia. It has been frequently suggested that the best index of the progress of a country is to be found in the savings bank figures. I will take the figures for the years that have been referred to. The number of accounts opened with the State Savings Bank during the year 1922-23 was 17,871; for the year 1925-26 the number was 22,587. The total number of accounts in the State Savings Bank for the year 1922-23 was 147,059; for the year 1925-26 the number was 167,063. The amount standing to the credit of depositors in the State Savings Bank for 1922-23 was £5,866,286; for the year 1925-26 it was £6,346,713. Deposits in the cheque-paying banks for 1923 totalled £12,674,418; for the year 1925 the total was £14,524,321. In the Commonwealth Savings Bank the deposits for 1922-23 amounted to £2,099,187; at the end of March last the deposits stood at £2,417,383. There is the true index, as we are frequently told, of the real prosperity of the State. The ideal alluded to by the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) of building workers' homes in the country engaged the attention of the previous Government, and the same policy has been continued by the present Government. Every application for a worker's home in the country has been granted, and such ap-

applications will continue to be granted. Therefore the Government do not need a lecture from the member for Perth on that point.

Mr. Latham: It takes a long time to get an application through.

The Minister for Lands: No. The board are very good.

Mr. Latham: I am not saying that it is the fault of the board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: For a time the board were handicapped by want of capital. When they were short of capital, however, the whole of the money available went into the country and there was nothing for the metropolitan area. During recent months the board have had a little capital to spare, and have been able to grant a few metropolitan applications. I simply rose to make these points, especially with regard to complaints affecting the departments under my control. We agree that members opposite have been most generous in their references to the Government, and we appreciate those references very much. I am sure all of us are imbued with the belief that the State is progressing well. Everybody seems to admit that things are going on well. The finances are sound, development is good, and progress is solid; and therefore it should not be a question of playing ins and outs, as we are often accused of doing. Let us give credit where credit is due; and if the Government are doing their job, let the people know.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [9.35]: It is not often I address the House, and the few remarks I shall offer this evening are not intended to be critical of the actions of the Government. As regards my own electorate especially, I have no grievance whatever to ventilate. Only a few months ago the Minister for Works paid my district the compliment of a visit in connection with the opening of the railway from Lake Grace to Newdegate.

Mr. Brown: Which ought never to have been built.

Mr. STUBBS: That interjection shows how much the hon. member knows of the subject. I can inform him that during the next harvest that railway will carry at least 100,000 bags of wheat. If any member can tell me of another district which in the short space of two or three years has developed sufficiently to produce a harvest of 100,000 bags, I have yet to learn my agricultural alphabet.

Mr. Latham: Surely the farmers there are entitled to a railway.

Mr. Brown: Yes, but it should have been built from another place.

Mr. STUBBS: The hon. member knows nothing about the matter. I am referring to the agricultural districts because it is pitiable to go into the Lands Department, as I do almost daily, and see the number of men standing at the counter endeavouring but unable to get land. We are told that in the Eastern States land values have been boomed hugely. The people there will wake up after the first drought, when they find themselves unable to meet their engagements in respect of land, much of it mallee, for which they have paid up to £25 per acre. They would have done much better to invest their capital in unalienated Crown lands of this State which can grow enormous quantities of wheat—twice as much wheat as Western Australia produces at the present time.

The Minister for Lands: But railways must be built to get to those lands.

Mr. STUBBS: I am coming to that point. In conjunction with the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) I have arranged a trip to an agricultural area, and I hope that all members with the time to spare will join in that trip. The party will consist principally of farmers who have assured me that 30 miles due east of Newdegate there is a vast tract of unalienated Crown lands the quality of which is excellent. I have never yet visited that district. However, I well remember the time when a Minister for Lands, guided by incomplete data, told me there was not sufficient good land at Newdegate to warrant the building of a railway. I undecieved that Minister for Lands by taking him on a trip to the district in company with other members of Parliament. There are now some 400 farmers on the tract of country between Lake Grace and Newdegate which less than five years ago we were told would not warrant a railway. If the information given to me about the country east of Newdegate is correct, if that land is equal to the Newdegate land, another 400 or 500 farmers can be settled there. I have no doubt that further tracts of similar country eastward towards Esperance will also carry large populations. I ask hon. members to tell all the people they meet about the lands of Western Australia. It is pleasing to know that the policy of the Agricultural Bank in regard to assisting backblock settlers is being liberalised.

Until recently assistance was not given to farmers established more than 12½ miles from a railway. The alteration of policy is due, I understand, to the factor of motor transport. The Agricultural Bank will now give assistance up to the full value of improvements within a distance of 20 miles from a railway. Until recently the 25s. or 30s. per acre granted for clearing was cut down by 50 per cent. where the settler was more than 12½ miles from a line. Now, however, if the Agricultural Bank inspector considers the land to be of good quality, the trustees are generous enough to allow the settler the full value of his work. That is a step in the right direction, and should commend itself to every member. The Governor's Speech mentions that the deficit is practically what the Treasurer forecasted. I venture to say that had the last season finished as it promised to do at this period of 1925, there would have been no deficit at all. The country around Lake Grace, Newdegate, and Dumbleyung is capable of producing 20 bushels of wheat to the acre; and equally good land is to be found in many other districts. Last season, however, the yields, with one or two exceptions, were disappointing; the average at Lake Grace, instead of 15 or 16 bushels, was not more than seven. Still, 1926-27 promises to be a record in every part of the State, and it is likely to prove an eye-opener to the Government when they come to handle the wheat traffic. Unless prompt steps are taken to increase the carrying capacity of the railways, there will be a serious block early in the season. I believe that the Government are alive to their responsibilities in this regard, and that they will leave no stone unturned to meet the demands which will be made upon them, beginning in November and continuing into April. The Governor's Speech makes mention of the great North-West, and to-day's newspapers state Dr. Earle Page has had a long interview with our Premier in reference to the Federal Government's proposal for the division of the North-West and its handing over to the Commonwealth. If all members of the Chamber had made the North-Western trip which I made five years ago in company with a number of members of both Houses, every one of us would join in fighting tooth and nail to obtain justice for that wonderful tract of country. Not one of them would agree to the proposal to separate it from the southern portions.

Mr. Teesdale: There is one here for a start!

Mr. STUBBS: If the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) will bear with me for a few moments, I will endeavour to show that it is quite possible to develop and people the Kimberleys and the North-West generally, without severance from the South. It is true that for many years past he and other hon. members representing the northern parts have had scant courtesy shown them regarding public expenditure. We have in the North a heritage far greater and richer than is to be found in any other part of the world. Some people say that the climatic conditions will prevent a large population being established there.

Mr. Lamond: That is all rubbish.

Mr. STUBBS: But we cannot get away from the fact that such statements are circulated and are believed by many people. I have seen families who have scarcely been away from the Kimberleys in their lives. They went there as young people, were married and have reared strong virile families, as healthy as could be seen in any part of the world. One of the greatest difficulties experienced in the far North arises from the lack of communication with the outer world. The party I accompanied through the North camped for a few days at Hall's Creek. The postmaster and several other residents asked us which party had won the general elections! I thought they were joking, for the elections referred to had taken place 12 weeks previously.

Mr. Teesdale: Anyhow, they will know who won the test match by to-night.

Mr. Brown: There is a telephone to Hall's Creek.

Mr. STUBBS: The line had broken down and the newspapers had been hung up along the track. The vast distances and the isolation are hindrances in the North. When one leaves Derby or Wyndham and proceeds inland one travels for hundreds of miles along river frontages and on either side of the watercourses are chains of mountains where auriferous wealth abounds. I believe I am right in saying that hardly a pick has disturbed the deposits. I was informed by a geologist with the party that gold, tin, copper, and iron ores occur abundantly there, but the difficulties of transport, the high cost of production and inability to secure necessary capital furnish the reasons why that auriferous belt has not been developed. Although the problem of develop-

ment may be beyond the power of the handful of people in Western Australia, and beyond even the possibility of securing sufficient funds from the Commonwealth Government to enable that development to be carried out. I claim that it is a matter for the British Government, who should help us to accomplish the task. Within a couple of days' sail of our rich North there lie the thickly populated island of Java and other islands adjacent. For the last 100 years we have held the North with a handful of white people, whereas in Java, an island 65 miles long and 50 miles wide at its broadest part, there are upwards of 35,000,000 people. The other islands teem with great populations too. Last year in Java alone the population increased at the rate of 1,000,000 souls. If all the people in Java resided on the island, there would be no room for growing the necessary food to supply their wants. Millions of them reside on bamboo rafts, some two or three storeys high, moored alongside the banks of the rivers. Javanese tell us that for years they have been watching jealously the development of Australia. For strategical reasons alone the British Government would be well advised to advance us £20,000,000 and not ask for any interest for 10 years. The Government could spend that money in providing profitable work for many thousands of people. They could construct a main trunk line from the existing railways right through to Darwin or to Hall's Creek. From the various ports, starting at Carnarvon in the South and working right up to Wyndham, they could build branch lines leading to the inland trunk line. These branch lines could be used to carry the produce that can be grown in such large quantities in the fertile areas of the North. Few people in Australia realise the potentialities of this wonderful part of the State. On the plateaus east of the Kimberleys, there are vast tracts of country where the grass stands two and three feet high. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) will bear me out when I say that extending over 100 miles there may be seen the richest pastoral land anyone could wish for.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a fact.

