

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1923.

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

QUESTION—MEEKATHARRA WATER SUPPLY, RETICULATION.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works: 1, Will he immediately inquire into the retrenchment of pumpers on the reticulation system at Meekeatharra which by reason of water shortage is likely to cause a cessation of mining operations there? 2, In the event of one or more mines being stopped through water shortage, due to retrenchment, will he take the necessary steps to dismiss the responsible officer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The position has been well considered. Pumpers have been reduced from two to one for the present for reasons of economy. There is no risk of water shortage, as arrangements are being made for the mines affected to provide their own supplies, when Garden Gully is shut down. 2, The position will not arise.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [4.37]: I do not know whether other hon. members have been affected by this debate in the same way as I have been. I confess that I have not spent a more interesting or more instructive time in the House than during the present debate on the Address-in-reply. If there is one thing which has struck me more forcibly than another, it is the unanimity in the Chamber regarding the importance of immigration and land development in this State. It is rightly stated in the Governor's Speech that the most important subjects are those of immigration and finance. To this State immigration means finance, and providing the Government have the co-operation of all parties, as promised during this debate, there is no doubt that immigration will prove a huge success. Mr.

Wignall, the gentleman who was defended by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) last night, came to this State as a member of a Royal Commission; and in one of his addresses he declared that the scheme of the Mitchell Government was a very bold one. I subscribe to that statement. It is a bold scheme, but not bolder than the policy of a White Australia. The six millions of people settled in this continent have laid down a policy which is affecting a thousand millions of the coloured races, and unless we get population into Western Australia that policy will be challenged sooner or later. Now I wish to give a quotation from a speech made by a gentleman in the Eastern States a little while ago—

The question of formulating a public policy of settlement and development was one that deserved the closest attention. The Labour movement had to recognise the necessity of filling up the spaces in Queensland and Australia. We could never hope to be a self-reliant nation unless we got more people in Australia. We would have to fill the empty spaces, for we were menaced at the present time by a danger too few recognised. That was the danger from the Asiatic. This was no figment of the imagination. Public men in France to whom he had talked on this matter ridiculed the idea of Australia being able to remain a white man's country with only a handful of people holding three million square miles of territory. Australia would one day be called upon to defend herself from Asiatic invasion. Anyone who doubted this, lived in a fool's paradise. Even America, one of the greatest democracies in the world, was yielding to Japanese pressure on the question of immigration. He had spoken plainly on this question, because he wanted them to realise that the danger from Japan was real.

That is the utterance not of a jingo, or of a flag-wagger, or a militarist; it is the calm, dispassionate utterance of Mr. Theodore, the Premier of Queensland.

Mr. Marshall: You have paid a visit to the North-West. What do you think of the million-acre policy?

Mr. DAVIES: The quotation which I have read comes with very good grace from a man who, I am bound to acknowledge, possesses one of the brightest intellects in the Australian Labour movement.

Mr. Lutey: Or in any other movement.

Mr. DAVIES: Those sentiments were uttered, not at a patriotic gathering, but to a meeting of Queensland unemployed. Much has been said in this House regarding the type of migrants brought to Australia. Before dealing with that subject, let me give the immigration figures of the last year, and of the present year up to the end of June. During 1922 there came to this State 1,467 nominated migrants, 2,902 migrants assisted by the Government, and 2,144 migrants who paid their full passage. Thus, out of a total of 6,513 migrants more than 50 per cent. either

were brought to this country by their friends who were already settled here—and who must have made a success or they would not have brought their friends out—or else paid their full fares. During the past six months of the present year, 485 migrants were nominated by their friends and 955 paid their full passage, the total number of migrants to Western Australia during the six months being 2,701. That is to say, a little more than one-third of the newcomers to this State during the current year up to the end of June were nominated by friends here or else paid the full fare. It has been made a charge against the Government that many undesirables are coming to this State. The allegation is that either by slipping through the medical examination at Home, or by some other underhand means, undesirables find their way to Australia. I have come in contact with hundreds of the new people, and I can declare that they are up to the average standard of the people in the Old Country. I am not going to offer any apology for the newcomers, but I certainly hold a brief for them in this regard, that although I have been a resident of Australia for nearly a quarter of a century I recognise that the people of the Old Country have not had the chances that the Australians have had.

Mr. J. Thomson: In what way?

Mr. DAVIES: The day is not very far distant when women worked in the coal mines of the Old Country, girls who expected some day to be the mothers of future Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I remember them working in the tin mines.

Mr. DAVIES: They were working in the brick yards when I left the Old Country, wheeling green bricks to the kiln and working on the machines; and possibly a few months after leaving such employment those girls may have become mothers.

Mr. J. Thomson: They were working on the coal mines, not down in the coal mines.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know whether they are working on the coal mines to-day. They were doing so in my day, though not during the time I was working in the mines. How is it possible for the sons and daughters of mothers who were expected to perform such work in the potteries of Staffordshire, the coal mines of Wales, and brickworks throughout the United Kingdom to be as good as the young Australians?

Mr. Underwood: How did our parents get here?

Mr. DAVIES: Those of us who have read Sir Philip Gibbs's book "The Soul of the Somme," will understand the calibre of the men who, as mere callow youths, were sent from England to France without very much training, and, notwithstanding this, are to be credited with bringing to a stop the most perfect military machine that has ever existed—the German army. After a short residence in Australia, and some training, those men will make good, as their forbears who came to Australia made good. It is up

to us to offer the right hand of fellowship to the newcomers. There has been a lot of discussion regarding the methods of the Government in settling these people. I have visited the group settlements. I did not make a casual visit, but went down with the deliberate intention of staying for a while amongst the settlers. I lived with a group settler in his hut, I supped at his table with him and his family, helped them to cook the food, and proceeded with the settler to his work. On that particular group were three Australians and 17 new chums. I got it from the Australians that the new chums were working as well as any men they had ever known. It is said that the new arrivals ought to have 12 months experience in the State before they are placed on a group settlement.

Mr. Marshall: No, before they are placed on land of their own.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have thousands of successful farmers who were never on the land until they took it up for themselves.

Mr. DAVIES: Many of those 17 in the Jarnadup group arrived in August last. I do not know whether it is mere coincidence, but the three groups I visited, Nos. 21, 25 and 21, had been visited by the Prime Minister, by the Overseas Settlement Delegation, and by various other delegations. Whether those three groups are regarded as the star groups, I do not know.

Mr. J. H. Smith: No, the men have only just begun on them.

Mr. DAVIES: At Jarnadup I met the settlers of three groups. The residents of each group contended that their group was the star group of the South-West. To me this friendly rivalry seemed an indication that the men on those groups were determined to carve out homes for themselves and their families. But I would ask the Government not to place on group settlements middle-aged men without families. It has been contended that the test will come when the sustenance ceases. I cannot say what will happen then, but it is only reasonable to assume that a large percentage of the middle-aged men without families will not be prepared to spend another 10 years carving out homes after the cessation of the sustenance, unless they have relatives to whom to leave the homes. After the dissolution of the group, it will take another 10 years to complete the home. It may seem a long time, but the wage-earner has to spend 15 years of his working life in getting his home together. It took me that time. So it will be seen that on the group settlements 10 years is not too long a time for the purpose. However, it is a long time for a man already 45 or 50 years of age. After another 10 years he will not be able to work his place and, having nobody to leave it to, it is quite possible that he and many other middle-aged men will not stick to the group settlement. The other night the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) interjected that people could be settled in other parts of the State, particularly in the wheat areas, more quickly

than in the South-West. During a Parliamentary visit to the South-West a function was held at Busselton. In the course of a speech, somebody declared that what we wanted was larger families and smaller areas. At that time the group settlements had not been thought of. Every member of Parliament present at that function applauded the statement that we required larger families and smaller areas.

Mr. Wilson: I was there, but I do not remember that statement.

Mr. J. Thomson: Nor do I, although I was there.

Mr. Munsie: At all events, the group settlements were in existence at that time.

Mr. DAVIES: Only for returned soldiers; not for civilians.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, we went and saw one at Pemberton.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not remember that. Anyhow, the statement that we require larger families and smaller areas was everywhere applauded, and was published in the Press.

Mr. Wilson: Was it the speaker or the speech that was applauded?

Mr. DAVIES: I presume it was the speech. Now that the Government are endeavouring to bring about a policy of larger families and smaller areas, they are still open to criticism by reason of the fact they are not putting into operation further wheat farms. As I say, only the other evening it was declared that people could be settled more quickly on a 1,000-acre block in the wheat areas than on a 100-acre block in the timber country. But is it logical to assume that a country will progress more rapidly with one family to every thousand acres than if it had a family to every hundred acres? In our road board areas are towns with a small population spread over great areas. Consult the local authorities, and they will tell you the area is so great it is not possible to provide adequate means of transport, but that if the population were gathered closer together, adequate transport could easily be provided. So, too, with the group settlements. I am not urging the Government to slow down on the wheat areas, but I am concerned about the success of the group settlements.

Mr. Willecock: It costs more to clear 100 acres down there than to clear 1,000 acres in the wheat areas.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. It has been stated definitely by high authorities that it is necessary to have 1,000 acres of wheat land cleared, so that a man may have a portion under fallow while another portion is under crop.

Mr. Willecock: The policy of the department now is to have only 600 acres cleared.

Mr. DAVIES: The policy of the Government in respect of group settlement is not to have the full 100 acres cleared, but to have 25 acres partially cleared.

Mr. Underwood: Is 25 acres sufficient?

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know. Experience alone can show.

Mr. Underwood: How can a man, having a hard struggle, be expected to carry and pay for 75 acres which he is not using?

Mr. DAVIES: That is one of the complaints of the group settlers. They ask, "Why don't the Government fence the whole 100 acres?" They are afraid their cattle will be running wild. Of course, if the full 100 acres of heavily timbered country in the South-West were cleared, it would entail a tremendous cost. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) referred to the North-West. The Premier told us the other evening that the population on the group settlements was about 1,250 settlers, and in addition their wives and children. Although the group settlements have been in existence for only a comparatively short time, they have a greater population than is to be found in the whole of the North-West.

Mr. Underwood: The group settler is on ten bob a day; the man in the North-West is not.

Mr. DAVIES: If the Government continue their group settlements at the same pace for the next three years, they will be well up to the mark in their obligations to the Imperial authorities. During the debate severe strictures have been passed on the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. Underwood: Hear, hear! warranted too.

Mr. DAVIES: I cannot separate the Country Party from the Primary Producers' Association. Yet I am told there is a big difference, that the Primary Producers' Association is an association of primary producers, whereas the Country Party members are the farming representatives, regardless of whether or not they are primary producers.

Mr. Johnston: They must be members of the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. DAVIES: But was that always so?

Mr. Johnston: Yes, they joined the organisation.

Mr. DAVIES: And that made them primary producers? Then where is the difference between the two organisations? Many of the strictures levelled against the Primary Producers' Association cannot lie with equal justice against the Country Party. From my observations in this House, and I listen with close attention to every speech that is delivered here, I have found that the Country Party in this House have been very loyal indeed to the Government by way of criticism. Times have changed in this House as they have changed elsewhere regarding the freedom of members to criticise the action of the Government that may be in power. In many instances Ministers have been prone to regard the criticism of the policy of the Government, or the administration of the Government, as hostile to themselves. But that is not so. I was not here prior to the creation of nationalism, but I do know that under what was known as the caucus system, members were more or less gagged when they came into the House. I do not mean they were gagged in the sense that if they desired to speak they could not do so, but they were

gagged to the extent that a particular matter was first discussed in caucus, whether that caucus was Liberal or Labour, and that after it had been so discussed, the members affected came down in a solid body and declared, "That is our policy; those are our proposals; you can accept or reject them." And the proposals were usually carried by the House because they had been first discussed in caucus and decided upon by a majority.

