

diseases. I believe that will be the best method to adopt. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Munsie, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 30th August, 1922.

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

QUESTION—MINING ACCIDENT.

Hon. H. SEDDON (for Hon. E. H. Harris) asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House all reports relating to the winding engine on the Golden Horseshoe Estates, Limited, on which a fatal accident occurred in December last?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: A previous motion having been tabled in the Legislative Assembly concerning this subject, and requesting that these papers be there tabled, it will be necessary to await the result of such motion.

BILL—BROOME HILL RACECOURSE.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.35]: It is very interesting to be able to make a few remarks on this most important debate. I have listened to the speeches made with the greatest of pleasure, but I have not been too well satisfied with the opinions expressed regarding the great immigration scheme initiated by the Premier. Thirteen members have already addressed the House and it is quite possible that all other members will give their views.

Hon. J. Duffell: Is it necessary?

Hon. J. EWING: It may help to elucidate some of the points and encourage the Minister to answer the very important questions which have been raised and which call for explanation. This is one of the most important sessions in the history of the Parliament of Western Australia. I am satisfied that we are at the parting of the ways, one way leading to failure and the other to prosperity. Some members have evinced a slight fear regarding the policy now laid before the country. Mr. Willmott, representing the great South-West, and other members, see in this scheme the prospect of great prosperity for Western Australia. The Premier's work has been recognised throughout the length and breadth of the State and the people are looking forward to the future with the greatest pleasure and the greatest hope. It is not necessary at this stage to dilate on the financial position. It is sufficient to say that the financial position is serious. The Government are confronted with many difficulties and the way out is not easy to find, but the way pointed to us by the Premier seems to be the surest. The onus is upon the Ministers who are governing the country to find some way out. Some members—among them Mr. Lovekin—have expressed fears regarding the Premier's scheme, and it seems that the position has not been made quite clear. As I understand it the Premier has arranged for a loan of £6,000,000, one-third of the interest to be found by the State Government, one-third by the Federal Government and one-third by the Imperial Government. There are obligations attached to the lending of this money. The total obligation upon the Commonwealth Government and the Imperial Government amounts to £600,000. This is the total each will have to pay on the £6,000,000 during the five years, after which the whole responsibility will rest upon the State. It must be recognised by every sensible person that unless some assistance were forthcoming at the present moment, it would not be possible for Western Australia to embark upon such a policy. What would it mean to Western Australia? During the five years the State Government would have to find by way of interest no less a sum than £1,800,000. We would also have to pay for the transport of all the people who are to be brought here but who, under this scheme, will come free of cost to the State. The obligation would be altogether too great for the State to undertake at present. During the first five years the Federal Government and the Imperial Government will pay in interest £1,200,000. This amount will be saved to the State. All the immigrants are to be landed here free of charge to the State.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That was arranged long ago.

Hon. J. EWING: The benefit still remains; the Leader of the House will doubt-

less tell us that that arrangement has been confirmed. This being so the State will be saved, during the period of five years, an additional sum of at least £1,000,000. If the State had to bear the whole of the burden, it would be necessary to find during the next five years a total of £2,200,000. This is the saving which the State will effect and this, to a certain extent, is gratifying. In the circumstances I have concluded that it would have been absolute madness on the part of the Government to refuse the offer. Mr. Lovekin, in the course of a very able speech with which to some extent I agree, pointed out that the State's obligation was to settle 6,000 immigrants on the land and to introduce into the State 75,000 people. This was the contract for the loan of £6,000,000. Unless those people are brought to the State and the number mentioned are settled on the land, this money will not be forthcoming. This position should be made perfectly clear. Mr. Mills, in speaking last evening, referred to the wonderful possibilities offered by the Irwin flats for the settlement of the men who are to come from the Old Country. I agree with him, but I think the South-West is the better place to settle them. However, we are not here to advocate any one portion of the State as against any other portion of the State. We are here in the interests of the whole of the people and if good land exists in the Irwin district, as I know it does, I hope every effort will be made to settle it, but not to the detriment of the settling of 6,000 men in the South-West. The North-West also has to be developed. Members will recollect the great enthusiasm displayed by the Leader of the House when he was speaking on the North-West. I read about the Millstream and its possibilities. It was like a fairy tale. There we have an enormous quantity of water impounded, coming from the bowels of the earth, and available to irrigate by gravitation the beautiful plains in that locality. To develop all these possibilities will mean the expenditure of an enormous sum of money. At present, however, the Government are devoting their energies to this particular scheme of settling 6,000 men in the South-West. Mr. Baxter did not seem to understand that. He said "If that is the case, God help them." I hope, before I have finished my remarks, to convince the hon. member that it will be in the interests of the people of the State if we can settle 6,000 men in the South-West. The Premier has said that he is out to double and even treble the wheat production of the State. We are all aware of the wonderful things he accomplished in years gone by opening up the wheat belt. Now, according to his public utterance, he intends to bring about further development in this direction. All that goes to show the enormous amount of money that will be required. The mere fact that we will have 6,000 settlers in the South-West, entailing an expenditure of £6,000,000 does not mean