Mr. STUBBS: And the area carries but a few head of stock. Why is that so? The greater proportion of the country is held by as many people as could be counted on the fingers of two hands. I do not blame the pastoralists who hold those vacant areas. They went there in the early days and they braved all kinds of difficulties. Many of them have

done well, although during the last few years the meat market has been depressed. South of the Fitzroy River many have gone in for sheep, but north of the Fitzroy, sheep are few and far between. Although passing through troublous times, the cattle growers have a wonderful industry that will be still further developed. The pastoralists are adversely affected by the transportation costs. Splendid beasts are grown there and at the Wyndham Meat Works I have seen carcasses weighing 7 cwt. when dressed. If they could be brought to market by a shorter route, the expense would be greatly lessened. At the present time, cattle have to be overlanded for 200 or 400 miles to the nearest port of shipment south. Freight represents £6 or £7 per head and by the time the cattle are disposed of, the Kimberley grower nets £2 or £3.

Mr. Teesdale: They would be glad to get that, too.

Mr. STUBBS: Yes, particularly during the last two or three years. Instead of having 10 or 20 men owning these millions of acres of rich pastoral country, an effort should be made to establish many more people there. I understand the leases contain a condition under which the Government can resume the land by paying compensation for improvements.

The Minister for Lands: And for disturbance.

Mr. STUBBS: I would be the last person to suggest that the leaseholders should be compulsorily removed, but when it is possible to travel from one station to another, to go for upwards of 80 miles without seeing a fence and to note that all the grass along the water frontages is closely cropped although a few miles inland high grass like cornfields is to be seen, it has to be realised that the position requires consideration. The average squatter is content with the river frontages and does not spend much money in sinking for water further inland. A few have been compelled to settle back from the rivers and they have had to provide water supplies. If there are between 300,000 and 400,000 head of cattle now, I maintain that the number could be considerably increased. The rainfall averages from 25 to 30 inches per annum. One unfortunate phase, however, is that the rain falls within three or four months only. On the other hand, vast catchment areas are available between the ranges where water could be conserved cheaply and used for irrigation purposes throughout the inland table lands extending for upwards of 150 miles east of the ranges,

and for goodness knows how far out. If facilities were afforded and the holdings were smaller, great development could take place. Of course a much larger tract of country would have to be held by a settler in those parts than is necessary in the south, because of the danger from droughts. All the men with whom I came into contact during my trip assured me there was no fear of any drought. Being a southern member, I deemed it my duty to become conversant with other portions of the State, so that when questions concerning the North and other districts came before the House I should be able to intelligently cast my vote.

Mr. Teesdale: It's a pity a good many more do not visit the North.

Mr. STUBBS: If the British Government could be induced to advance certain moneys for the railways I have mentioned, plus fencing—because a man cannot run sheep up there unless they are protected from dingoes—there would be no question about the value of that country. Any member who visits the North cannot fail to come back convinced that it would be a thousand pities to allow it to pass into the hands of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a mistake.

Mr. STUBBS: The hon. member, as a resident of the North, is in a much better position to speak of its possibilities than am I.

Mr. Teesdale: All that is wrong up there is that we are tired of apathy and sick to death of depression.

Mr. STUBBS: The State Government have not had the money to develop the North.

Mr. Teesdale: I am not blaming the Government.

Mr. STUBBS: Even so, that is no reason why the North should be handed over to the Commonwealth. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and it will be a sad day for Western Australia when this State is cut in two.

Mr. Teesdale: The bulk of the trade would still have to come here.

Mr. STUBBS: I have made myself conversant with a few of the group settlements, and I recognise that in so huge an undertaking initial mistakes were unavoidable. When Sir James Mitchell started the scheme a good deal of adverse criticism was heard on both sides of the House.

Some of that criticism, perhaps, was justified, but the greater part of it certainly was not. I was brought up in a district of Victoria where timber similar to our karri was growing and so, knowing the difficulties of the pioneer settlers over there, I am full of sympathy with the pioneers of our South-West. Those early Victorian settlers went to their graves with their backs bent, but their children and their grandchildren have since reaped the advantage. The point I want to emphasise is that it takes many years to sweeten the ground and get pastures rich enough to allow of the production of butter equal to the Victorian article. In my opinion Sir James Mitchell was perfectly justified in starting the group settlement scheme. Unfortunately, the swing of the pendulum carried him out of office for the time being. Thereupon most people thought that group settlement was doomed, but it is to the credit of the present Government that they have carried on the scheme. I have heard the Minister for Lands and the Premier both eulogise the work done on the group settlements by the late Administration. It is a good thing to know that both sides of the House are in agreement respecting the value of group settlement, especially in its relation to the dairying industry. For years past we have been sending out of the State anything up to £1,000,000 per annum for butter. The sooner we stop that drift and circulate all that money in Western Australia the better will it be for the State. The Government that bring that about will certainly deserve the thanks of the whole of the people. I was amused at the sallies between the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) and members on the Ministerial benches regarding the Country Party visit to the group settlements to canvass for members.

Mr. Lindsay: Some of the Country Party.

Mr. STUBBS: Well, some of them. But I was not very much amused when I heard the member for Katanning—I am sorry he is not in his place to hear my remarks now—

Mr. Marshall: He is doing just as much good for those he represents as if he were here.

Mr. STUBBS: He was very unfair when he said that he and the small band sitting beside him were the only people in the House representing the men on the land. I

can count eleven members unmentioned by the member for Katanning who are equally as enthusiastic over the welfare of the men on the land as is the hon. member himself.

Mr. Brown: Are the P.P.A. organising in your electorate?

Mr. STUBBS: They are. I thank the hon. member for that interjection. I met their canvasser last Saturday, when I was down in the electorate opening a bazaar. He said he was very glad to meet me, and I asked him what he was doing there. He said, "I have been here for three weeks. I wish I were as sure of a million pounds as you are of holding your seat." I told him I didn't want him to pull my leg, but he said it was quite true, and his wife, on being appealed to by him, agreed with him. He added, "When I came here I was instructed by head office to call on all farmers and get them to join up. The first man to whom I handed our membership card read it and said he would not sign it, that he was a supporter of Stubbs. I asked him what was his objection to signing it, and he pointed out that it pledged him to support only the P.P.A. candidate. I soon found that I would not get many subscriptions if I did not drop that card. I am now getting in all the money I can, but I am not getting many signatures for the card." I should like the member for Katanning and the other members of his party to look up an editorial published in the "West Australian" the day after the last elections. On returning thanks to the electors for having elected me with a majority of nearly a thousand over the P.P.A. candidate, I said the water that had gone under the bridge would never come back, and that the best thing the parties could do, seeing that the election was over, was to forget and forgive. I said I did not mind how many blunders I was charged with, so long as the other side agreed that they had committed just as many. That was nearly three years ago, and the "West Australian" commended those words of mine and similar words uttered by the member for Williams-Narrogin. But how much did the other side do to heal the breach? I want to be fair, but there is no fairness about the other side. Many men have said to me, "Why do you not join up again? You would get in flying." I asked them did they take me for a jellyfish. Further than that, I asked them for what reason had I been expelled.

Mr. Lindsay: You were never expelled. You expelled yourself.

Mr. STUBBS: Don't talk nonsense! I will tell you who expelled me.

Mr. Lindsay: You expelled yourself. You stood against the selected candidate.

Mr. STUBBS: My friend is talking without his book. If he will refrain from interjecting, I can convince every member here that I was expelled from the party. Certain members of Parliament received through the columns of the Press a notification that their nominations were rejected by head office.

Mr. Lindsay: You were not one of them.

Mr. STUBBS: I am hitting you to leg. If you keep on interjecting I will give you something more to go on with. Leave me alone and let me tell my own story, and we shall get on ever so much better. Those members were not even asked to appear before their judges; they were expelled without a trial. I was one of the members sitting on the same side of the House as were those who were expelled, and I had the courage to write a few lines to the "West Australian" saying I did not believe in men, especially returned soldiers, being stood against a wall and shot without a trial. If that was the reason for my being expelled, I have no cause for regret. Nominations for my seat were called in due course, closing at Wagin on a certain day. When the day came mine was the only nomination. Yet the member for Toodyay said I expelled myself. The executive had sent word to Wagin telling the district council to call for fresh nominations; fresh nominations were called, and three or four gentlemen submitted their names. I submitted my name and, on the night of the decision, Mr. Carroll was sent all the way from Perth to Wagin by Mr. Monger and his satellites.

Mr. Teesdale: A wonder he did not drop dead.

Mr. STUBBS: In my presence Mr. Carroll told the district council that if they selected me the executive would expel me.

Mr. Teesdale: Terrible!

Mr. STUBBS: What has the member for Toodyay to say to that?

Mr. Lindsay: You have not yet told me how they expelled you.

Mr. STUBBS: Mr. Carroll assured the meeting that if I was the selected candidate the executive would supersede them and expel me from the organisation. After Mr. Carroll had made that statement, I inquired what charge had been levied against me, what sin

I had committed that incurred the wrath of the executive, what part of the platform I had failed to comply with. To these questions no reply was offered by Mr. Carroll. After Mr. Carroll, I and the other candidates had made our statements, we were asked to leave the room and a secret ballot was taken. I was defeated by a few votes. That is neither here nor there. I want to know why I was expelled from the organisation.

Mr. Lindsay: You have not told us that you were expelled.

Mr. STUBBS: I say I was. Do not the facts as I have related them indicate clearly that I was expelled?