Mr. Willecock: That is what you did with the Electoral Districts Bill.

Mr. DAVIES: That is not correct. The question of the redistribution and the appointment of Commissioners did not affect members when the subject was submitted to the House. They were able to please themselves whether they supported or opposed the Bill. There is not an hon. member in this Chamber who is willing to urge the continuation of the existing distribution. But perhaps it would not be wise to deal with the proposed redistribution just now; we shall have an interesting debate on the subject when the matter comes before the House. No member likes the idea of losing any of his electors, some of whom may be friends, and some of whom may even be enemies.

Mr. Marshall: My trouble is that I have more than I want in my electorate.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member is very fortunate because he is one of a very few living to-day who has more than he wants. With regard to the criticism of the Primary Producers' Association, anyone who is a reader of "The Primary Producer" newspaper—

Mr. Marshall: You should be a reader of it.

Mr. DAVIES: I read all the papers, including "The Worker," and I read every column of that newspaper each week. Possibly, if not probably, what applies to "The Primary Producer" applies to "The Worker." What applies to the Country Party in this House and their loyalty to the Government applies equally to the Opposition. There have been a few discordant notes struck during this debate, but so far as the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader, and the member for Kanowna are concerned, we know that they are supporting the immigration policy of the Government.

Mr. Corboy: They endorse immigration as a principle. Yours is not a strictly true statement of the position.

Mr. DAVIES: Anyone who reads "The Primary Producer" newspaper cannot but come to the conclusion that notwithstanding the support given to the Government regarding their policy of immigration, the journal is bitterly opposed to the general policy of the Mitchell Government.

Mr. Marshall: They have an axe to grind.

Mr. DAVIES: If you ask the Country Party members in this House whether "The Primary Producer" is the official organ of the Country Party, one will reply that it has

nothing whatever to do with the Country Party.

Mr. Collier: It is my official organ.

Mr. DAVIES: If you go to another member of the Country Party he will say that it is not the official organ of the Country Party, but that it is the official organ of the primary producer.

Mr. Richardson: Which is which?

Mr. DAVIES: Which is the head and which the tail?

Mr. Corboy: The tail is here, and the head is outside wagging the tail.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Be fair and mention the names.

Mr. DAVIES: It is not a matter of mentioning names; those are the answers that have been given to me.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Let us have the names.

Mr. DAVIES: Even in the last issue of "The Worker" I noticed the heading "An Epidemic of Suicides and Stowaways."

Mr. Wilson: There have been a good many stowaways.

Mr. Underwood: The trouble is that the stowaways are brought back.

Mr. DAVIES: You have only to read that article and you can come to no other conclusion than that the Government are bringing those unfortunate people to Western Australia. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) went to America recently and he has told us since his return of the pep that is in the American. I have not had the good fortune to visit the United Kingdom in recent years, but I have met people who have been there lately, and they have told me that the Old Country is passing through a tragic time. I have letters in my possession from coal miners in South Wales who declare that they have worked for a fortnight and that at the end of that time they had to go to the parish for relief.

Mr. Cunningham: Are they not doing that here to-day?

Mr. DAVIES: That is a different matter. There is a big difference between a man working every day and a man working for a fortnight only.

Mr. Wilson: What do they do after the fortnight?

Mr. Corboy: Do you mean that their wages are so low that they cannot provide themselves with the necessities of life?

Mr. DAVIES: That is the position.

Mr. Marshall: What a great advertisement for the motherland.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: It is not a question of an advertisement for the motherland at all. It is a question of the tragic position she finds herself in through having a surplus population, and through the disturbed position in Europe. It is not a matter to joke about. When we have a member of this House stating that we are bringing out to this country the unfortunate people I have described, and when we find a newspaper of the standing of "The Worker" stating that there is an epidemic of suicides and stowaways, we can come

to only one conclusion and it is that these suicides are caused by difficulties that are met with here.

Mr. Underwood: You must have a peculiar mind to read that stuff.

Mr. DAVIES: A statement was made here last week that doles are handed out to people in the United Kingdom, and exception was taken to the use of the word "dole." The hon. member who alluded to the matter said that the workers of Great Britain contributed towards that fund from which to-day they were receiving sustenance. So they do. It is not only the Liberals of the old country, nor yet the conservatives who refer in England to the payments to the unemployed as doles. The word is used also by the Independent Labour Party there and Mr. J. R. Clydes, the deputy leader of that party, stated only last week that it would be better for the British Government to pay the workers £1 a week than to pay them 15s. a week by way of unemployment relief.

Mr. Wilson: Fifteen shillings is only a dole.

Mr. DAVIES: How much more is £1 a week for working? That is the point I want to make. If it was suggested in this country that men should receive less than the basic wage, the person who made the suggestion would be hanged.

Member ordered to withdraw.

Mr. Marshall: There are employers in this State to-day who are paying less than the basic wage.

Mr. DAVIES: If that is so, they should be prosecuted.

Mr. Marshall: They are the sort of people who sit behind you and support you at Parliamentary elections.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murchison must keep order.

Mr. Marshall: You are the political tool of that class of man.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. Marshall: I will not withdraw it and I challenge your ruling. There is nothing in the Standing Orders under which you can compel me to withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw the statement.

Mr. Marshall: I refuse to withdraw it because it is true.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then the hon. member must leave the Chamber.

Mr. Marshall: I refuse to do that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms, remove the hon. member.

Mr. Marshall: Before I am removed I repeat that members opposite are nothing but the political agents of the capitalists of this State.

[The member for Murchison then left the Chamber.]

Debate resumed.

Mr. Wilson: Do you mean to say that £1 a week is the wage paid in the Old Country?

Mr. DAVIES: No; it is far from being a regular wage. The point I wish to make at this juncture is that no less a person than Mr. J. R. Clydes—but let me quote the words he used in the course of a speech delivered by him at Cambridge. I do not know whether he was addressing the University students or not.

Mr. Willcock: He was talking on economics, not practical politics.

Mr. DAVIES: He declared it would be better to pay £1 a week in wages for competitive work than give a dole of 15s.

Mr. Munsie: So it would. I quite agree.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not disagreeing.

Mr. Willcock: That is from the point of view of economics.

Mr. DAVIES: Whatever the idea was, it may be construed into meaning that he is telling the unemployed workers of the United Kingdom, who are to-day on a sustenance allowance of 15s. a week, that it would be better for the Government to find work for these men.

Mr. Willcock: Not at £1 a week.

Mr. DAVIES: Even if they had to work for £1 a week.

Mr. Corboy: For a pound's worth of work.

Mr. DAVIES: I know just as much about it as the hon. members interjecting.

Mr. Munsie: He does not say £1 a week.

Mr. DAVIES: They know no more and no less than I do.

Mr. Corboy: Do you suggest that he meant they should work for a whole week for £1?

Mr. DAVIES: I am not suggesting anything, but am reading the statement.

Mr. Corboy: You are making the inference.

Mr. DAVIES: Members can make what inference they like from the statement. If a similar statement was made in this State by the Leader of the Opposition or his deputy—

Mr. Munsie: It has been made and advocated to the Premier already more than once.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not responsible for that. If a statement like that was made it would be misconstrued.

Mr. Munsie: You are misconstruing it now. There is no harm in the statement.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not condemning it. It would, however, be misconstrued by hundreds of workers in this State to mean that it was the opinion of the Leader of the Labour Party that he would sooner men accepted £1 a week for work than 15s. as a dole.

Mr. Munsie: He did not say that.

Mr. Corboy: Why are you putting it up, so that it shall be misconstrued here?

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members must cease interjecting.

Mr. DAVIES: It appeared in the public Press.

Mr. Willcock: Let us get back to Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The miners in Cornwall asked the Government to subsidise them instead of paying them doles but the Government refused.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow these arguments across the Chamber.

Mr. DAVIES: With regard to the immigrants that are being brought out here, I am glad the opinion of members opposite is not held by the member for North-East Fremantle. He knows what the conditions are in the Old Country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are improving.

Mr. DAVIES: According to the returns published in the paper, but not to the extent we in Australia would like to see. I hope the co-operation that has been promised will bring some relief to the Old Country. It is not an appeal made to us only in our own State but it is an appeal to the justice of Australia. We have been permitted by the protection of the British Navy to lay down a policy in Australia, which will be regarded in the years to come as the greatest experiment that any democracy attempted, that is to keep this land, which at one time belonged to a coloured race, a white man's country. Unless every section of the community realises the fact that there is danger ahead, that policy will not endure. Criticism has been levelled against the Government because they have accepted the help of the New Settlers' League. Member after member has denounced the Government—I do not know that I am fair in using that term—for passing this work over to a non-official body. This self-imposed task on the part of the New Settlers' League is worthy of every commendation and not condemnation. It is only another branch of the Ugly Men's Association. Has anyone alleged that the Ugly Men should not undertake the relief measures in which they have been engaged during the last seven years?

Mr. Corboy: It was for that reason they were created.

Mr. DAVIES: If it is a charge against the New Settlers' League that they are assisting the Government in placing new settlers on the land, it ought to be a charge against the Ugly Men's Association that they are relieving people who are in distressing circumstances.

Mr. Corboy: There are many cases of necessity to which the regulations of the Charities Department do not apply.

Mr. DAVIES: It is a question of party that is entering into the matter. Whether the party opposite or this party is in power, any Government would be glad to accept the services of the New Settlers' League in placing the people on the land.

Mr. Willecock: The Labour Party set up a decent standard of wages.

Mr. DAVIES: That is another matter. We ought to be fair in our criticism against the Government regarding that organisation.

Mr. Mann: Our soldiers only received £1 a week when putting in their first periods of training.

Mr. DAVIES: Much has been said regarding unemployment. I do not know whether it has taken the wind out of the sails of those who have claimed that unemployment exists, but there is an admission in to-day's

paper that not so much is heard of unemployment as was the case a few weeks ago. That is very pleasant news for all. Even when unemployment was alleged to be at its height, when a conference was called at the Trades Hall, only 70 men who were unemployed attended it. It is a matter of great concern to the Government that any men should be out of employment. Even in the most prosperous times of the State, when the Scaddan Government were in office, one could gather 70 men at one time who were unemployed. To magnify that into saying that there is great unemployment in the State is a libel upon Western Australia.

Mr. Munsie: Did only 70 attend the meeting of unemployed?

Mr. DAVIES: No; I am referring to the conference.

Mr. Munsie: That was purely one of immigrants.

The Colonial Secretary: They were not all immigrants.

Mr. Munsie: Yes.

The Colonial Secretary: There were a few visitors.

Mr. Munsie: The paper said there were 60. I counted them.

Mr. DAVIES: Even in the days of our greatest prosperity we could find a number of men seeking work.

Mr. Munsie: I do not dispute that, but why limit the number to 70? On the occasion of the meeting of the unemployed there were 300 present.

Mr. DAVIES: There are times in the State when, if an advertisement were published calling for men, a considerable number would come along and claim that they were unemployed.

Mr. Willecock: There are hundreds of men who are unemployed who would not attend.

Mr. DAVIES: I want the House to realise that even in Queensland, before the introduction of the Unemployed Insurance Act, Mr. Theodore addressed a meeting of 500 unemployed in Townsville.

Mr. Munsie: Do not forget the Press were not afraid to mention the fact in Queensland every day, but we must not say anything about it here because the National Government are in power and you are supporting it. If you were on this side you would be organising the thing every day and harassing the Labour Government.

Mr. DAVIES: When the hon. member was on his feet he did not have sufficient go to come to the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not be offensive.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not mean to be. These were 500 single men.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a marvellous thing that they were all single men.

Mr. DAVIES: That was the statement made in the Press.

Hon. P. Collier: It must be right then.

Mr. DAVIES: If I occupied the position of Leader of the Opposition or that of the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), I would

have spent a shilling on a telegram to Queensland to ascertain the correctness of the statement. They could have had an answer on the following day.

Hon. P. Collier: We have to look after our own State, not Queensland.

Mr. DAVIES: There were 500 unemployed in receipt of sustenance from the Government. Mr. Theodore addressing them said, "If I were a single man I would walk the boots off my feet before I accepted sustenance at the hands of the Government."

Mr. Willecock: If you had no money you would have to get sustenance from somewhere.

Mr. DAVIES: That is not the point. Mr. Theodore had sufficient courage to tell those men what his opinion was, whether they agreed with it or disagreed. His speaking to them like that and standing up to them, and saying what he believed to be correct, was one of the reasons why the Theodore Government was returned by such a big majority.

Mr. Munsie: Because he stuck to his principles.

Mr. DAVIES: Because he stuck to his guns. He was courageous enough to do so. Nothing can succeed to-day unless it is based on common sense and justice. If parties would face the position squarely, they would be more likely to gain with the public than lose. Members opposite must not forget that some day they may get into power, and they are building up for themselves a mountain of trouble. Men will be looking at the records and saying, "When you were in Opposition you said such and such a thing. Now you are in a responsible position we expect you to honour what you said you would do."

Mr. Munsie: We will do it.

Mr. DAVIES: "We expect you to do what you said you would do when another Government were in power."

Hon. P. Collier: I hope you will not hand over all those multitudinous clippings to those people.

Mr. Munsie: He will organise them all right.

Mr. DAVIES: I was on the executive when the Scaddan Government were in power.

Hon. P. Collier: I remember it well. You were a most persistent man when you were on that committee.

Mr. DAVIES: The Leader of the Opposition, when I was on the executive, was ever ready to concede that what I put up was logical.

Hon. P. Collier: I know one thing you put up. There were men getting 7s. 6d. a day and we gave them 9s. and you wanted them to get 10s.

Mr. DAVIES: That is not so.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, the Geraldton men.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member's memory is at fault.

Hon. P. Collier: It was your executive and you were a member of it.

Mr. DAVIES: My memory is not at fault.

Hon. P. Collier: Your executive were there, and you were with them.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member's memory is at fault; mine is not. The Wilson Government were in power, and these men were receiving 7s. 6d. per day. In October the Labour Government came into power and immediately a request was made to Cabinet to increase the wages to 9s. per day. That was done without demur. That is my recollection of the position.

Hon. P. Collier: And certain men at Geraldton refused to work for 9s. and went on strike for 10s. Your executive came along and supported their request.

Mr. DAVIES: There may have been extenuating circumstances, so far as the Geraldton men were concerned. The bulk of the railway men were pleased to get 9s. per day from the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: You were most persistent at the meeting with the executive.

Mr. DAVIES: Perhaps so. I have not previously mentioned the fact, but perhaps members would be interested to know that only recently at the Trades Hall I was returned unanimously as vice-president of the Building Trades executive, and was elected to that position at the head of a body comprising seven or eight of the unions in the building trades.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, and you got one of your own pals to move that there should be two vice-presidents instead of one, thus saving an election. That is how you got that appointment.

Mr. DAVIES: That assertion shows the deplorable nature of party politics.

Mr. Munsie: It is the truth. Was there not only one vice-president last year? I saw the records of that meeting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: This gives one food for thought. It shows that the hon. member displayed concern about the matter to such an extent that he made inquiries.

Mr. Munsie: Nothing of the sort. A man concerned gave me the particulars.

Mr. DAVIES: As a matter of fact, that episode is not worth mentioning.

Mr. Munsie: You are sorry you mentioned it now.

Mr. DAVIES: No, I am not, but I want to correct the hon. member.

Mr. Munsie: What I said was true.

Mr. DAVIES: It may be as true as the statement made by the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) concerning the hon. member, who presided at the New Settlers' conference at the Trades Hall. Did the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) deny that statement last night?

Mr. Munsie: I deny it now.

Mr. DAVIES: Then the position we get at is that a member makes a statement and another denies it. It remains for others to accept or reject the statement. It does not get us anywhere.

Mr. Lambert: We are not concerned in the slightest.

Mr. DAVIES: I did not think the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) would be concerned. He would welcome it rather than otherwise.

Mr. Munsie: Of the building trades unions, how many are affiliated with the A.L.F.?

Mr. DAVIES: That does not concern me.

Mr. Munsie: Of course it does. You can be elected an officer of the National Federation to-morrow, but you could not be elected as an officer in connection with the Labour movement.

Mr. DAVIES: It comes with good grace from the president of the A.L.P., who refers to the whole of the building trades unions of this State like that!

Mr. Munsie: I asked how many were affiliated with us.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Order! Hon. members must keep order.

Mr. DAVIES: How many are affiliated?

Mr. Munsie: Three out of the whole number.

Mr. DAVIES: How many are there?

Mr. Munsie: You should know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. DAVIES: In any case, the statement is on record and it can be produced at a later stage. This is a clear statement and it is made by the president of the A.L.P.

Mr. Munsie: And I stick to it all right.

Mr. DAVIES: It does not matter how many unions are affiliated or whether they are affiliated at all.

Mr. Munsie: There are three of them affiliated.

Mr. DAVIES: What difference does it make?

Mr. Munsie: Do you think we want scab organisations here? Do you think we want another packers' union in this country?

Mr. DAVIES: I can hear a murmur going round the Chamber; "That is a good one!"

Mr. Willcock: I did not hear any murmurs.

Mr. DAVIES: The statement about scab unions was referred to. Does the member for Hannans say that the building trades unions not affiliated with the Trades Hall are scab unions?

Mr. Munsie: I did not say they were scab unions.

Mr. DAVIES: The member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) says that they are not connected with the A.L.P.

Mr. Willcock: Of course.

Mr. DAVIES: Are they not legitimate trades unions registered under the Arbitration Act?

Mr. Munsie: Yes. So is the Coolgardie Miners' Union, and that is a scab union.

Mr. DAVIES: Members of those unions have as much right to live in this State as the members of any other organisation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members must keep order. These interjections must cease.

Mr. Willcock: Interjections are encouraging occasionally.

Mr. DAVIES: And these have been encouraging.

Hon. P. Collier: Especially during the last quarter of an hour.

Mr. DAVIES: I have been able to get a word in now and again. I wish to refer to the apprenticeship question, which is an important matter not only to the trades unions of the State but, what is more important, it concerns the working men's families. Has the time not arrived when we should review the position regarding apprentices?

Mr. Willcock: Make the employers give the youths apprenticeships.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not dealing with that side of the question at present. I can recollect ten or 15 years ago when there was one apprentice allowed for every five journeymen. The trades union movement contended that they could not accept any more apprentices than in that proportion. They said that if they accepted more apprentices it would undermine the union movement.

Mr. A. Thomson: That was ridiculous nonsense.

Mr. DAVIES: Speaking from memory, the proportion was altered, and later it was one apprentice to every three journeymen.

The Colonial Secretary: The proportion varies in different trades.

Mr. DAVIES: That would be about the average. It shows, however, that the trades union movement during the intervening period have seen that it is possible to make an alteration, without undermining their position. I would be the last to suggest that their position should be undermined. Is it not possible for something more to be done, for it must be remembered that the boys of trades unionists are those mostly concerned.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is the main point.

Mr. DAVIES: Is it not possible to permit a greater number of apprentices to be employed, and would it not be possible to reduce the time of apprenticeship that has to be served? Twenty or 25 years ago apprentices to the engineering trade had to serve a period of five years. During that term they had to learn fitting, turning, pattern making, moulding, and possibly a little blacksmithing. That was the position, to my knowledge, in the country from which I came. The apprentices had to have a knowledge of all those trades, and it had to be picked up within the five years. To-day we have an apprentice for turning, another for pattern making, and another for moulding; yet they still have to spend five years in learning their particular trade, notwithstanding the improvements in machinery and equipment generally. I would ask the Government if they cannot see their way clear to call a conference of trades union leaders of organisations such as the engineers, the boilermakers, the blacksmiths, and the moulders, to ascertain whether they cannot employ, for the sake of the rising generation, a greater number of apprentices and allow a shorter period to be served. An improvement could be brought about in that direction. It would mean an addition of one in five, which is not much to the trades concerned,

but it would mean a great deal to the boys. Would hon. members be surprised to know that when applications were called recently for boys prepared to serve apprenticeships at the Midland Junction workshops, there were 250 candidates for 20 vacancies.

Mr. Munsie: There were 73 applications for one vacancy in the electrical trade.

Mr. DAVIES: That makes the position worse and gives my words greater force. The qualifications required for the vacancies were that the boys should be 5ft. 2in. in height; they should be from 15 to 17 years of age, and for the fitting apprenticeship the successful lad was required to have passed the seventh standard. The mentality of all the lads securing the vacancies had to be bright. I doubt whether any country other than this adopts so high a standard for its prospective trainees.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a very high education standard, and also a high standard for physique.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: They keep raising the standard because there are so many offering for so few vacancies.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so. Had the standard been slightly less, in all probability there would have been 400 applications for those positions at the railway workshops. That shows the position of affairs in this State.

Mr. A. Thomson: It is serious for the rising generation.

Mr. DAVIES: And because of its seriousness, I have mentioned it here.

Mr. Munsie: What do you suggest to alter it?

Mr. DAVIES: A conference of the leaders of the trades union movement, held under the auspices of the Government. Perhaps the employers might be called into the conference.

Hon. P. Collier: You know the number of boys entering the engineering trade is not so limited because of the number of apprentices, but because there are no vacancies.

Mr. DAVIES: It is owing to the fact that only one apprentice may be employed to every three journeymen.

Hon. P. Collier: But not to that alone.

Mr. DAVIES: I know the shops are carrying their full complement of apprentices. Applications are called twice a year and not more than 40 journeymen would be turned out.

Hon. P. Collier: Are the workshops always full to their margin of one to three?

Mr. DAVIES: I think so.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not think they are.

Mr. DAVIES: At any rate, they ought to be.

Mr. Munsie: If you get the employers at the conference to agree to take apprentices, we will agree. Our experience is we cannot get the employers to take apprentices. They will not have them.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member has not yet heard the whole of my proposal. I suggest not that the ratio of apprentices be in-

creased, but that the period of apprenticeship be reduced.

Mr. A. Thomson: Why not prescribe one apprentice to each journeyman?

Mr. DAVIES: I would sooner allow the men who have studied the question from all standpoints to discuss that.

Mr. A. Thomson: The present system prevents our own boys from learning a trade.