Mr. Lindsay: You were not selected and so you were not expelled.

Mr. STUBBS: I will leave it to the public to decide whether I was not expelled.

Mr. Teesdale: Well, you are here to-night; so much for Carroll.

Mr. STUBBS: I am a candidate against all comers. I know what sort of a reception I should get if I attempted to rejoin one of the branches of the Country Party, but it would take a team of horses and a million pounds to get me to go back, unless the executive did the fair thing by all the other members they expelled without a trial. Until then I prefer to remain a member belonging to no party in particular, or to go out of Parliament, rather than do what some people suggest I should do, namely, join the Country party in spite of the treatment meted out to me. It is unfair of the member for Kataning (Mr. Thomson) to say that he and only a few other members represent the men on the land. I have done more good for the men on the land than could 50 Alexander Thomsons or 50 Bertie Johnstons. If necessary, I can prove my statement to the hilt. I have done so by giving not only my time and what talents I possess, but also my capital—when those people could not get assistance from anyone else—to the tune of £20,000.

Mr. Teesdale: Nobody can snigger at that because I know it is a positive fact and can prove it.

Mr. STUBBS: I am not squealing about that. What I complain of is the unfairness of members coming here and telling the public that they are the only ones who represent the men on the land.

Mr. Brown: Did he say that?

Mr. STUBBS: Yes, that they were the only true representatives of the primary producers. That sort of thing I will not

tolerate, and I have taken the earliest opportunity to resent it.

The Minister for Lands: I have never represented a country constituency, but I think I have done more for the men on the land than he has.

Mr. Marshall: In my opinion he is only a farmer of farmers.

Mr. STUBBS: I regret that the Leader of the Country Party is not present: I do not believe in speaking against a man in his absence, but this is the only opportunity I shall have to justify my position before the public. I am convinced that a majority of the people stand for fair play, and fair play I have not received from the primary producers' executive.

Mr. Lindsay: Nearly as good as last night, only I have not a chance to reply.

Mr. STUBBS: I shall give the hon. member all he wants and a bit more to go on with.

Mr. Teesdale: A few more of them will be called to heel directly.

Mr. STUBBS: I regret that the interjection of the member for Toodyay caused me to get a little warm. I did not intend to introduce personalities.

Mr. Brown: You are only trying to heal the breach?

Mr. STUBBS: I tried to do that two or three years ago, but men like the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) only widened it, and now it is so wide that it can never be healed.

Mr. Brown: I never did that.

Mr. STUBBS: Given a good harvest, I feel sure that the financial position will be such as will redound to the credit of every member who has devoted his time to passing laws beneficial to the State. I hope Western Australia will make great progress in the near future. Land settlement is the only relief for this State. Mining unfortunately has been waning for some years, and until another good field is located and fresh capital is introduced, the State must look to agriculture to keep the ledger square. I hope that at the next elections most of the members will hold their seats, and that is all the harm I wish the Country Party or the Labour Party.

MR. LATHAM (York) [10.26]: I do not propose to detain the House long, but there are one or two matters on which I wish to say a few words. After listening to the excellent speeches of members representing the North-West, one wonders why the member for Pilbara (Mr. Lamond) last session

should have asked for a Royal Commission on the North-West. From their remarks I am satisfied that I was justified in the attitude I adopted when I said that a Royal Commission was not required. Possibly the cause of a good deal of satisfaction has been the visit of the Minister for Works to the North-West. I noticed by the newspaper that he acted the part of Father Christmas, showering gifts wherever he went. Any Minister would be popular in such circumstances, and no doubt members are well satisfied. I am pleased they are so well satisfied, and I certainly believe that their satisfaction arises from the fact that the Minister for Works was able to take such a big bundle of good gifts with him. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking a few nights ago, he said the Minister for Works had promised the people of the North-West that they would have the last say on the question whether they would become a portion of the Commonwealth territory, separate from Western Australia. The Minister told us he did not make that statement and that it was not reported in the Press, but if anyone turns up the "West Australian" of the 2nd July he will find a paragraph headed "The Minister entertained, Future of the North, Broome, July 1," and reading—

The Minister, in reply, announced the Government's policy as he had outlined it at Port Hedland, and assured the residents of the North that nothing definite would be done in regard to the Commonwealth proposals until concrete proposals had been placed before Cabinet, and Parliament had expressed its opinion. Even then residents of the North would have the final say.

Parliament apparently was merely to be asked to express an opinion; the final say was to rest with the people of the North-West. The Minister told the Leader of the Opposition that he did not make that statement. Yet it is reported in the "West Australian."

The Minister for Lands: I think the Constitution provides that the opinion of the people must be obtained.

Mr. LATHAM: It would be unfair to the State to give the people of the North greater power than Parliament possesses, and that would be the case if the promise of the Minister for Works were carried out. This evidently was one of the gifts that the Minister had to shower upon the constituencies up there. No doubt the sitting members would be delighted if the Minister for Works again

visited the North just before the next elections; it might have some good results.

Mr. Clydesdale: It is time the North received some consideration.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know that the North has received such a wonderful lot of consideration from the present Government. It is easy to render tremendous lip service.

Mr. Lamond: If you came there before the next elections it would be the best thing that could happen for us.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member might lose his seat.

Mr. Coverley: The North did not receive much consideration from the Government you supported.

Mr. LATHAM: I venture to say the whole State received fair consideration in view of the limited amount of money available and the difficulties of finance at the time. I propose to speak briefly of the financial position. From our point of view it was well explained by the Leader of the Opposition. I admit that the finances of the State are in a much better position than they were a few years ago. That is due to greater production and greater developmental work. The present Government have a wonderful opportunity. The Federal Government have never been so generous in the history of the Commonwealth as they are to-day towards Western Australia.

The Minister for Lands: We have not had much more than your Government had.

Mr. LATHAM: No, but the prospects ahead are very bright.

The Minister for Lands: That is a matter for the future.

Mr. LATHAM: To-day there is a credit balance. There must be close on one million pounds. For soldier settlement alone there is £700,000.

The Minister for Lands: The soldiers get that. We only get the interest.

Mr. LATHAM: There is the £300,000 special grant waiting to be spent.

Mr. Withers: Who said so?

Mr. LATHAM: We know that is all right.

Mr. Withers: The Government do not know it.

Mr. LATHAM: The opportunities for this State are better than they have ever been since Federation. An opportunity presents itself under these Federal proposals for reducing taxation.

The Minister for Lands: Under what?

Mr. LATHAM: I refer to the offer of the Federal Government.

The Minister for Lands: We have had only £300,000 for last year. We do not get it for this year.

Mr. LATHAM: The Government will get it. The Minister knows that.

The Minister for Lands: I do not know it.

Mr. LATHAM: I know the State will get it—

The Minister for Lands: I hope so.

Mr. Wilson: We don't know.

Mr. LATHAM: —unless there is a change of Government before the next session of Parliament. The Federal House has merely been adjourned. The Bill will be introduced later.

The Minister for Lands: There may be a Bill introduced that will alter the whole financial arrangement.

Mr. LATHAM: The Federal Treasurer has stated in Perth that the consideration I have just mentioned will be meted out to this State.

The Minister for Lands: I have not read his speech.

Mr. LATHAM: During the past year a great deal of money has been made available to the State, due to increased taxation, amongst other things.

The Minister for Lands: There has been no increased taxation and you know it.

Mr. LATHAM: This argument has been put up before.

The Minister for Lands: It is a fact.

Mr. LATHAM: I will show that what I say is correct.

The Minister for Lands: It is not correct.

Mr. LATHAM: Was there no increase in the land tax?

The Minister for Lands: There was an increase in the land tax, but a reduction in railway freights.

Mr. LATHAM: I have the figures here, taken from the "Quarterly Abstract." To the 30th June, 1924, the amount of land tax received was £71,448, and to the 30th June of this year it was £145,000—double the amount. The money credited to the Treasury, not to the Railway Department, was £45,000, we understand, and a reduction in rates was made accordingly. That £45,000 has never been credited to the Railway Department. No credit is shown on the returns.

The Minister for Lands: The railway rates were reduced.

Mr. LATHAM: By £45,000. Who got the benefit?

The Minister for Lands: By more than that.

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister does not know who got the benefit. The people who paid the tax did not get any advantage from it.

The Minister for Lands: The Treasurer did not get it.

Mr. LATHAM: I know the Treasurer received a considerable amount as a result of the increased taxation. The Minister says there was no increased taxation.

The Minister for Lands: The Treasurer told you that repeatedly, and you know it.

Mr. LATHAM: The land tax was doubled. During the year there has also been the petrol tax.

The Minister for Lands: That does not go into the Treasury.

Mr. LATHAM: Where does it go?

The Minister for Lands: To the roads and you know it.

Mr. LATHAM: It represents more money. But for that petrol tax the money would have had to come from loan funds or revenue.

The Minister for Lands: It does not go to the Treasury.

Mr. LATHAM: I know it does.

The Minister for Lands: I do not want to call you a liar. That is not allowed.

Mr. LATHAM: That money is available to the Government. They are relieved of the necessity of finding £100,000 out of Consolidated Revenue or loan funds.

The Minister for Lands: It does not relieve anything. It means that more work will be done with the money.

Mr. LATHAM: The traffic fees have been increased.

The Minister for Lands: Who gets those fees?

Mr. LATHAM: I admit they go towards enabling the local authorities to render services.

The Minister for Lands: The road boards and municipalities get it.