Mr. DAVIES: I ask the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) as the official head of the A.L.P. in this State, whether an invitation extended by the Government to deal with this phase would be accepted. The reason I suggest the trades union leaders be invited is that, if they are not alive to their own interests, to whose interests would they be alive? I am satisfied that we have something to learn from the experience gained during the war. A dilution of labour took place in the Old Country. Girls were put on to munition machines and, after a period of three or six months, they became very efficient. In view of the improvements to shop equipment, is it necessary that a lad should serve five years when four and a half, four, or even three and a half years' apprenticeship might suffice? I have been to the Perth Technical School and watched the lads who were serving their time at fitting in the Midland Junction workshops, taking a course in turning. After three years' tuition and aided by their knowledge of fitting, they were able to take up the trade of turning and fitting. The same applied to lads who were learning the trade of turning. After a course at the Technical School they were able to get work as fitters and turners. They may not have been so smart as men who had served the five years' apprenticeship, but they were smart enough to earn the award rate. I stress this point because it is of the utmost importance to the lads of this State. The member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) last night referred to unemployed insurance and gave some very good illustrations of its application in Queensland. If we are going in for insurance, bearing in mind the experiences in the Old Country, would it not be better to institute a pension for widows and orphans rather than adopt unemployment insurance. It has been stated—with what truth I do not know—that during the dockers' strike in the Old Country, the men showed a disinclination to return to work, because they were in receipt of a greater amount per week from unemployment insurance than they could earn at the docks. There was no incentive for them to terminate the strike so long as they could draw the unemployment insurance.

Mr. Heron: The Act provides that they cannot draw unemployment insurance when on strike.

Mr. DAVIES: I have made a mistake; I should have referred to the doles paid by the boards of guardians.

Mr. Heron: You are wandering a bit.

Mr. DAVIES: I have no objection to admitting a slip. It was stated that the dockers had no desire to end the strike be-

cause they were receiving from the boards of guardians a greater amount than they could earn. In view of this, would it not be better for us to deal with the question of a pension for widows and children?

Mrs. Cowan: Why only widows? There are many married women who have been deserted by their husbands.

Mr. DAVIES: The State Children Department pay 9s. per week in respect of needy children and in certain cases I believe the mother receives an allowance. It would be a simple matter to change over from the State Children Department to a pensions department, and instead of the allowance being regarded as charity from the State to the recipient, it would be regarded as a pension and a right. If a woman became a widow, she would have a right to the pension. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) dealt with viticulture and criticised the Government somewhat trenchantly—

Mr. A. Thomson: And rightly.

Mr. DAVIES: Possibly so—because the Minister for Agriculture last year said the Government intended to put 10,000 additional acres under vines, and had failed to do so.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Premier made that statement.

Mr. DAVIES: I have some letters that indicate the position of settlers on the Swan. I shall not mention names, but if members require them, they may see the letters. One man sent 654 cases each 56lbs. net, weighing 16 tons 7 cwt., to London. He received from the agents an advance of £607 10s. 8d. The cost of materials, cases, etc., was £81 4s. 4d., shipping charges at this end totalled £132 17s. 1d., interest and commission £75 18s. 5d., making the total expenses in Western Australia £289 19s. 10d. The London charges came to £228 9s. 9d., so that the total expenditure here and in London was £518 9s. 7d. This man had to pay back to the agent who had made the advance a sum of £490 5s. 3d.

Mr. A. Thomson: Did that shipment consist of currants and sultanas?

Mr. DAVIES: All lexias. Another settler stated that he shipped 117 boxes of lexias and received an advance of £136. It cost £65 17s. to send them to London and they realised £77 5s. 2d. The net profit in London was £35 12s. 3d. and the settler was left to pay back to the agent £158 12s. 6d. Another man, in respect of 152 boxes of lexias shipped to London by the "Orsova," received an advance of £180 19s. Cleaning and packing charges, packing material and railage cost £33 11s. 4d. On 45 boxes of currants shipped by the "Moreton Bay," the same man received an advance of £44 18s. 4d. Cleaning and packing charges, packing material and railage cost £7 8s. 9d. The actual cash received for the 197 boxes representing 4 tons 18 cwt. 56 lbs. was £184 17s. 3d. Here is a letter from the agents—

Re dried fruits. We might mention that the Customs officials dealing with this consignment state that the quality is as good as any that has been exported from W.A. up to date, and we trust this standard will be maintained throughout. That is a testimonial to the quality of the fruit.

Mr. A. Thomson: The exporters of that fruit were in the same unfortunate position as the exporters of apples in striking a bad market, but I suppose you will not suggest that we should not continue the trade.

Mr. DAVIES: I am glad the hon. member has made that remark. But he has stated that the Government are to blame for not having put an additional 10,000 acres under vines. He should not overlook the circumstance that if the Government did put even an additional 1,000 acres under vines, we should have to get the right applicants.

Mr. A. Thomson: They can be got.

Mr. DAVIES: They will not come forward while such prices are obtaining.

Mr. Johnston: We are still importing raisins.

Mr. DAVIES: There is any quantity of the best lexias to be found in the world. Lexias cost so much to produce on the Swan, and if they can be produced in the Eastern States so much lower, the Eastern States producer can ship his lexias over here and sell them in our market, in competition with Western Australian growers, at a profit. The question is one of economics. It is not a question of patriotism.

Mr. Heron: The growers get better prices in the Eastern States, and still they sell their stuff here cheaper.

Mr. DAVIES: Now as to cotton growing in the North-West. I am pleased that the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), who took such a prominent part in the establishment of the plantation at Derby, is in his seat, because a tribute is due to him for the way he worked to establish cotton growing in this State.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAVIES: The Minister for Agriculture, speaking here the other evening, said he would not have attempted to grow wheat in this State in conditions similar to those under which men were expected to produce cotton in the North. I repeat the statements of the Minister for the information of the member for Roebourne. The Minister said that planting out of season, or at the tail-end of the season, could not possibly succeed. Notwithstanding the adverse circumstances under which the cotton was planted, the day I visited the plantation, accompanied by a man who resided there, the plants were about 18 inches or two feet high. The man told me that the plantation had not had a fair chance.

Mr. Pickering: He was right, too.

Mr. DAVIES: There were large bolls, the size of a lime, and these bolls when squeezed yielded as much matter as would come out of a lemon or an orange. This showed that notwithstanding the unfavourable planting,

the cotton plants were doing well. That evening I met the people concerned in the plantation—the three families who are remaining at Derby. Strangely enough, the heads of those three families happened to be ex-residents of the Guildford electorate. I was acquainted with the three gentlemen, and I will repeat what they told me: "We went out on that plantation and cleared the ground. It was not cultivated, but merely scratched. No fertiliser was put in the ground. We planted the seed, and left it without any attention at all, either at the time or since. The expert came along and condemned the whole show, lock, stock and barrel. So we abandoned it." To the casual visitor the place looks as if a blight or a plague had struck it, and driven the settlers away. There are half-finished houses, and agricultural implements lying about, cooking utensils scattered about the place—

Mr. Teesdale: The settlers left the next day.

Mr. DAVIES: In justice to the member for Roebourne—

Mr. A. Thomson: And in justice to the State.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes; it must be acknowledged that that plantation did not get a fair deal.

The Minister for Works: Whom do you blame for that?

Mr. DAVIES: The expert.

The Minister for Works: For the abandonment?

Hon. P. Collier: Blame the department that sent the men up there. In the first place, the men were sent up too late, and in the second place there was no cultivation. The whole thing was mismanaged by the department.

Mr. DAVIES: The Government got a man like Colonel Evans, in whom I suppose they had the utmost confidence, though they had not complete confidence in the member for Roebourne or the Queensland expert. On receipt of the report by Colonel Evans, the Government simply accepted his views and took the settlers off the holdings.

The Minister for Works: What happened to the cotton?

Mr. DAVIES: It is there still.

The Minister for Works: Still growing?

Mr. DAVIES: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: The sensible business method would have been to start with two or three men and give the proposal a practical test. It would not have cost many hundreds more to give the thing a practical test.

Mr. DAVIES: I entirely agree with that. I consider that the utterance of the Minister for Agriculture here the other evening constituted an additional reason why the men should have been allowed to continue on the plantation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A Government inspector told me that the expert knew more about the country in half an hour than he himself had learned in 20 years. He said the expert was there for half an hour.

Mr. A. Thomson: Apparently he went up there to condemn the place.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not say for one moment that the Government should be condemned, but this experience ought to teach them that once they set out on an enterprise, say such as cotton growing in the North, they should not finally abandon it until exhaustive inquiry has been made by some competent person. I do not know that the member for Roebourne was consulted after the expert from India came here. Possibly the hon. member will speak later in this debate. However, the present situation is that out of 12 families who started on this cotton-growing experiment, only three now remain on the plantation. If I may use a hackneyed word, I should like to ask whether the experiment now being made can be considered sufficiently comprehensive to really test the place.

Mr. Teesdale: It is doomed to failure.

Mr. DAVIES: That is the opinion I have formed myself, but I was somewhat diffident about giving expression to it. I consider that more than three settlers should have been placed together for the purposes of the experiment now going on. They could then have assisted each other. A matter of great concern to the metropolitan area is the question of housing. I understand that there will be a deputation to the Premier to-morrow asking him to resume the construction of workers' homes in the metropolitan area. Two or three speakers, especially the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson), have urged that the amount allowed under the Workers' Homes Act should be increased. As a worker, I am not inclined to think that that step would help one iota.

Mr. A. Thomson: Yes, it would.

Mr. Heron: The workers cannot pay the charges.

Mr. DAVIES: I would hesitate to take on, with my other responsibilities, a loan of £800.

Mr. A. Thomson: But you would get a better house.

Mr. Heron: A better house than you could pay for.

Mr. DAVIES: I know the advantages of the house, but I know the disadvantages of heavy charges to a man with a limited wage.

Mr. A. Thomson: You would not be paying more.

Mr. DAVIES: Possibly building costs are now at their highest. As regards bricks, no reduction has taken place, and bricks are as high to-day as they have ever been in this State, and are harder to obtain by reason of so many building operations being in progress.

The Minister for Works: Are you in favour of extending the brickworks?

Mr. DAVIES: I cannot deal with that question now, I will deal with it when State trading concerns come before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much argument. The hon. member must address the Chair, and must not allow himself to be led away by every remark.

Mr. DAVIES: It is my want of experience, Sir. Anyhow, I am not prepared to subscribe to the view that the amount under the Workers' Homes Act should be increased. The increase, instead of helping the worker, would represent a burden to him. I do suggest, as a way out of the difficulty, that the erection of workers' homes should be resumed in the metropolitan area, that the amount of the advance should remain at the present figure, and that if a worker wants a better house than can be obtained for the maximum under the Workers' Homes Act he should put in the additional amount.

Mr. A. Thomson: That has always been done.

Mr. DAVIES: The trouble to-day is not the amount, but the fact that the erection of workers' homes in the metropolitan area has almost ceased.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DAVIES: Before tea I was stressing the point that an increase in the grant allowed under the Workers' Homes Act would not improve the position. Very few workers' homes have been erected in the metropolitan area. True, grants are given under the Federal War Service Homes Act, which is now administered by the Workers' Homes Board, but that has nothing to do with the State. I urge the Government to again erect workers' homes in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Angelo: And so increase the size of the city?

Mr. DAVIES: When I say the metropolitan area, I refer, not to the city, but to the outer suburbs. Nothing breeds discontent among the people more than having miserable homes to live in. I myself have experienced it, and I know what it means. The passing of the Workers' Homes Act immensely pleased the people, but unfortunately the construction of workers' homes in the metropolitan area has almost entirely ceased.

Mr. Pickering: For one thing, £550 is not sufficient money.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not going to subscribe to the idea that to increase the grant would improve the position.

Mr. Angelo: People in the North are prohibited from getting any workers' homes at all. There is only one workers' home in the North. The £550 is not sufficient up there.

Mr. DAVIES: There may be justification for increasing the grant in the North. I wonder whether those who advocate an increase in the grant realise that building materials are at their highest possible cost to-day, and that if the grant be increased probably the high price of materials will continue.

Mr. Pickering: The State is responsible for the high cost of material charged at the State Sawmills.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so. Those mills charge exactly the same as private mills. The State Brickworks also charge as much as, if not more than, private brickworks. It would be interesting to hear the Minister for Works on that question.

Mr. Angelo: Then State enterprise is not interfering with private enterprise, since they work in harmony?

Mr. DAVIES: It might be all right to increase the grant under the Workers' Homes Act if the workers could have an assurance that the wages received to-day would not be reduced. If a man in receipt of the basic wage of £4 5s. went in for an £800 house, and then in a few years' time the basic wage was reduced to £3 10s., how could he then pay the same rent as he can to-day? There is one way out of the difficulty: Municipalities and road boards in the metropolitan area declare a brick area, within which no wooden houses are permitted. This is a country of timber. I live in a timber house, and I know that in the summer time the wooden house is cooler and much more comfortable than is the brick house. It is said the wooden house has a disadvantage in that renovations, including painting, are so much more costly.

Mr. A. Thomson: And the insurance premiums are double those charged for a brick house.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not think they are double. I have a wooden house, with lath and plaster linings, and I think the premium I pay is 2s. 6d. more than would be paid on a brick house. If the local authorities would restrict their brick areas, and so allow people to go in for timber houses, the cost of workers' homes could be greatly reduced. I have studied the plans of the houses being built on the group settlements. The price of each house is, I think, £240. The house contains four rooms of 13 x 12. The two front rooms and one back room are ceiled, but otherwise unlined. There are two fire places, each lined with brick, an approved stove of Western Australian manufacture, a front verandah of 8ft., and a back verandah of 9ft. The house is of the semi-bungalow type. Hundreds, if not thousands, of workers in the metropolitan area would be very glad to own such houses. It is very wise in the Government not to completely line those homes in the group settlements, because an industrious man, once he gets into his home, will see about lining it in his spare time.

Mr. Pickering: He will not have too much spare time.

Mr. DAVIES: Of course, if a man cares to carry the additional expense, he could be given a completely lined house. All the group settlers are very pleased indeed with the houses being provided for them. Now I want to say a word or two about tramway extensions.

Mr. Pickering: Do you think they are necessary?

Mr. DAVIES: I know the Country Party has an antipathy to any extension of the city tramways.

Mr. Latham: That is unfair.

Mr. DAVIES: Then why does the hon. member ask whether I think the extensions are necessary? It is essential that increased travelling facilities should be provided in the metropolitan area, so that people might build their homes in the outer suburbs. But

when a tramway extension is made, steps should be taken to preclude an undue rise in the price of land in the district. Notwithstanding what was said by land agents before the Royal Commission, prices of Como land have greatly increased since the building of the tramway. The Royal Commission asked the Government to seriously consider an extension to Belmont, I for my part suggest to the Government that they should reserve land in the Belmont area, and when the tramway extension is built, throw open that land at a fair price to the workers. That suggestion will be found to be eminently practicable. If the present conditions continue, the position will become intolerable. In the metropolitan area we have two or three families living in one house, like so many chicks in a coop.

Mr. Angelo: In the North we have families who cannot get a house at all.

The Minister for Mines: On the other hand, up there one family can be found living in a house big enough for half-a-dozen.

Mr. DAVIES: We ought to alter that also. The Minister for Mines: Oh, you want the millennium.

Mr. DAVIES: However, if we cannot assist the whole of the people in the State, let us assist those whom we can.

Mr. Angelo: And make the city life still more congenial at the expense of the people outback.

Mr. DAVIES: I wish to consider road transport versus tramway transit. I understand the Como tramway extension cost £1,000 per mile. If that is going to be the cost of all tramway extensions I am going to ask whether it would not be better to appoint a competent authority to express an opinion, or even suggest that the Government go into the question themselves, for the purpose of finding out whether it would not be advisable to construct a road so that a motor service might be instituted. In the aggregate this might prove less costly, looking at it from a superficial point of view, than a tramway extension. I am aware that bogey cars which are in use at the present time cost between £2,000 and £3,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Fremantle cars cost £4,000 each.

Mr. DAVIES: For that sum of money four motor vehicles could be purchased. It might therefore pay to construct good roads so that the motor method of transport might be adopted.

The Minister for Mines: Why ask for an extension to Belmont when they already have a motor bus on the road?

Mr. Pickering: What price that motor bus?

The Minister for Mines: What fares do they charge?

Mr. DAVIES: I understand it is 1s. 6d. each way, or 2s. for the return journey.

Mr. Angelo: Motor buses are cutting out the tramways in the Eastern States.

Mr. DAVIES: How can we expect workers to live in the Belmont area and pay 2s. each day so that they might attend their work?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The engineers at Singapore are asking that the trams be removed and that motors should be substituted.

The Minister for Mines: The trams at Singapore are used by the natives only.

Mr. DAVIES: Two or three years ago the Minister for Railways was interested in the subject of the electrification of the metropolitan railway system. There is an agitation at the present time in the Kalamunda district for the electrification of the railway to that locality. If we could bring this about it would mean healthy homes for the people. I suggest that the first step in that direction would be the extension of the service to Belmont. The matter is certainly worthy of consideration. I next wish to deal with meat supplies to the metropolitan area.

Mr. Pickering: What about Wyndham meat?

Mr. DAVIES: Hon. members had an opportunity to-night of sampling Wyndham frozen meat, and it would be interesting to know how many availed themselves of the opportunity to try it.

The Minister for Mines: You must wait until to-morrow and see what the effect is going to be.

Mr. DAVIES: It might be wise to postpone consideration of the subject until we can get some information as to how many members actually tried the frozen meat. Regarding the bringing down of livestock from the North-West, I recently had an experience of how it is done when I travelled on the "Bambra" from Darwin to Fremantle. My observations lead me to declare without hesitation that the method of transport is the most wasteful imaginable. As many as half a dozen head of stock were thrown overboard per day.

Mr. Angelo: I have known of 33 per cent. being lost.

Mr. DAVIES: I was informed that the freight was £5 or £6 per bullock and that there was the cost of feeding on the voyage and the attendance.

The Minister for Mines: No, that is included in the freight.

Mr. DAVIES: I was told that about 50 per cent. of the "Bambra" shipment would reach the consumers. The bullocks loaded at Derby numbered 250.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There were 13 head lost out of a shipment of 600 on the "Kangaroo."

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know whether it is because of the construction of the ship, but the fact remains that the cattle were herded together in such a way that were it done on the railways the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would be called in. In the conditions existing on the "Bambra" the stock were bound to sweat themselves to death.

Mr. Underwood: Not to death.

Mr. DAVIES: Well, to skeletons. I am informed that the old boats like the "Tangier" were better equipped than some of the boats of to-day.

Mr. Underwood: The best cattle boat on the coast was the "Kwinana."

Mr. DAVIES: If the stock were carried on the upper deck they would be in the fresh air and would have a chance to reach the market. As it is, very few of those that are brought down on the "Bambra" reach the metropolitan area. In addition to the mortality there is going on an immense wastage. I can testify to the fact that when the bullocks were taken on board at Derby they were rolling fat, and when they arrived at Fremantle they looked like glorified whippets. The question of bringing frozen meat from Wyndham has been referred to. There was a trial shipment on the "Bambra" and I spoke to a butcher in my district who told me that he had ordered about 300 lbs. of that shipment. He declared that out of a couple of hundred customers only one ordered frozen meat and almost the whole lot was left on his hands. The question then arises: why will not the people eat frozen meat?

Mr. Teesdale: If they would not eat the meat that was brought down on the "Bambra" they should be compelled to go without. It was beautiful meat.

Mr. Angelo: It was prejudice and ignorance.

Mr. DAVIES: If the consumers will not purchase it, the butchers will certainly not buy it to have it left on their hands.

Mr. Underwood: Hundreds of tons of frozen meat are brought over here from the Eastern States every week.

Mr. DAVIES: I suppose the people eat that because they do not know the meat is frozen.

Mr. Angelo: That is where the ignorance comes in.

Mr. Underwood: Anyhow, I do not think you know the difference between shark and barracoota.

Mr. DAVIES: If we can overcome the prejudice and ignorance we shall be able to get meat much cheaper in the metropolitan area. Let us try to find out what the exact reason is. In 1916 a Federal price-fixing commission visited this State and the question arose whether bread could be supplied at a cheaper rate to the people. The master bakers said, "Yes, we can supply it provided the people come to the bakery for it; it is the distribution that is so costly." The chairman of the commission asked the baker who was giving evidence whether the people would fetch it themselves under those conditions, and the answer was that a trial had been given to that method and it had failed. The chairman of the commission told the master baker that the reason for that was that the economic pressure was not severe enough to compel the people to go to the bakery to get their own bread, that they insisted on having it delivered. Just let me

give an instance of what came under my notice when I was in Melbourne some three years ago. I was visiting one of the department stores in Bourke-street when a woman came in and purchased sixpennyworth of tape. The attendant, having completed the sale, said, "May I send this to you, madam?" The woman replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Underwood: Did she get a truck or a van?

Mr. DAVIES: That possibly is the reason why many things are so dear to-day. Through too costly methods of distribution the consumer has to pay more for his wants. It may be the same in regard to meat from the North. The method of bringing down live stock is costly, and the people have to pay it. The member for Pilbara stated that Parliament had been working on top gear, and that democracy had so evolved itself that we had to-day almost reached an impasse. He also said we either had to go forward or backward, and that there was nothing he could suggest whereby an improvement could be made in the present system.

Mr. Underwood: The Constitution.

The Minister for Agriculture: We could not stand still.

Mr. DAVIES: An interjection was made, "What about elective Ministries?" and the hon. member said we had tried the system. Where have elective Ministries been tried in Australia?

Mr. Underwood: In this House.

Mr. Johnston: By one party from one party.

Mr. DAVIES: Last night the member for Yilgarn referred to the treatment of consumption at the Wooroloo Sanatorium and said, "Let us deal with this in a non-party spirit."

Mr. Heron: Those were Dr. Mitchell's words.

Mr. DAVIES: Some members referred to the fact that we had never made immigration and land development a party question in this House. Let us deal with all things in a non-party spirit. There should be an improvement in the system of Parliament. The fault cannot lie with one party only; all are responsible. When matters are of great import to the people, the appeal goes out, "Let us deal with the matter in a non-party spirit." I ask members to deal with matters in that way from the standpoint of the welfare of the people.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We do the latter. It is only the point of view you take.

Mr. DAVIES: We will have parties, however long Constitutional government goes on.

Mr. Pickering: We cannot get away from them.