Mr. LATHAM: I suppose the subsidies are reduced accordingly.

The Minister for Lands: No, they are not.

Mr. LATHAM: Some districts are not getting any.

The Minister for Lands: Municipalities have not received subsidies for years.

Mr. LATHAM: I admit that, but they have had a good deal in the past.

The Minister for Lands: There is no increase in taxation from the point of view of State revenue, but there is a decrease of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the super tax.

Mr. LATHAM: There has been an increased land tax, a petrol tax and increased traffic fees. A vermin tax will also be struck.

Hon. J. Cunningham: What is that for?

Mr. LATHAM: It is to render further services to the people, but they are paying for them.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The whole of the money will be absorbed in the work.

Mr. LATHAM: The Government have money for roads which was never given to any previous Government. Instead of constructing roads out of loan funds, they ought to be able to construct them out of revenue received through increased taxation.

Mr. Chesson: The people who receive the benefit are those who suggested the vermin tax.

Mr. LATHAM: They have had some service from the present Government, but they are paying for it.

Mr. Chesson: They wanted a vermin tax and they have got it.

Mr. LATHAM: There has been a reduction in the earning capacity of the railways, practically to the extent of a quarter of a million. I do not know what the actual cause of the trouble is. Last year the surplus revenue was £190,505, but this year there has been a loss of £31,980. We know the railway employees have received some benefit out of that. If any benefit is to be given, it should be given to the users of the railways. I do not think there has been an additional station-master placed at any of the important sidings for the last three years. Some of the sidings are returning a wonderful revenue.

The Minister for Lands: I notice that two or three new railways have been passed on to the department.

Mr. LATHAM: That is all right. I do not say there is nothing good in the Government; I will give them credit for what they have done. In the case of the railways there was a surplus last year and a loss this year. If anything is to be given away, something should be given to the users of the railway. I know of cases in

which the Railway Department are repudiating their claims. One man sent away a truck-load of petrol. He paid a high freight, but six cases were missing at the other end.

Mr. Marshall: I know of a case of that kind.

Mr. LATHAM: A station-master should be appointed at these important sidings. Instead of people using the railways for the carting of produce they are now taking the risk of sending stuff by road on motor lorries. Of course there will be competition with the railways under these conditions.

The Minister for Lands: I suppose objections would be raised if people were allowed to travel for nothing.

Mr. LATHAM: If the Government want the people to use the railways they should give them some of the benefits that are being given away.

The Minister for Lands: Why do you want railways so much if you think people are not getting any benefit from them?

Mr. LATHAM: Because of the traffic that passes through some of these sidings the goods that are consigned to them should be protected by a station-master.

The Minister for Railways: Why employ station-masters where they are not required?

Mr. LATHAM: I have shown where they are required. If valuable goods like these were consigned to a station more care would be taken of them along the road. I do not accuse the railway employees of taking the stuff, but it is evidently thunted off at the siding for the time being, and someone else comes along and relieves the trucks of some of their loading. More consideration should be given to the users of the railways. When we find that buses and motor lorries can enter into competition with the railways we ought to ascertain why it is possible for them to be in a position to do this. To-day goods are being carried over a distance of 180 miles by motor lorry in competition with the railways.

The Minister for Railways: We will hand over to the motor lorries all the super freight.

Mr. LATHAM: That is a nice excuse.

The Minister for Railways: It is a generous offer.

Mr. LATHAM: If the Minister does hand over the cheap freights to the motor lorries what will he do for back-loading when the wheat is being moved? I will not have it said in this House that what freights do not

represent a paying proposition to the Railway Department. It has been repeatedly stated that the wheat of the farmers is carried on the railways is a loss; and it is of true.

The Minister for Railways: Who has stated it?

Mr. LATHAM: I believe the Minister stated it before he assumed office.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. LATHAM: I think I heard the hon. gentleman say it when he was sitting in Opposition.

The Minister for Railways: You only think that.

Mr. LATHAM: I will not assert it definitely. However, the statement has been made in this Chamber repeatedly. The farmers should not be threatened in that way.

The Minister for Railways: I am not threatening them.

Mr. LATHAM: The farmers want to use the facilities provided by the State. The fact of the railways not being made attractive enough is the cause of the traffic by motor carries. A man in my electorate said to me recently, "I am going to send my sheep to market by motor lorry, because in that way I get a better service."

The Minister for Mines: That is silly talk.

The Minister for Railways: He would do it once, and then he would retire in disgust.

Mr. LATHAM: Greater consideration should be shown by the Railway Department to their customers. My own experience sometimes makes me wonder whether the department investigate complaints at all. Another point is that the department do not seem able to move with the districts which are progressing rapidly. The Minister knows of the progress of these districts, but I sometimes think he officials do not know of it. In the case of an estate which is being subdivided into 40 farms, a loop line was put in for the convenience of the original holder of the land. To-day that loop line has to serve 22 settlers. They cannot get an extension from the block to the trucking pen. That siding is within 60 miles of Perth. Its name is Hamersley Siding. Not long ago the Railway Department put on three motor coaches for passenger traffic. Though I do not wish to be a gramophone repeating complaints, I will say I have been informed that the railway union refused to run those coaches because they led to reduction of staff.

The Minister for Railways: That is not so.

Mr. LATHAM: I am pleased to have that assurance. However, I would like to know why motor coaches cannot be run on our railways as is done in New South Wales and Victoria. Taking a mixed train that leaves York at 10 minutes past 12, I get to Bruce Rock—which represents about four hours' comfortable motor run—at half past 10 at night. There is a shunt at every siding. If coaches were put on for passengers and mails, one goods train per week might meet the requirements.

The Minister for Lands: How many passengers are on a train?

Mr. LATHAM: A good many. Nearly every compartment was full on the occasion I refer to. There will be very few passengers carried by the railways if quicker means of transit are not supplied. It would be well to put on some decent motor coaches and thus by shortening the time of transit make it possible for the people to use the railways. I hope the Minister will seriously go into the matter.

The Minister for Railways: I am seriously going into it now.

Mr. LATHAM: The suggestion applies particularly to loop lines. I am sorry the Minister for Works is not present, as I wish to suggest that before any more railways are built in this State, his department should thoroughly investigate the scheme recently propounded by Mr. Hedges, a scheme which seems highly feasible. If we can haul large loads over the trunk lines, the cost of running will be reduced considerably. I hope one or two officers of the department will be delegated to investigate the proposal, so that eventually all subsidiary lines can loop into main lines with a decent grade. Probably the suggestion of Mr. Hedges is one of the best ever made for the benefit of the State. While on the railway question I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the wretched accommodation at some stations, especially where loop lines join up with the main line. Merredin, for instance, is a shocking place to wait at during the night. It may not be so bad for men, but for women and children it is awful.

The Minister for Railways: Something is being done at Merredin.

The Minister for Mines: Heavy expense was incurred at Mt. Barker.

Mr. LATHAM: I have nothing to do with Mt. Barker, and there are other districts more entitled to consideration.

The Minister for Mines: Your Government incurred the expenditure at Mt. Barker.

Mr. LATHAM: Presumably in that case my Government made a mistake. Presently I shall tell the Minister for Mines of some mistakes made in his department.

The Minister for Mines: Very well.

Mr. LATHAM: Many of the stations are absolutely disgusting. People travelling through Western Australia must conclude that we have an impoverished Government. We are a progressive State, and we should not tolerate railway buildings that are in a shocking condition. Now let me say a few words about water supply. I commend the Government for having provided water schemes in agricultural areas. By that means the community will be made more contented and more wealth will be produced from the soil. It is wrong, however, that too great an effort should be made to compel the users of the water to pay undue charges in the way of interest, sinking fund, maintenance, and administration. In addition, the Government obtained a return through the income tax, because the people who use the water run stock. Moreover, increased traffic is provided for the Railway Department.

The Minister for Mines: What about the farmer who provides his own water supply?

Mr. LATHAM: He gets a lot of concessions! The Minister has had a good deal of farming experience, and he knows that it does not cost him £50 per year for water.

The Minister for Mines: In one year it cost me £300. I lost all my sheep.

Mr. LATHAM: That was in the very early stage. Water does not usually cost a farmer that amount of money. The Government should not seek to make a profit out of water. I do not mind the farmers paying the actual cost of the work, but I do not wish the scheme to be converted into a profit-making machine.

The Minister for Lands: Give up whining! You are not going to pay interest or sinking fund on the head work for three years after construction.

Mr. LATHAM: It is satisfactory to know that.

The Minister for Lands: You will pay only for reticulation.

Mr. LATHAM: That is a good idea. Then we come to the question of wire netting. No one in the State has done more for the farmers regarding this matter than the Minister for Lands. A lot of work has been done, but there is still much to do. The Minister was right in securing netting supplies early, thus enabling the farmers to net the fences during the winter months. I

commend the Government for helping the farmers to protect their crops against the ravages of the rabbits and I urge him to furnish further supplies before the end of the month. By September the farmers will not be in a position to go on with the work so that it is necessary to speed up as much as possible. The mortgages could be sent along subsequently, for hardly any farmer would refuse to sign the documents and, in any case, the Government are adequately protected. Even if the late Government had been in office, they could not have carried out this work better than the Minister for Lands has done. The unemployment problem is one of the serious difficulties confronting the State. We will always have that difficulty until the State has progressed sufficiently to enable us to deal more comprehensively with the problem. Recently I asked for a return from the Charities Department indicating what payments had been made under this heading. On the return I noticed a footnote pointing out that the distribution in 1925-26 was due to the change of policy in granting relief to deserving cases whereas that had previously been refused. There was a change of Government in April, 1924, and I noticed from the return that in May and June nothing was paid, and in July £7 5s. was paid out. Operations during those three months were controlled by the present Government.