Mr. Harrison: There will always be party bias.

Mr. DAVIES: There was a time when parties were divided on the fiscal issue. In the Federal Parliament there were free-traders on one side and protectionists on the other.

Hon. T. Walker: Not in the Federal House. It is part of the Constitution to have a tariff round the borders.

Mr. DAVIES: They call it a revenue tariff.

Hon. T. Walker: That is equivalent to protection.

Mr. DAVIES: Cannot we deal with all matters in a non-party spirit?

Mr. Lambert: Don't you think we have so dealt with every one?

Mr. Pickering: You have been most generous.

Mr. DAVIES: Criticism has been levelled at the Country Party for their criticism of the Government. That is the product of nationalism, I presume. Every member on this side upon his return to Parliament subscribes to free discussion and to his being responsible only to his electors.

Mr. Lambert: That is to say he can do as he likes.

Mr. Pickering: Like the hon. member.

Mr. Lambert: You are overburdened with intelligence.

Mr. DAVIES: It was not always thus. Matters were discussed in caucus, and then brought into the House, and whether it suited members or not the subjects were carried.

Mr. Johnston: What is caucus?

Mr. DAVIES: A meeting of the party. Once members came to a conclusion in the star chamber, that became their opinion whether they liked it or not.

Mr. Lambert: Like the party meeting you held before the assembly of Parliament.

Mr. DAVIES: A meeting was held, but no one was bound to support the things discussed. Nothing was decided, and no member was bound when he took his seat in the House.

Hon. T. Walker: Why did you meet?

Mr. Pickering: To discuss matters.

Mr. Heron: To come to an honourable understanding.

Mr. Lambert: To have a friendly chat.

Mr. DAVIES: It was not a meeting to bind members to support what was to be carried at the meeting.

Mr. Heron: The member for Sussex tells us a different tale.

Mr. DAVIES: Some improvement can be brought about in this direction. The man in the street is regardless, when a candidate comes before him, of whether he belongs to the Labour Party, the National Labour party, the Country Party or the Nationalist Party. If a man has given good service in the House the bulk of electors will, regardless of party, support him.

Mr. Lambert: That is a comfortable feeling to have before an election.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. It is one I possess.

Mr. Pickering: And I also.

Mr. DAVIES: Others on this side also possess that fine feeling. The general opinion of electors is that they stand for a man who does his duty regardless of party.

Mr. Teesdale: What about the late member for York?

Mr. DAVIES: That was a slip on his part. He failed to put in his nomination to the returning officer.

Hon. T. Walker: And he missed the bus.

Mr. DAVIES: The electors desired that he should return to the poll, but a particular candidate refused to move. If he had done so that gentleman who represented the electors would have been returned to the House. I should like to refer to the incident that occurred before tea. It is the first of its kind since I have been a member. No one was more surprised than I, for I did not hear the interjection of the hon. member.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member need discuss that question.

Mr. DAVIES: I regret the incident and wish it had not occurred.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogun) [8.10]: The Speech this year contains an interesting if somewhat stereotyped record of the progress of the State during the past year, and also the programme forecasted by the Government of legislation for this session. I wish to make a few comments on the Speech, and to do so in the same spirit of helpfulness and friendliness I have always displayed to the Governments I have supported.

The Minister for Agriculture: To all?

Mr. JOHNSTON: If Ministers will take a careful note of the helpful criticism that has been tendered to them from all sides of the House during the debate I am sure we will have a definitely improved administration and better legislation in the near future. In view of the heavily increased taxation we have been subjected to during the past year I regret to find the deficit for last year was £405,351. We must, however, be thankful for small mercies. We find a measure of reduction, somewhat approaching the increased taxation imposed during last year. The accumulated deficit to the 30th June last was £5,910,916. Against that we have an accumulated sinking fund of £8,781,051, so that our position is not so bad as it looks.

Mr. Harrison: On paper.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Our accumulated sinking fund is to-day greater than the accumulated sinking funds of all the other States of the Commonwealth put together.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has nothing to do with the deficit.

Mr. JOHNSTON: No, but it has an important bearing upon the financial position of the State. I never miss an opportunity of reminding people, particularly from other parts of Australia, of this fact when they refer to our financial position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It may go down with outsiders but not with us.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In other States the same splendid provision for the future, as laid down by the late Lord Forrest when he established the original sinking fund of one per cent. on our loans, has not yet been made. In the present circumstances, and with the demands upon the public ex-

chequer constantly occurring, members of this party have never ceased to urge a policy of economy, but I do not see how we can live within our incomes at present unless we get the proper measure of relief that we are entitled to from the Federal Parliament. In to-day's paper I see that Mr. Gregory has taken up the matter of our treatment at the hands of the Federal Government. Yesterday he asked the Prime Minister the following question—

In view of the heavy expenditure to which the Government of Western Australia is committed by its policy of development of the vast areas of the State and its encouragement of immigration and land settlement, will the Government issue instructions for the re-enforcement of the bookkeeping system of interstate trade in the Customs Department of Western Australia for the next two years, to permit of the collection of data which may help to demonstrate how the present system of high tariff imposts, so advantageous for the other States, is prejudicial to the interests of the people of Western Australia, and enable the Government of that State to submit to the Commonwealth a definite claim for financial reparation?

The Prime Minister replied stating that the matter was receiving consideration. The land settlement and group settlement policies will mean a large increase in the population of Western Australia. That means that we must pay more through the Customs in comparison with other States. What we pay is doubled by the fact that these heavy Customs duties increase the price of many articles manufactured in the Eastern States, and they are sold here at a much higher price than obtains in the State of origin. This is due to the Customs duty which has to be paid on those articles. There has been no more important matter put before the Federal Government for many years than that which Mr. Gregory put before the Prime Minister when he asked the question I have quoted. If we had that information we could make our proper claim along legitimate lines, backed with the fullest official details. I urge the Government to take advantage of the Prime Minister's visit to Western Australia to press this request for financial assistance with all the power and might at their disposal. I hope that they will do so, and I feel that in the Prime Minister they will have a sympathetic listener.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have my doubts.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am convinced that it was the desire of the Federal Treasurer to give effect to the financial agreement, which would have given Western Australia £100,000 more by way of subsidy than we have received in the past. I regret that the selfish action of the New South Wales Government prevented that agreement being given effect to.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is a doubt whether the amount would have reached that total.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I believe the Federal Government are anxious to deal fairly with Western Australia. That indeed is the true Federal spirit.

Mr. Angelo: It will take us two years before we will know what we are losing.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is not so. We would know quarterly as the imports came in and excise was collected. One often hears amazing statements in Parliament, but one of the most amazing came from the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) last night.

Capt. Carter: Is this the voice from the throne?

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is my own voice. I have not discussed this matter with the power behind any throne. That hon. member said that the executive of the Primary Producers' Association did not favour the policy of closer settlement to which the Government had attempted to give effect. I have to thank him for his proper admission that the Country Party members in this House stood for closer settlement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You did not vote for the Bill.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Certainly we did.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You voted against the last Bill.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We voted solidly in favour of important amendments to protect the interests of pioneers. I want to emphasise the fact that there are three things that have the whole-hearted support of the Country Party, the Primary Producers' executive and, in short, of all members of that movement. I refer to migration, closer settlement and development.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You did not show that by your votes.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is amazing that any hon. member should make that statement against the fine organisations from which the members of our executive are selected annually. It is true that when the Closer Settlement Bill, which we supported solidly, came before the House, we endeavoured to see that justice was done to those old pioneers who took up their land in the early days.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was no injustice in that Bill, in any shape or form.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Those pioneers have homes to which many attach a sentimental value much in excess of the amount they would receive if the land were taken for closer settlement. Those pioneers should receive full and proper compensation, should their homes be resumed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill provided for that.

Capt. Carter: Of course it did.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That was what we attempted to achieve.

Capt. Carter: But the Bill provided for it. Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was said that you were instructed to vote against the Bill.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I did not receive any such instruction. I am not prepared to take instructions from any executive while occupying my present proud position as a representative of the people.

Hon. P. Collier: The point is that you are in the happy position of agreeing with the hostile executive.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not know about that. I certainly think the president of the Primary Producers' Association's executive might well feel proud at the attention paid in this Chamber to the very important political pronouncements he puts before the country each year. This year I believe his statement, from a political standpoint, was more important than the Speech made from the throne by the Governor.

Hon. P. Collier: Far and away more important; that is only as it should be—coming from the right wing!

Mr. JOHNSTON: It received a measure of support from those to whom it was addressed, and, in justice to Mr. Monger, I would say that his personal views, as expressed in his speech, were adopted by the Association which he so capably leads. As to the migration scheme, it is true that a good deal of criticism has been levelled at details. I do not propose to add to that criticism to-night beyond urging the most careful expenditure of the loan money. It is only natural that there should be a lot of criticism during the initiation of a scheme of this kind. The Government should appreciate this sign of the interest members take in its progress. It is a sign that members are doing their job. It is no small matter that we should borrow £6,000,000. It is true that the Federal and Imperial Governments have undertaken to pay a third of the interest on the loan for the first five years.

The Minister for Agriculture: You seem to understand the policy all right!

Mr. JOHNSTON: There are some details that I shall be pleased to receive from the Minister. In Western Australia we have a small handful of 348,000 people, but we are to bear the whole responsibility for the capital expenditure at the end of the five-year period. That being so, it is only right that every member of the House should be anxious that the Government should obtain full value for this expenditure. At the start the Government did not obtain full value for their expenditure in the South-West. That fact is freely admitted. We have been told that better methods are now being initiated. Ministers should devote their whole attention to seeing that the State receives full value for the expenditure of that loan of £6,000,000. If we get that, the scheme will be a success. If we do not safeguard ourselves along these lines, a scheme conceived in the highest interests of the State and the Empire may easily end in disaster. I would like to think that, in assisting in this scheme, we are doing something to carry out the prophecy for the future that was first made by Sir Joynton Smith. We, in this portion of the Empire, are doing our part to carry out Sir Joynton Smith's vision of Australia being the ultimate headquarters of the British race.

The Minister for Mines: With Doodlakine as the capital?

Mr. JOHNSTON: We should look at the position of the United States a couple of centuries ago, and at the position now. We realise that we are now in the position that the United States was in in those early days.

The Minister for Mines: Then the magnetic centre of Narrogin will come into its own.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I thought the Minister for Mines would have had a little more vision than not to believe that this huge island continent of Australia has a great future before it in the hands of the British race. I heard a member of the British Overseas Delegation, Mr. Wignall, when speaking at Kalgoorlie say that the community there was a more British one than he had found in Great Britain. We should have a much larger population than we have now. The British Government have already shown a desire to transfer their surplus white population to this island continent.

Hon. P. Collier: Now, when do you propose to enter the matrimonial circle?

Mr. Munsie: Give him notice of that question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JOHNSTON: It seems to me that during the last year or two, the Government have been pinning their faith to a developmental policy in the South-Western portion of the State, to areas heavily timbered and well watered. Most of the migrants who have gone on the land have been sent to the South-West. It would almost appear that the Premier had for the moment lost sight of the wheat belt and the magnificent areas along the Great Southern railway, where so much more, comparatively speaking, can be done with loan expenditure.

Mr. Pickering: I thought £3,000,000 had been set aside for the wheat areas alone?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have not heard of that money coming along yet.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know it is being made available.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I know that the Agricultural Bank is doing its part in making fresh advances for agricultural purposes. I give the Government credit for their actions in that regard. I do not know that the money is drawn from the Imperial grant. The Minister may inform us on that point. No doubt the Government have to some extent been influenced in opening up the South-West by the knowledge of the imports of dairy produce from the Eastern States. Last year no less than £894,153 was sent to the Eastern States for butter, cheese, eggs and other dairy produce, all of which could have been produced in Western Australia.

Mr. Underwood: I have been in this House for the past 17 years and I have heard that statement made every year.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes, and if the hon. member were out of the House a bit, he

would see the considerable effort that was being made to reduce that expenditure in the Eastern States. If the hon. member came to Narrogin, he would see a butter factory there where, during the best part of the season, 6 tons of butter per week are turned out.

The Minister for Agriculture: That was done inside of a couple of years.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes, it was a very creditable achievement. I join with other hon. members representing the Great Southern from Pingelly to Katanning and Tambellup in their advocacy of that magnificent area of country as a suitable field for the Government's group settlement efforts. The butter production is increasing rapidly and that territory is capable of carrying 30 times the number of settlers there to-day if the land were only purchased and subdivided by the Government.

Mr. Underwood: Now give the North-West a trial.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yesterday the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) spoke of a property for sale at 35s. an acre. I know that property well. There are similar properties throughout the Great Southern, most of them well improved, and I cannot understand why they are offered for sale so cheaply when we know that land of similar quality in the Eastern States, but less favourably situated, is bringing four to five times the money.

Mr. Stubbs: That is quite true.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Government could settle groups much cheaper in the Great Southern than anywhere else in the State. I hope that this matter will receive their attention and that groups will be established there to engage in dairying and viticulture. Figures have been given showing that land in the Great Southern can be purchased and put under vines for less than £20 per acre, as compared with £60 per acre which is the cost in the Swan district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If this land is so good, why do not the people purchase it that are coming here from the Eastern States to take up land?

Mr. JOHNSTON: They are doing so every week. The Premier visited Darkan and inspected the vineyard established by Mr. Rhodes, who came from Mildura. At Darkan Mr. Rhodes grew finer grapes without irrigation than he grew at Mildura with irrigation. The local governing bodies from Pingelly to Katanning have been trying to get the Government to give effect to their promise to establish viticultural settlements there, but without result. Last year we sent £67,157 out of the State for wine alone. Wine grapes of the highest quality were grown and the finest wine was produced at Wagin and Katanning in years gone by, which shows what a splendid opening there is for settlement in this industry along the Great Southern.

Mr. Underwood: But still you want some Government assistance.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In spite of the fact that a considerable quantity of raisins is produced locally, last year we sent £24,312 to the Eastern States for this commodity and we imported jam to the value of £110,000. These figures show what an excellent opportunity offers for increased production in these directions.

Mr. Underwood: You will find we export the currants and raisins we grow and import others.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is so, but the value of our imports greatly exceed the value of our exports. Regarding new railways, most of the money expended in the last few years has been spent in the South-West. The wheat belt has to some extent been overlooked.

The Minister for Agriculture: What about the Esperance-Northwards line for a start?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The construction of that line is proceeding but slowly. My argument is that there is more railway construction projected in the South-West than in the wheat belt. I do not complain of that. It is the duty of the Government to open up all parts of the State, but there are localities in the wheat belt with large settlement but too far distant from railway communication for profitable farming. Important proposals put forward by the Railway Advisory Board have not been carried into effect; nor are they mentioned in the Governor's Speech.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Advisory Board do not have to find the money.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The hon. member generally attaches great weight to the opinions of these expert advisers of the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But construction cannot be carried out without money.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Settlers east of the Yiliming-Kondinin line have been put on the land at distances of 35 to 40 miles from the railway. They have large areas under crop this year from Walyurin, East Jilakin and Kalbarin, and it is important that railway communication be provided for them at the earliest possible date. The Railway Advisory Board recommended a railway from Kondinin to Newdegate that would serve Kalbarin en route, but I find no mention in the Governor's Speech of that very important proposal. I hope, however, that a Bill to authorise the construction of this line will be introduced during the current session in accordance with the promise made by the Premier in this House a year ago. I have asked the Government to send the Advisory Board to report on the Quindanning district, than which there is no district so long and so well settled that is still without railway communication. This district has been settled for 60 years. I congratulate the Government on mentioning in the Speech their intention to construct the railway from Narrogin to Dwarda. This line was approved in 1915 and £10,000 to start the work was voted on the Loan Estimates for the period ended the 30th June last, but I

regret that the Minister for Works is not present to explain why that amount was not expended in accordance with the directions of the House. I am pleased that the Government have decided to build the line through this fertile district. The Minister for Works has given notice of a Bill to deviate the route. If the deviation is designed to afford better communication to that fine body of returned soldiers settled on the Noombing estate, the measure will have my hearty support. The Government have done right in deciding to proceed with the construction of this railway, which was authorised so far back as 1915, and I am glad the Premier is keeping faith with the settlers by fulfilling his promise. I congratulate the Minister for Agriculture on his report on the Esperance land. It is true that the high opinions voiced by him were previously expressed by Professor Lowrie, by Dr. Harrison, formerly R.M.O. at Esperance, and by a majority of the Railway Advisory Board. The Advisory Board reported in 1910 that there was a huge province at Esperance crying aloud for settlement. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the proposed railway through that district. The commission travelled through the Esperance district and also through the mallee areas of the Eastern States and, unlike the members of the Forests Commission, its members were well paid for their travelling.

Mr. Pickering: It seems to be a big joke for everybody except the Forests Commission.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I merely wished to remind the House of the injustice done to the hon. member which, even now, is capable of being rectified by the Government. I was pleased to see the Minister for Agriculture return like some modern Christopher Columbus and tell of his great discovery of land in the Esperance district, his remarks bearing out those of the other authorities of years ago. In view of the Minister's advocacy, I do not see how the Government can refrain from introducing a Bill to authorise the construction of the line from Norseman to Salmon Gums. In Kalgoorlie three weeks ago an unkind person came to me and said, "What are you people going to do about that 60 miles that is without railway communication between Norseman and Salmon Gums? We call it 'The Gropers' Gap' up here." "If to be born in Western Australia is to be a griper," I said, "that is a very unjust name to attribute to that empty space, particularly in view of the advocacy which two gopers, the Minister for Agriculture and myself, have given to the construction of the line." If that gap remains, it could more properly be called "Mitchell's Mistake" or "Walker's War Cry." No doubt the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) will find it very useful as such in the near future. Another matter to which I desire to draw attention is a petition signed by every

holder of a leasehold worker's home in the town of Narrogin. The petition was presented to the Government some months ago. The petitioners, an earnest body of workers, asked for the option to be extended to them to convert the homes in which they are living from leasehold blocks into freehold. The policy of this party is freehold tenure for all concerned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They need not have petitioned. They could have got in under Part IV. of the Act.

Mr. JOHNSTON: When they wanted those homes, they had to accept the only tenure available for that particular land, which was leasehold. I forwarded the petition to the Premier, and received a reply that the matter was receiving consideration. I wrote to him again on the subject, and the matter was still receiving consideration. I am not content to let the Government evade the issue any longer. It is up to them to say right out whether they intend to give these workmen their freehold titles or not. While the Labour Government were in power, very many town lots were disposed of entirely on the leasehold principle, especially in Bruce Rock and Corrigin. It was a very interesting experiment, and I regret that as a social experiment its period was so limited. Hundreds of town lots were leased by the Labour Government to all sorts of people—wealthy people, people who never improved the lots. All those people have been given by this House the right to convert the blocks into freeholds. The only man who has been denied that right in towns is the worker owning his home and living in it. The petition shows remarkable unanimity, inasmuch as it has been signed by every holder of a house on leasehold tenure in Narrogin. I hope it will be granted by the Government without further delay.

Mr. Cunningham: Who were the promoters of the petition?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not know who promoted it, but it was sent to me by this association of the workers who are interested. During the recess I visited the Eastern States, and while there was greatly struck to see huge factories going up in Melbourne and Sydney, factories to be used for exploiting the Western Australian and Queensland and other outside markets for the benefit of Victoria and New South Wales. It appears to me that if we cannot obtain the necessary relief under the tariff for the development of our primary industries, if we are to be subjected to the exploitation of Eastern manufacturers, our best course by far is to encourage secondary industries in Western Australia. There are only two ways in which the State Government can help towards such an end. One is—and I regard this as rather important—by an amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act. Under that Act as it stands to-day, a municipality cannot rate on the unimproved value of land, but is compelled to rate on the annual value. This may seem a small thing, but it is one of the factors which have to be reckoned with in calcu-

lating costs. South Perth, because of that objectionable provision, decided to convert the municipality into a road board, thereby getting the benefit of the system of rating on unimproved values.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Road boards get subsidies too, you know.

Mr. JOHNSTON: A man wants to build a big factory in Subiaco, and I may mention in this connection that I had the privilege of discussing the question of the establishment of woollen mills in this State with Mr. Stirling Taylor whilst I was in the East. I do not see why a man should be penally rated for his enterprise in erecting large woollen mills, for instance. I think the Government might well accede to the request put forward by repeated municipal conferences, to be given the option of levying rates on whichever system each municipality may think just. I do not wish any municipality to be coerced into altering its system, though I think the very least the Government can do is to put our municipal councils in the same position as that occupied by similar bodies in the Eastern States, namely that of rating on either the annual value or the unimproved value, as they may think fit. Another factor telling against Western Australia is the heavy rates of taxation imposed here as compared with the East. This refers particularly to large incomes. We wish, however, to get some secondary industries established here, instead of importing the products of those industries from the Eastern States. The man with the capital can exercise a derisive influence towards the establishment of secondary industries in Western Australia. In considering such projects we must take into account the plea so ably put forward by Mr. Monger in his recent address, that Victoria's maximum rate of income taxation is 6½d. in the pound, as compared with a maximum of 4s. 7d. on large incomes, and only on large incomes, in Western Australia. The 1s. 7d. is arrived at by a tax of 4s. and a supertax of 7d. I ask the Government to consider seriously whether the time has not arrived when in the interests of Western Australia that supertax should be waived. I hope that when the taxation Bill comes before the House, the question of getting rid of the objectionable supertax of 15 per cent. on all incomes will be fully considered.

Mr. Angelo: Even then our maximum will be 7d. above the Queensland maximum.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Now I wish to say a few words regarding the pressing question of water supplies both in the country and in the city. We all remember what took place last year, when from one end of the wheat belt to the other the people were unfortunately without water. It was heartrending to know of people carting water five, ten, and twenty miles. Over such distances they were obliged to cart the whole of the water they required. In the eastern wheat belt a great deal of stock had to be sold simply because the farmers were in such a distressful position with regard to water. It was a very sad

sight to see the lines of water carts at the various sidings, carts which had come in for water that in many cases had been brought by the Government over distances of 50 to 100 miles at a loss to the State as well. At the same time we hear of complaints in the city, no doubt justifiable complaints, regarding shortage of water in parts of the metropolitan area. What is the position to-day? Anticipating Parliament's approval, the Government have entered upon a very large water supply for the metropolitan area. I have been told that the complete scheme will cost three millions sterling. The Minister for Works has told us that several new reservoirs are already being erected in various parts of the metropolitan area, with a view to obviating the complaints which were heard last year. As regards the country, we have been promised key dams. Requests have been made for considerable extensions of the goldfields water scheme. I want the Government to foresee the position that is likely to arise in the country next summer, in the same way as they are anticipating the position which may occur in the metropolitan area. So far as I know, not one key dam has yet been commenced; and yet the difficulty which caused the Government to determine on key dams last year is far more urgent than the trouble in the metropolitan area. Apparently the city has once again received the substance, namely the starting of a three-million pounds scheme, whilst the country has promises of the shadow in the shape of a few key dams, and extension of the goldfields water scheme is still under consideration.