The Minister for Lands: Do you not know that instead of the Charities Department doing that work, it is carried out elsewhere provision having been made for it on the Estimates?

Mr. LATHAM: No. I thought this represented a hit at past administration and I wished to correct that impression. I would draw attention to the amazing growth of these payments, for I find that in June last £976 was paid out, and in July £1,300. Frequently I have heard members on both sides of the House condemning the British Government because of the dole system. Do not let us institute a similar system in Western Australia. It is the duty of the Government to provide work.

The Minister for Railways: Have we not done that, more than ever before?

Mr. LATHAM: If such payments are to be made, the effect will be that men will be attracted to the city.

The Minister for Lands: He is not much of a man who will come to the city for a shilling or two a day!

Mr. LATHAM: That is so, but the Minister knows that they do so. When they se

ut for Perth they do not know how much they will get, but they hear that the Government are providing food and therefore they come to the city. For my part I consider that the unemployed in the country areas receive rotten treatment compared with those in the city. I had an experience with three men in York recently. They had not had anything to eat for a few days and I endeavoured to ascertain whether there was a representative of the Labour Bureau in York, but I could not find one.

The Minister for Railways: If you had gone to the representative of the Government there—the Clerk of Courts—you would have found out all about it.

Mr. LATHAM: I am pleased to know that. I am positive that no other person in York is aware of the fact.

Mr. Chesson: If you had gone to the police you would have received assistance.

Mr. LATHAM: The police did render every assistance possible, but they said they were not responsible for any work in connection with the Labour Bureau.

The Minister for Railways: But we have a bonus system, under which there is a reward of half a crown for every policeman who finds work for men in the country.

Mr. LATHAM: That fact has not been circularised.

The Minister for Railways: Every policeman in the country has been circularised accordingly.

Mr. LATHAM: That is news to me.

The Minister for Lands: Further than that, every branch of the New Settlers' League carries out similar work.

Mr. LATHAM: That is satisfactory. Farmers prefer to employ men locally rather than to send to Perth for them. Regarding the administration of the Main Roads Act, I understand from comments by the chairman of the Main Roads Board that it is the intention of the Government to ask the local governing bodies to provide 7s. 6d. out of every 15s. to be spent. I understand that the Commonwealth is to provide £1 and the State 15s., of which latter amount the road boards are expected to pay 7s. 6d. It appears to me that under that provision the road boards will have to find the petrol tax, the land tax and so on, the effect of which will mean that the road boards will find the whole of the 15s. The intention of the House was that there should be the petrol tax and the land tax and the balance of the 15s. was to be shared as between the loan funds and the local governing bodies.

The Minister for Lands: Most of the petrol tax will be paid in the metropolitan area.

Mr. LATHAM: I challenge that statement. Individual owners of cars in the country areas pay a heavier petrol tax than do city owners.

The Minister for Lands: Some of them do.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope due consideration will be given to the position I have referred to. Frequently have we heard of the Public Works Department sending a lot of men into a district and starting operations on a road without first advising the local authority. If the local authority has to find some of the money, surely it ought to be advised of the starting of operations. Recently the department sent men into a district up Geraldton way without first acquainting the local authorities.

The Minister for Railways: That occurred because, when the mine closed down, a lot of men were out of work.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not say there is any harm in it; I only suggest that the local authority should be notified.

The Minister for Railways: The local authority exercises a preference in regard to each proposal.

Mr. LATHAM: However, I will have an opportunity to deal with this at another juncture. There is a question I want to discuss with the Minister for Agriculture. A few years ago I remember the Minister and the present Premier kicking up a noise about public servants becoming attached to political bodies. The other evening I secured an answer from the Minister for Agriculture about the appointment of a stock inspector at Carnarvon. I do not know whether the Minister is aware that that gentleman is connected with a political party. If not, I might furnish him with some information from the "Worker" of 28th May, 1926. There is no objection to a public servant being attached to Labour politics, provided he can do his job, but why should he be permitted to dabble in union affairs? I learn from the "Worker" that this stock inspector at Carnarvon is collecting union fees and sending them down to head office. It would be interesting to quote from a speech made by the Premier when Leader of the Opposition in the session of 1922. It will be found in "Hansard," page 1601, of that session. Mr. Collier, referring to a P.P.A. organiser said—

It is altogether undesirable that officers of the department should be thus associated with

the organisers of a political body. . . . If he were a union man, he would be called a paid agitator. . . . There is a tendency nowadays for administrative affairs and this political organisation to be mixed up. That is entirely wrong. Such was never done in the past; it was never attempted during the years Labour occupied the Treasury Benches. The principle is wrong and should be scotched at the outset. This is only another bit of evidence of what has been going on. Such an incident should not be allowed to occur again.

If it was wrong then, it is equally wrong to-day, and I hope the Minister will take steps to see that this gentleman is not acting as a paid organiser for the Labour movement while doing Government work.

Mr. Lamond: He is not a paid organiser.

Mr. LATHAM: Then why is he collecting the fees and sending them down to Perth? It is very indiscreet, to say the least of it, to use the columns of the "Worker" to advertise that union fees may be handed to one who is an inspector of the stock department. I hope the Minister will take up this matter and issue instructions that this sort of thing must be discontinued.

The Minister for Agriculture: Probably it is merely that some teamster has handed him a fee and asked him to send it to the city.

Mr. LATHAM: I think the officer should be advised to dissociate himself from that sort of thing while doing Government work. I will not detain the House any longer, for I am desirous that we should get through the Address-in-reply debate and come to the more active business of the session. I hope the result of the Government's negotiations with the Federal authorities will be disclosed as soon as possible, so that the taxpayers may know what they are to be called upon to pay.

#### THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon.

M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [11.7]: I do not propose to speak at any length. Happily, nothing has been said regarding the administration of my department, beyond the reference just made by the member for York to circumstances that can easily be explained. I will content myself with saying a few words about the mining industry, the depressed condition of which is not peculiar to this State. The same thing obtains right through Australia, in Queensland, Victoria and other States where mining was an important industry 10 years ago. This Government have done their best for the industry, spending large

sums of money to assist it. Although it does not show the progress that, fortunately, other industries are showing, nevertheless the administration of the industry and the department is more difficult to-day than ever before. It is one thing to administer a progressive department, and quite another to have to handle one in which the difficulties are very great. The condition of the mining industry is due to circumstances over which the Government have no control. The industry depends on costs, and the remarkable increase shown in those costs is largely due to the Federal tariff. A little while ago the tariff was again increased, with the result that the duties on mining machinery are now higher than those imposed on any other machinery used in the Commonwealth. It is remarkable that the mining industry should be singled out for this unjust treatment, and it must be ascribed largely to the fact that apart from the interests of one or two members, the industry has no representation in the Federal Parliament. We know that when Customs duties are increased they affect the cost of living, and therefore the men engaged in the industry are not able to work at a rate which was a living wage 12 or 14 years ago. While mining costs have increased, the tonnage treated has diminished and ore of a greater value has to be mined to-day in order to meet the increased costs. All this constitutes a very great handicap to the industry. There are thousands of tons of ore reserves in our mines which could be treated at a profit if the conditions that obtained prior to the war still operated. Those conditions do not obtain, and the industry is not progressing as it would have done had the conditions remained favourable. For the information of a few bitter critics in another place, critics who can see no good at all in anything the present Government do, let me point out that we have spent more money in assisting the industry than have any three previous Governments combined. In the last 20 years assistance has been accorded to mining to the extent of £600,000, while the present Government in less than three years of office have expended nearly £200,000 of that amount. In other words, one-third has been expended by us, even though the Mining Development Act has been in operation for some 20 years. Much as we have done and much as this Parliament might approve of, it will

not bring about the results desired until the people who control the mines do something also. There is no doubt that the conditions operating on our mines are rather unprogressive. The managers are not as up-to-date as they might be; they have not adopted new methods; although large dividends have been paid, no provision has been made for the times of difficulty, and unless the companies do something, Governments or Parliaments cannot hope to remedy the position. The companies must realise that they and not the Government own the mines. It is not our business; it is their business. Unless they are prepared to reconstruct, to economise, and to mine more efficiently and economically, the Government will not be able to bring about any lasting results. Still, we need not be disheartened. Like every other industry, mining is merely passing through a phase. All industries experience good times and bad times. Wheat producers during the last eight or nine years have enjoyed very prosperous times and so have wool growers. But the prosperous times will not last indefinitely. Seasons are bound to come when these industries will be depressed, and they also will pass through a bad phase; and if the people engaged in them do not make provision for the future during times of prosperity, they too will suffer. If they adopt lax methods and a go-as-you-please policy, they must inevitably suffer. We possess the richest gold mines in the whole world, but the policy pursued in the past of paying dividends without regard to the future and of lapsing into go-as-you-please methods, have resulted in the disastrous state of affairs that prevails in the chief gold mining centre to-day. I do not consider that this state of affairs is due to Governments or that the present Government can remedy it. The mines are not in the hands of the Government; they are owned by private enterprise. If the Government interfered with the companies, they would be told to mind their own business. In the past, while the Government paid the piper, the others have called the tune, and unless the economic conditions become easier, we shall not secure any improvement while that continues. I am of opinion that mining will still play an important part in this State. The developments at Wiluna may lead to the opening up of as large a mining field as was ever known in this State. If the ore can be

treated at a profit, there are great possibilities. I am glad that on other fields such as the Murchison, the industry is more prosperous, and a happier outlook is manifested than for many years past. The day will come when mining will again be as important as ever it was and will take as prominent a part in the progress of the State, besides giving employment and a comfortable living to thousands of people. A word or two now about the reference by the Leader of the Country Party to the Ravensthorpe smelter case. His statement was so far from the truth that ordinarily I would not have bothered to reply to it, but seeing that his remarks have received prominence in the Press, it is wise not to let them pass unnoticed. People reading a statement made by an allegedly responsible member of this House may regard it as containing actual facts. Therefore it is due to me to explain the position as revealed by the files of the Mines Department. The Premier described the Leader of the Country Party as the political garbage gatherer of Parliament, one who went around the country in the recess, lent a willing ear to every complaint and made no inquiry to ascertain the actual facts. The hon. member could have come to me about the Ravensthorpe case and I would have given him the files. Other members have seen me—among them the member for Wagin—and are now familiar with the whole of the facts. The Leader of the Opposition knows the exact position. Any member on the Opposition side of the House could have seen me and ascertained the facts. Had the Leader of the Country Party approached me and said, "While at Ravensthorpe I was given this information. Is it correct?" I would have replied, "There is the file; look for yourself." The hon. member did not do that; he did not want to do it. His desire was to create a sensation. He wanted to convey the impression that the prospectors concerned had been badly treated, and that he was their champion. Such conduct is despicable. If the hon. member had moved a motion requesting information and had been denied it, I could excuse his action, but he never sought information or made the slightest inquiry from the department. Here we have the Leader of a party accepting ex-parte statements as actual facts and depositing his rubbish here, much as a willy-willy deposits its rubbish on the goldfields.

Mr. Lindsay: We shall have to change our leader.

Mr. Marshall: It would be well if you did.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The greatest disadvantage under which the Country Party labour is their leader.

Mr. Marshall: It is the biggest load they have to carry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not say that because I wish him any particular harm, but the whole of his speech on the Address-in-reply was one long tarradiddle of statements by interested parties that from time to time have been disproved by Ministers. What are the actual facts of the Ravenshorpe case which the hon. member describes as a scandal? The hon. member proposed to read to the House a circular issued to members on the 12th December, 1922, the contents of which are well within my recollection. It was issued by Mr. Dunstan, a party interested in this matter. In 1922 when Mr. Dunstan issued the circular complaining that he had not received a fair deal from the Government, the Labour Party were not in power. Sir James Mitchell was Premier at that time and was supported in office by the Country Party, while some members of the Country Party helped to constitute the Government. The alleged scandal at Ravenshorpe is not due to the action of this Government. It is a legacy handed down to us. The verdict of the court was given before we came into office. We played no part in it. The action was instituted against the Mitchell Government.

Mr. Mann: You do not suggest that the previous Government were wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I suggest that the member for Katanning did not tell the truth. The Ravenshorpe liability is a legacy handed down to this Government. We played no part in the controversy or in the legal action. The previous Government carried on the business. They decided to go to court. The verdict in the action was given before I came into office. If there is any scandal associated with the business it is the responsibility of the previous Government and of the hon. member who supported them. After all these years he makes a statement in this House that the whole thing is a grave scandal and discreditable to the Government. He said that in the opinion of the judge the disclosures in the Supreme Court were disgraceful to the Government. What have they to do with this Government? They occurred when the previous Government were

in office. The hon. member said a decision was given by the court, and a promise was made that the money would be paid. He said, "I am criticising the Government for not fulfilling their promise." He was asked if he knew the facts. He said, "The case was dealt with by the Supreme Court. The Government have wasted more money in law expenses than is involved in the court's decision, concerning which they are now quibbling." This Government did not waste any money because it had nothing to do with the action. If any money was wasted it was wasted by the Government the hon. member supported, and in which there were some country party members holding office. I ask the one representative of the Country Party in the Chamber now (Mr. Lindsay), who I know would not make such a statement, what it can matter to us with regard to the money? It is not our money. What interest could we have in withholding payment? It will not cost me a penny. What interest have I in quibbling over the matter or in stopping payment? I should be glad indeed to see the end of the business. I am tired of getting letters about the Ravenshorpe smelters trouble. I wish I could wash my hands of the whole business.

Mr. Davy: That is easily done.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: How?

Mr. Davy: By letting us win next March.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then members opposite will have all the worry. The Leader of the Opposition is very strong about this business. He fought the case. I know he is not satisfied.

Mr. Davy: You are quite satisfied with what he did.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I am not. In view of what I know, I think he was foolish in fighting the case. He was morally right but legally wrong.

Mr. Davy: His Crown Law advisers advised him to do it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have been told that that is not so. In face of the fact that the regulations were not cancelled, how did the Government come to proceed with the action? I cannot understand why they did. I would not have done it. I took office without knowing anything about the case. The view put to me was that the verdict was legally wrong, but after going into the facts I believe it was right; but the whole business is morally wrong. The court gave Dunstan the verdict. It said he was entitled to certain moneys, and that all the people who dealt with the smelting works were

entitled to certain moneys. The court decided that the proceeds should be pooled, and that all the prospectors who had claims should share equally in the pool according to the tonnage of ore they had in it. The trouble to-day is that Dunstan says the distribution is unfair. He accepts the verdict under which he won the case, but will not accept the verdict of the court in regard to the distribution. An article appeared in the "Sunday Times" last Sunday, the headings to which were "Remarkable revelations," "State Government's extraordinary business methods," "Facts about Ravensthorpe smelter case," "Charges written up to hide losses," "Settlement of claims long overdue." They are not remarkable revelations; they are only remarkable allegations. They are not facts but ex parte statements. The "Sunday Times," like the member for Katanning, could have obtained the facts from me. They did not want them; they wanted remarkable revelations. Had they asked me about the position they could have had the full facts. The "Sunday Times" says, as does the hon. member,—

Possibly the long-drawn-out trouble would have been settled two years ago but for some alleged interference by Mr. Troy. On July 23, 1924, officers of the Mines Department made a proposition that those who sold gold ore to the smelters should be paid the standard price for the metal, the balance of the distribution to go to owners of copper, as that metal rose in price from £58 to £152 per ton. This would have been acceptable, but it is believed the proposal was made without the cognisance of Mr. Troy, and when he heard of it he had it withdrawn. The result is that if the present proposed basis for the settlement is adhered to gold producers would get £10 to £12 an ounce for their gold at the expense of the copper owners. Such a course is obviously unfair.

The producers, who had more gold than copper in the distribution were awarded more than £4 an ounce for their gold and would receive more than they were morally entitled to. They would be getting this at the expense of the copper producers. That is the verdict of the court. I am not going to contest that verdict. To do so would leave me open to an action by the Gold Producers' Association. We are paying in accordance with the decision of the court. If the gold producers do get more than the copper producers we cannot help that. It is a decision of the court. I will not interfere in the slightest degree. I will pay to-morrow on the decision of the court, but Dunstan will not accept payment. He says it is unfair. He asks why the gold producers should get

more out of the pool than they are entitled to, and says that gold is worth £4 an ounce whereas copper is worth £150 a ton. I said I could not help that, that this was the decision of the court, and that I am not quarrelling with it. It would be suicidal for me, as a Minister of the Crown, to depart from the decision of the court. The gold producers would win any action against me if I did so. I would be a fearful ass if I altered the conditions laid down by the court, and would let the country in for further payments. Because I will not do this Dunstan will not take the money. No Government would do other than we have done. They would not dare to do it. Dunstan makes all these statements, these remarkable revelations. He is the person who gave the information. The member for Katanning, to say the least of it, ought to have had more sense, and both he and the "Sunday Times" could have come to me and readily obtained all the facts. I have done with the whole business. The Government want to pay as the court instructed them to pay, and they will not pay otherwise. If Mr. Dunstan does not like to accept that, I cannot help it. I say nothing as to the morality of the position. I regard the whole business as immoral. These people treated with the Government for years on the understanding that the Government had the right to make certain charges. After the lapse of years these people discovered that a regulation providing for fixing certain costs for smelting had not been cancelled. Having made that discovery, they put forward a claim for all amounts over and above the cost of treatment as set down in the regulation. Therefore I am not concerned with the moral aspect, but only with the legal aspect. That is the explanation of the whole business. I have never interfered. In fact, I did not see Mr. Dunstan. I understood that a certain legal firm were acting for him. I do not know whether they were or not, but I do know this, that anything done by me has been done on the advice of the Crown Law Department. The matter is entirely in the hands of that department, and entirely out of my hands. I have not interfered at all beyond this point, that I have said I will not agree to pay except upon the decision of the court. Mr. Dunstan has also said there was a proposition that the distribution should be arranged in the following manner: the gold producers should get what they are morally entitled to, and the copper producers should get the rest. But if that

suggestion were made—and I believe it was in fact made—the gold producers would not agree. Through their solicitors they have notified the Mines Department to that effect. That is all that is to be said about the matter. The Government are willing to pay to-morrow on the decision of the High Court if Mr. Dunstan will accept payment. I ask members to be careful in accepting Mr. Dunstan's statements, because while he accuses me of interference he accuses the officers of my department of dishonesty. Mr. Dunstan has said, "Thomson will fight for us." But Mr. Thomson did not do so. He merely brought into this Chamber the tittle-tattle he had heard outside. The member for Katanning, indeed, made not the slightest attempt to get at the truth of the matter, which he could have ascertained by calling at the office of the Mines Department.