Mr. Clydesdale: The city will have to pay for its water supply.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I hope that is so.

Mr. Mann: You will not mind if the city is paying for it?

Mr. JOHNSTON: No. But the sooner we get a metropolitan board of works on the same lines as that existing in Victoria, the better. I entertain not the slightest objection to the city having an extra three-millions sterling spent on its water supply, provided that the ratepayers who get the benefit of it are prepared to pay for it.

Mr. Clydesdale: Will that apply to the country as well?

Mr. JOHNSTON: As a fact, it is applying to the country. In the municipality of Narrogin to-day the people are being rated at 3s. in the pound for their water supply—a very heavy charge on a small community. Next there is the tramway extension so vigorously and so successfully advocated by the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale).

Mr. Clydesdale: You have come round at last, then.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Not at all. Extensions to Maylands, Claremont and elsewhere are in progress. I look with a good deal of regret on the extension to Claremont along the Perth-Fremantle road, because it is so very close to the railway. The extension recommended by the Royal Commission consisting of members of this House was along Western-

road, close to the river. In view of the condition of the country's finances we have no right at all to build a tramway to a locality already well served by a railway, as Claremont is. I fear the ultimate result may be that both the tramway to Claremont and the railway will be run at a loss, owing to the competition of one Government service with another Government service. Here again my objection would be waived altogether if I were convinced that the city was going to pay this half million or so which the tramway extensions will cost, taking into account the new cars and new equipment necessary. This expenditure, it is to be noted, comes on top of the three millions for metropolitan water supply.

Mr. Mann: Will you not give the city anything out of revenue?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Of course.

The Minister for Agriculture: Where do you get your half million pounds from?

Mr. Lambert: It is not £100,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: A large number of new cars will be required. I do not know the full extent of the Government's proposals. We are told that Parliament is to be asked to vote money and I hazarded a guess of half a million pounds. I will be agreeably surprised if it is less.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are as far out on this point as you were about the three millions for water supplies.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I advocate the appointment of a metropolitan board of works or a tramway trust to see that these works pay interest and sinking fund.

Mr. Lambert: But they are paying now.

The Minister for Mines: The country has not contributed a shilling towards it, but on the other hand, the concerns have contributed £55,000 to the revenue.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Nearly half the population of the State resides within the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Mines: The people pay for the services rendered to the last penny.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is all I am asking.

The Minister for Mines: Then what are you growling about?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I ask that a metropolitan board of works shall do this work, and put the liability on the metropolis.

Mr. Clydesdale: The work is being done.

The Minister for Mines: Why hand over what is already profitable?

Mr. Clydesdale: That is the point.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Royal Commission that inquired into the Soldier Settlement Scheme did excellent work. I saw them carrying out their duties in the country and they did their work most painstakingly. A great many of my electors have been over-charged under that scheme, and I hope the fullest approval will be given by the Government to the Commission's recommendations. I know something about the returned soldiers who have settled throughout Western Australia. A painstaking and impartial Commission was appointed by this

House to inquire into their grievances. The Commission went into the matter very thoroughly, and I hope their recommendations will be fully, completely, and generously carried into effect. What is worth doing is worth doing well, and I hope the Government will accept their very proper recommendations without any delay whatever. I will have an opportunity to deal with other important matters mentioned in the Governor's Speech when they come forward during the session. I will conclude by hoping that our labours will prove to the benefit of the whole of the people of the State.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. S. Sampson—Swan) [9.3]: It is not my intention to delay the House for any length of time regarding matters affecting the Colonial Secretary's department. There will be ample opportunity when the Estimates are before the House for references to be made to the many departments under my Ministerial control.

Mr. Corboy: You are Minister in charge of "all others not mentioned."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Those departments can be more properly discussed on the Estimates. With other hon. members, I regret that the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) is not with us to-night. I am pleased to hear that a good report regarding his health has been received from someone who saw him to-day. Mr. O'Loughlen is known throughout the State, and wherever he is known he is highly respected. I hope it will not be long before he is with us again.

Members: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is very gratifying to me that during the course of the debate there has been little, if any, criticism respecting my departments.

Mr. Clydesdale: That is coming.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Reference was made to the supply of meat to two institutions at Claremont and I shall deal with that matter later. If criticism comes later, and it is justified, I shall be very pleased to hear it. Nevertheless, I shall be very surprised if there is anything in the criticism that is to come. To-day is the first anniversary of my Ministerial birthday.

Mr. Clydesdale: You will be lucky if you have a second one.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is said that the first three years of Ministerial office are the most difficult. I anticipate that as time goes on, the work will become easier.

Mr. Corboy: It is the job of hanging on that makes it so hard.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The work entails long hours, but it is interesting, and I can say that the last 12 months have been among the happiest in my life.

Mr. Clydesdale: You don't know what is in front of you.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As to the administration of my departments, I hope to profitably use what knowledge I possess. I frankly acknowledge that I have a great deal to learn; I am under no misapprehen-

sion on that score. During the past year I have endeavoured to keep—

Mr. Corboy: A stiff upper lip.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is what I intended to say. I have also endeavoured to carry out in a sympathetic way the multifarious duties connected with my office. I may have failed on some occasions, but so far I have not noticed any bricks. I have received bouquets to date, and I hope that will continue. So far as my ability permits me, I shall continue giving of my best to the work.

Mr. Corboy: That is, for another few months at any rate.

Mr. Stubbs: Will there be plenty of rotten eggs then?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Generally speaking, the tone of the debate has been very encouraging. There has been unanimous commendation regarding the migration scheme, on the success of which Ministers are prepared to stand or fall.

Mr. Heron: I think you will fall.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The scheme is of the utmost value and on its success or failure, depends the future of Western Australia. We are advancing settlement and we are making headway. Many details will be improved, but the scheme has been so well founded that I have no fear of ultimate and full success. At the time the Governor's Speech was delivered, 64 groups had been established, representing 1,271 settlers and approximately 3,000 souls in all. Naturally there has been some criticism regarding the scheme, but it has not been of a serious nature. Ministers welcome criticism. The Government have been pleased to welcome visitors from the Eastern States and from the Old Country. There is every desire that the world shall know everything in connection with the group settlement scheme and the migration scheme generally. There is no desire that only the better side shall be shown to the outside world. Those who come here must work, and those who are prepared to do that have a greater opportunity of success than is afforded in any other part of the world. Because of that, and because we have faith in the State, members generally unite in applauding the scheme and showing their faith in it. I regret that neither the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) nor the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) is in his seat at the moment, because I desire to refer to some of the statements made by those hon. members respecting the supply of meat to certain institutions at Claremont. It was alleged by those hon. members that frozen meat was being supplied to the Old Men's Home and the Hospital for the Insane.

Mr. Teesdale: A terrible affair if it was!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would be.

Mr. Teesdale: On P. & O. and other big ocean liners, the passengers have to eat frozen meat for six weeks at a time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so, and it is essential that frozen meat shall

be used on those boats. I agree in all sincerity that the supply of frozen meat to the Government institutions concerned would be very wrong indeed. The tenders specifically set out that fresh meat has to be supplied and that the meat must be of first class quality.

Mr. Teesdale: That does not make frozen meat any worse.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not prepared to say that frozen meat is not as good as fresh meat. In my opinion it is not. It is certainly not equal to fresh meat unless treated carefully in the thawing out. A firm supplying frozen meat would do so with the sole object of making an undue profit. The department controlling the Old Men's Home and the Hospital for the Insane will not willingly permit frozen meat to be supplied. I ask the hon. members who made the charge to give me definite details; indeed, I challenge them to do so. I know they were actuated by the very best motives, but I am certain they were wrong in their statements. I am assured that no frozen meat has been supplied to either institution.

Mr. Lutey: Then I think you have been misinformed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If it can be proved that frozen meat has been so supplied, further steps will be taken. The inmates of those institutions are not going to be exploited with our knowledge. Drastic steps will be taken if it be found that frozen meat has been knowingly received at either of those homes.

Mr. Lutey: It was frozen all right; it had to be sawn.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Can the hon. member assure me of that?

Mr. Lutey: I have heard that it had to be sawn.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In answer to a question, it was said that on two or three occasions chilled meat had been supplied, but on going into the matter I learnt that the officer who put up that answer thought that meat that had been in cool storage was chilled meat. On making inquiries I find that meat in cold storage, the temperature of which is not reduced below 40 degrees, is not chilled meat; that chilled meat is meat reduced to a temperature of not lower than 33 degrees. I hope the hon. members who made the charge will help me by proving their allegations. On the other hand, if they have not the necessary evidence, I ask them to withdraw their statements, as being unfair to the officers concerned.

Mr. Teesdale: It is a pretty bad advertisement if we will not eat our own chilled meat.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is not the point; the point is that the contractor must supply according to the terms of his contract, which is for fresh meat of first class quality. We have heard something of smart answers put up to questions asked in the House. On only one occasion have I

heard such an answer. That was when the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) asked a question about a picture film illustrating the electrified railway service of Victoria.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you not think a Minister ought to say as little as possible in answer to questions?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: On many occasions the less said the better. I have no knowledge of any improper answers put up by officers. Sometimes members ask questions with the object of creating consternation in the department. In such instances those members may see in the replies an unkindness which does not really exist. When last I spoke on the Address-in-reply, I was privileged to touch upon a variety of subjects which perhaps would be improper now. I should like to say how greatly I appreciate the offer made by the Premier of assistance to the fruitgrowers. The Premier has definitely promised that when a practical scheme should be submitted for marketing, drying, dehydrating or in other way dealing with fruit, he would give liberal financial assistance to the growers. To me, as the member for Swan, that is extremely gratifying, and I hope that within the next few months there will be evolved a scheme of great and permanent advantage both to the State and to the growers. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation of the kindness extended to me as the "baby" Minister of the House during the past 12 months. I trust that for many years to come that kindly spirit will continue.

Mr. HERON (Leonora) [9.25]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	21

Majority against .. 9

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Munroe
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. Durack	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Heron	(Teller.)
Mr. Hughes	

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Carter	Sir James Mitchell
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Davies	Mr. Piesse
Mr. George	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Latham	Mr. Underwood
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. H. K. Maley	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

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

—> BILLS (10)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Anzac Day.
- 2, Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act Amendment.
- 3, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.
- 4, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 5, Redistribution of Seats.
- 6, Land Tax and Income Tax.
Introduced by the Premier.
- 7, Inspection of Scaffolding.
- 8, Pingarra-Dwarda Railway Extension Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Works.
- 9, Electric Light and Power Agreement Amendment.
- 10, Firearms.
Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1923.

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

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

Mental Patients.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. J. F. Dodd) asked the Minister for Education: 1, Have the Government decided to build a receiving home for mental patients on a Class "A" Reserve at Point Resolution? 2, Can this reserve be utilised for such a purpose without the consent of Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, No.