Mr. Latham: Is the position that no one can be paid until all concerned agree to accept the money?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Crown Law Department say so. This man is holding up the whole business. I am not going to see Mr. Dunstan, because if I do see him he will say I made statements never made by me at all. It is an extremely bad thing that a gentleman like the Leader of the Country Party should come here and repeat untrue statements without having made any effort to ascertain the truth, as he could easily have done. The Leader of the Opposition knows the position well, and the members of his Government know all about it. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) came to see me personally about it, and I told him all the facts. Any other member can also see the file.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: You have had about fifty letters from me on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I wish to say a few words about the Agricultural Department. I am glad to be able to state that there has been no criticism whatever regarding the activities of the department. I believe hon. members are satisfied that the department are doing good work, and that the expansion which has taken place in the staff is in the interests of the agricultural and pastoral industries. The present Government have appointed a number of officers who are doing good work and building up the wealth of this country. The new Chief Veterinary Officer, Mr. Murray Jones, has proved a distinct acquisition to the department. A veterinary pathologist is giving his whole time to the investigation of the diseases which af-

fect sheep in the Avon district. The Government have also appointed two veterinary surgeons, three stock inspectors, a viticulturist, an agriculturist, and five agricultural advisers who are out teaching better methods of production in the wheat and fruit industries and other avenues of primary production. Further, we have appointed an assistant to the botanist, and three pathologists, and also quite a number of agricultural cadets who later will engage in the work of agricultural education throughout the farming areas of the State.

Mr. Sampson: Is it proposed to appoint additional fruit inspectors so that better protection may be afforded against fruit fly?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, it is not, though there have been requests to that effect. It is not borne in on me that additional fruit inspectors are required, because it is due from the growers themselves to exercise some care. The officers are constantly on the alert, and demonstrations are given to show how fruit fly can be dealt with most effectively. It is not reasonable that the whole of the burden of combating fruit fly should be thrown on the department. I repeat, those engaged in the fruit industry should exercise care.

Mr. Sampson: Something would be achieved if spraying and the picking up of fallen fruit were made compulsory.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are doing that. The Government have established an Agricultural College, which will be opened next month.

Mr. Sampson: Did you say that spraying and the picking up of fruit are being made compulsory?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Those things are provided for under the Plant Diseases Act. In that connection there have been many prosecutions during the past year. We took drastic action, and the people who did not do their duty were dealt with by the courts.

Mr. Sampson: The statement has been made that the department only dealt with diseased fruit sent to market.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not so. The hon. member can easily satisfy himself on that score by calling at the department, when I shall be able to give him the names of quite a number of persons who have been prosecuted for want of care in their orchards. As regards the establishment of the Agricultural College at Muresk, I think I can say that it is due not to any previous Government but entirely to this Gov-

ment. We took the matter up immediately on assuming office, and the credit for establishing the first agricultural college in Western Australia goes entirely to the present Government. When we came into office, the matter was dead. We purchased property. We erected buildings at a cost of £34,000. Probably that cost will be greatly increased as the work of the college proceeds, but the £34,000 was provided by the present Treasurer. The staff to work under the principal, Mr. Hughes, has now been selected, and we hope that the college will play an important part in the development of Western Australia. I take a great deal of pride in the fact that the college has been established, and I feel sure that the Government's policy in this respect will be generally acclaimed. We have also a number of experimental farms. The Wongan Hills light sands farm was established by the late Government two months before we came into office, but all the expenditure on it has been met by the present Government. Considerable amounts have been spent on improvements, cultivation, and machinery. Last year 1,000 acres were put under crop, 463 acres being wheat; and hon. members will be glad to know that the wheat production averaged 6.52 bushels per acre, a remarkable record for experimental cropping in a district that is purely sand plain. This year it is anticipated that we will again have satisfactory returns.

Mr. Lindsay: That shows what the light sands will do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are continuing the policy of establishing experimental farms. One has been established at Dampierwah, some 45 miles away from Perenjori, and another at Salmon Gums, in the electorate represented by the Speaker. We have reserved a site for another experimental farm east of Southern Cross, and that location will be fixed during the next few weeks. Should the farm in the Southern Cross area prove that wheat can be grown there profitably, a large area will be available for settlement south of that centre. We also propose to establish a fourth experimental farm, but we have not yet decided upon the exact locality. It is not generally known that there was an outbreak of codlin moth in this State at North Dandalup in 1924, and another at Collie last year. Owing to the energetic steps taken by the Fruit Inspection Branch of the Agricultural Department, Mr. G. W. Wickens and his officers have succeeded in getting the outbreak under control and I am pretty sure

that the disease will be completely eradicated. At North Dandalup very few signs of the pest were seen last year and I sincerely trust that the outbreak will be definitely stamped out this year. The Midland Junction abattoirs have been brought up to date at a cost of £45,000 and these, together with the abattoirs at Fremantle, enable the slaughtering of stock for the metropolitan market to be carried out under conditions that are economical for the butchers and scientifically efficient in the interests of the community. We have provided chilling space and the meat is taken to the shops in the city as it should be. Although there was much controversy regarding this question at the outset, the operations have proceeded smoothly and have given general satisfaction to those concerned. I will conclude with a reference to Mr. W. K. Willesee, a stock inspector employed by the Government in the Carnarvon district. When the member for York (Mr. Latham) brought this matter up it was the first I had heard of it. It is true that Willesee was a Labour candidate for the Gascoyne seat, but that fact does not prevent him from earning his livelihood.

Mr. Latham: No, not if he has the necessary qualifications.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It will not prevent him from earning his livelihood so long as I am in charge of the Agricultural Department provided he is able to carry out his work properly. Considerable agitation has taken place regarding this officer, but most of it has been underhand. There have been attempts to get rid of Mr. Willesee, but no definite charge has been laid against him. I have a suspicion as to where the attacks have come from, and so has the gentleman who brought the matter under my notice. Neither Mr. Willesee nor any other officer in my department will be dismissed from his employment unless a definite charge is laid against him and proved, that he cannot do his work. If such a charge is made against Mr. Willesee and it is proved, he will leave the department.

Mr. Latham: You will admit he had no right to interfere in union matters?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He had the right to send money down if someone asked him to do so! I have done that sort of thing myself.

Mr. Latham: As a politician you are entitled to do so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not care what brand of politics an officer may possess, so long as he keeps politics out of

the work of the department. I do not want any officer in my departments to tell me that he is a Labour supporter merely because I am a Labour Minister. I want my officers to do their jobs, and to carry out my policy. When I retire from the control of my departments, I expect them to be loyal to the Minister who succeeds me and to carry out the policy of the new official head of the department. If the officers do that I will respect them. In this instance, Mr. Willesee will remain in the department so long as he does his work. It should be remembered that Mr. Willmott retained his position as an officer in the Forests Department although at that time he was standing as an anti-Labour candidate. Then again I have appointed Mr. M. T. Padbury, the President of the Primary Producers' Association, to a seat on the advisory board of the Muresk Agricultural College.

Mr. Teesdale: You must have slipped!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. I appointed the President of the Royal Agricultural Society to a seat on the board and when Mr. Padbury was appointed to that position, he was entitled to the seat. Mr. Padbury is on the board by virtue of that fact.

Mr. Teesdale: As long as he only fell into the position, I do not mind!

Mr. Lindsay: More cordial relations!

Mr. Latham: I want to assure the Minister that no one asked me to bring the matter forward. I had read something about it and considered it my duty to bring the question before the House.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This is not the first time that the subject has been raised before me. When my attention was drawn to it by one gentleman and I put certain phases of the agitation before him, he said: "I will not interfere in the matter any more. I have my suspicions about the source of the agitation."

Mr. Sampson: Then if he is asked to do any of that work again, he will refuse?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He has not done any at all. I have listened to the speeches made by members of the Opposition and I could detect no real charge against the Government in any one of them. Any adverse criticism that was made has been easily repudiated, particularly where the speech of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) was concerned.

Mr. Teesdale: For God's sake don't blame us for that!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The assertions of that hon. member have been utterly disproved and I trust that he will be more careful in the future. If he considers he has charges to make against the Government, let him come to Ministers and we will give him any information in reason.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [11.49]  
I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. HERON (Leonora) [11.50]: Like some other members, I think the time occupied by the Address-in-reply is largely wasted; however, unlike the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), I am not going to take up hours in saying so. I really do think the time spent over the Address-in-reply debate could well be saved to the House and utilised by Ministers in travelling through the electorates. It is just over six years since first I was elected to this Chamber, and as this is the last Address-in-reply debate before the next general election I wish to take the opportunity to thank various departmental officers for the unfailing kindness and consideration they have shown to me as one representing an outback seat. For instance, in the Public Works Department there is one officer in particular who went out of his way to visit my electorate in relation to an amalgamation of road boards in outback centres. I refer to Mr. Sampson, and both for myself and for the people of the outback country I wish to thank him for the time he spent amongst our local authorities putting them on the right track with good advice. Mr. Sampson did not have a very comfortable job whilst in my district, for he had to preside as chairman over a conference of four or five road boards. However, the people up there are very grateful to him for his services. Then in the Mines Department there are several officers to whom I am indebted, notably Mr. Lang, the Assistant Under Secretary, and Mr. Telfer. Those two officers have unfailingly given me every assistance, as indeed have all the other officials of the department. In the Land Department there are the Under Secretary Mr. Morris, Mr. Highman and others to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. So, too, in the Taxation Department I have been met with courtesy by Mr. McFall.

Mr. Davy: You are not going to praise the Taxation Department, are you?

Mr. HERON: I certainly wish to praise that particular officer, for whenever I have had occasion to go to the department he has been kindness itself to me. A good deal of water will have to run under the political bridge before we have another Address-in-reply debate, and in case I should meet with any mishap at the next election I take this opportunity to thank all those departmental officers who have shown me so much consideration. I wish to congratulate individual members of the Government on the way they have carried out their duties. The Premier in particular stands for commendation on his splendid achievement. We hear from the Opposition side of the money he has squandered in giving increases to railway employees, increasing the salaries of the police, shortening hours, and things like that.

Mr. Latham: Nobody has ever said anything about the increases to the police.

Mr. HERON: Well, I will withdraw that charge against you. But despite all this alleged squandering on the part of the Premier, he has come out with a very good financial balance, and I wish to congratulate him on his achievement. There is another matter I wish to touch upon, a subject I have frequently mentioned here, namely the remarkable development of the pastoral industry in my electorate. Last session I referred to the developmental programmes of certain companies who had taken over pastoral areas in my electorate. I have before me the records of two of them. The Yundamindera company announced that they intended to erect 130 miles of dog-proof fencing at a cost of £75 per mile, 70 miles of subdivisional fencing at a cost of £30 per mile, and to sink eight wells. With the completion of that programme they were to have 600,000 acres of land fenced, on which they expected to carry 30,000 sheep. I am pleased to say they have almost finished that developmental work and are now making provision for stocking up their property. The other property, Sturt Meadows, planned to erect 70 miles of dog-proof fencing at a cost of £75 per mile, with the necessary subdivisional fences costing about £30 per mile; and to erect a little later another 20 miles of dog-proof fence and 60 miles of subdivisional fence. I find that this company

also have almost completed their programme. So it will be seen what a great advance is being made in the pastoral industry in my electorate. The Sturt Meadows Company will have spent £160,000 or £170,000 on their property. Those are only two companies out of many. Another company that has taken over a property in the Murchison district have arranged to spend £30,000 upon it. Of course that is not in my electorate, but it is not unfair that I should mention it as an example of the strides the industry is making, not only in my own electorate, but in others as well. That brings me to the fact that it is highly necessary that more wells should be sunk along the stock route. The existing wells were sufficient when only cattle were travelling, but now that sheep also are being travelled it is essential that additional wells, perhaps ten more, should be sunk between Wiluna and Leonora. I thank the Minister for having taken this matter in hand and for having gone so far as to send out a boring plant with which to locate the site for a well. I hope he will push on with the other work. Within the next two or three months the Wiluna company will have arriving from New South Wales 8,000 valuable sheep that are being introduced to build up the flock. To travel those sheep from Leonora to Wiluna, a good water supply will be necessary. The company went so far as to say that, if the Government had not the money available at the moment, they would sink the three important wells and the Government could recoup them later on. That shows the confidence of the company in this pastoral country. The Government should lose no time in putting down those wells so that we shall run no risk of a repetition of what occurred 12 months ago, when 49,000 sheep were landed at Leonora and within a few months 2,000 or 3,000 were lost on the route between Leonora and Lawlers.

Mr. Marshall: And in price they averaged about £3 at that time.

Mr. HERON: Yes; some of them were worth much more. While I am pleased at the introduction of Eastern States capital to develop the pastoral industry, I do not wish to see small pastoralists crushed out. The Government should render assistance to the small men who have insufficient capital to develop their holdings. The Governor's Speech refers to assistance rendered to small

cattle men. I hope they will be able to give some help to the small sheep men also. As a party we believe in encouraging the small men. The land should not be locked up in large holdings. It is in the interests of the State to encourage more holdings and small holdings. If men can make good on small holdings it is the duty of the Government to assist them. As a mining representative I thank the Government for having proclaimed the Miners' Phthisis Act and the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act dealing with miners. The men forced out of the mines had become almost despondent at the thought that their dependants in a very short time would be unprovided for, but the proclaiming of the Act has removed a great load of anxiety from their minds. The proclamation has not been made general; the Act has not been proclaimed in my district, but I hope it will be in the near future. One man of my acquaintance, who had been forced out of the mines and was receiving assistance from the Government, said he was still fit to work and did not want charity. That showed a fine spirit. I thank the officer in charge of the department for the prompt manner in which he found work for that man, who, in the course of a few days, will be starting work in the vicinity of Perth. That man was prepared to earn what he could so long as his health permitted him to work. I expected the Minister, in the course of his speech, to make some statement about the big mine in my district—the Sons of Gwalia mine. An offer of assistance to the extent of £15,000 was made to help the company to instal new plant. Those people unfamiliar with the facts doubtless wondered why the offer was not accepted. The explanation, as I have told the Minister, is that no company could accept the money hedged in as it was with such conditions. I hope the Minister will not wait until the mine closes down before he decides to do something. I believe he is of opinion that the position is not so serious as the company represent it to be, but I can assure him that it is serious, and it would be a great blow to the back country if the mine were to cease operations. About 350 men are employed on the mine and their presence in the district, of course, provides work for many other people. If the assistance were granted in a form in which it could be accepted, at least 80 to 100 additional men would be employed.

The company require money for development work as well as new plant. The Government advance was offered for the erection of new plant, but new plant would be of no use to the company unless they had the mine developed ahead. A condition was that the money should be repaid at the rate of 1s. per ton per month. On the tonnage crushed that would have necessitated the company repaying £600 per month.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think that is correct.

Mr. HERON: That is the information I have; when I interview the Minister again I shall show him the letter. The crushing plant was improved six months ago. The company had a 30-head mill crushing 8,000 tons a month, but the improved plant enables them to crush 10,500 tons. Although the crushing of the greater quantity involved no additional overhead charges, the mine still showed a loss of £165 per month. The Minister said it was not the job of the Government to help them unless they were prepared to help themselves. The Sons of Gwalia Company have tried to help themselves.

Mr. Lutey: I wish the companies on the Golden Mile had tried as hard.

Mr. HERON: In Mr. Kingsley Thomas's report it is pointed out that they put up an up-to-date plant, reduced overhead charges, and did everything possible, without appealing to the Government for assistance. Seeing that they have gone as far as they could, and can go no further, it is the duty of the Government to assist them. If help is not rendered, it will be a great blow to the people of the back country. It will throw out of employment at least 350 men, and bring into disuse the water supply owned by the Government, the railhead, the warden's court and other places, all of which will have to go by the board if the mine is closed. I hope the Government will see their way clear to help this mine. The company went to the extent of trying to help the people in the district to keep down the cost of living to a minimum. They put money into the local co-operative store, and assisted them in every way. Mr. Kingsley Thomas referred to this as follows—

In the matter of social welfare and interest in the well-being of employees, the management of the Sons of Gwalia have expended both time and money with excellent results. Evidence in this connection is attached to the report. It is satisfactory indeed to find in an outside mine such a realisation of the eventual economy of up-to-date machinery, labour-saving devices, and modern mining and metallur-

gical practice. These matters are being tackled in a resolute and capable manner, and might well be observed and noted by those who are inclined to live in the glories of the past.

The mine has been favourably commented on by the Royal Commissioner. The Minister cannot say the company has not done everything possible to keep the mine going. It is, therefore, the duty of the Government to go to its assistance. I have here some photographs. One shows a picture of the woolshed that is being built by the Sturt Meadows Co. We welcome such newcomers as Messrs. Hawker, Chomley & Co. They are doing excellent work and are providing admirable accommodation for their employees. I have also a photograph of their shearing shed. This was an old building associated with a picture garden in Kalgoorlie. I have another snapshot showing the shearers' accommodation, the dining room, the kitchen, and the bedrooms. This happens to have been the old totalisator at the Coolgardie racecourse. If we had other employers who were prepared to give this class of accommodation to their workers, such as this and other enterprises are doing, including the Yundamindera Pastoral Co., it would be an excellent thing.

Mr. Latham: Most of them are prepared to do that.

Mr. HERON: It would not then be necessary for the Government to talk about a shearers' hut accommodation Act. I might also say that the Sons of Gwalia Co. made provision for a playground for the children, in conjunction with the co-operative store. Members may be interested to see all these photographs.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

### BILLS (16)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Vermin Act Amendment.
- 2, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

- 3, Coal Mines Regulation.

Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

- 4, Federal Aid Roads Agreement.
- 5, Traffic Act Amendment.
- 6, Road Districts Act Amendment.
- 7, Wyalcatchem Rates Validation.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

- 8, Administration Act Amendment.
- 9, Constitution Further Amendment.
- 10, Kalgoorlie and Boulder Racing Clubs Act Amendment.
- 11, State Insurance.

Introduced by the Premier.

- 12, Agricultural Bank Act Amendment.
- Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

- 13, Herdsman's Lake Drainage Act Repeal.

Introduced by Hon. J. Cunningham.

- 14, Police Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Davy.

- 15, Guardianship and Custody of Infants.
- 16, Married Women's Protection Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Mann.

*House adjourned at 12.30 a.m. (Friday).*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 24th August, 1926.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 1.30 p.m. and read prayers.

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £1,913,500.