that other portions of the State will stand still. The position pointed out by Mr. Lovekin was a fair one. I believe that during the next five years we will have to find not less than £20,000,000. That money will be secured and it will be devoted by the Government to various portions of the State so that all may be developed. I think that that will be absolutely necessary, because otherwise, the South-West alone would be developed to the detriment of the rest of Western Australia. Therefore, I contend that that amount of money will have to be borrowed to develop the other parts of the State. The wise expenditure of that money, the settling of people on the land, the opening up of our resources and the general increase in prosperity will certainly bring to Western Australia not 75,000 people, but three times that number. I do not think it is possible to estimate what, with wise administration of this immigration scheme and wise expenditure of the money involved, with the concurrent development of our natural resources, apart from land settlement, will really mean to this State. I am quite satisfied, however, that we will be able to absorb quite three times the 75,000 people referred to by the Premier. I say without fear of contradiction that should such be the outcome of the Premier's policy, then everything will be well with Western Australia. I do not think there will be any need to trouble regarding the financial position of the State if the scheme prove to be successful and the money is wisely expended. Mr. Lovekin looked upon this question as an Imperial one. We all do that. With Mr. Lovekin, we know that the scheme will be of great benefit to the people in the Old Country. England has a surplus population of quite two million people on whom she has to spend a lot of money. The £600,000 she is contributing towards the scheme is a mere bagatelle from her own standpoint. Personally I think the Imperial Government should have found a lot more money for the advancement of this scheme. At the present time England is in rather an abnormal condition, and it may not be long before the whole of her present surplus population will be absorbed in manufacturing industries. As the world recovers its equilibrium, Great Britain's industries will progress. Mr. Moore said there was plenty of room for all these people in the Old Country. It would not appear to be so according to present indications, at a time when her industries are so upset. That will pass in due course and then these people who are available in such large numbers at the present time, may not be available five years hence. With the Commonwealth Government, however, the position is different. They have not treated Western Australia fairly, and I hope that in the near future something will be done to overcome this position as between the Commonwealth and the State. I will give my hearty support to anything that can be

brought about to create a better feeling between the Federal authorities and the State. I will give my support to anything that will make the Commonwealth realise how earnest the people of Western Australia are on this question and that they are not willing to exist any longer under present conditions. If such a result can be achieved, then something permanent will have been accomplished. If that were done, it would result beneficially for both the Commonwealth and for Western Australia. In this particular scheme, however, it works for the benefit of the Commonwealth much more so than for Western Australia. The Commonwealth Government are to find £600,000 in order to assist in bringing out 75,000 people to be settled in Western Australia. The Federal Government get £5 per head by way of indirect taxation. That means that during the period of five years, they will get £1,875,000 in hard cash. That is all to the advantage of the Commonwealth, which will reap the benefit of the increased population in this State. The Federal authorities will pay back to Western Australia during the period of five years something like £467,000 at the rate of 25s. per head. The Federal authorities pay £600,000, or one-third of the interest on the money borrowed for this immigration scheme, which means that in the end the Commonwealth will have a credit balance of £800,000.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is the position.

Hon. J. EWING: To all intents and purposes, the Commonwealth Government are not doing anything much in assisting us to bring out these people. In point of fact, viewed from the financial aspect, they are doing nothing. We have to face the difficulties in Western Australia. I support the point advanced by Mr. Lovekin, but, at the same time, we must believe—and I think the Leader of the House will tell us so, too—in Sir James Mitchell and what he has put before us. We know that the Premier is a man who loves his country and who is far-seeing. All these aspects affecting the Imperial Government, the Commonwealth Government, and so on, must have been in his mind when he arrived at the arrangements which he has placed before the country. That being so, naturally Sir James Mitchell would do his level best to secure the best results for us. The inference to be drawn from Mr. Lovekin's remarks would be that Sir James Mitchell has not done so. We would have to infer from his remarks that Sir James Mitchell has not done that but took what was offered to him.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is what the other people say.

Hon. J. EWING: If that is so, I am sorry to hear it. I have sufficient faith in Sir James Mitchell, however, and believe that he thoroughly understood the position. It is no use decrying the position. We must make the best of it. The expenditure of this money will result in the opening up of our lands and the development of our industries, and that will make for beneficial results. It

would be wrong to find fault with the Premier as some hon. members have done, but rather should we believe that he has done his level best and kept these points before him in his negotiations in the Old Country. If I did not believe that such was the case, I would not believe in Sir James Mitchell. He is a man who is able to represent Western Australia with a full knowledge of our possibilities and our position. He is a man of considerable financial training who knows how to deal with the figures. In such circumstances, I would not believe that the Premier would lose sight of these aspects when dealing with such a big problem. One most important matter referred to during the debate was the question of people who come to Western Australia leaving the State again. I have been at some trouble to investigate this question and I regret to say that from what I can ascertain, such would appear to be the case. It is admitted that this goes on.

Hon. T. Moore: It is absolutely certain that it has gone on, and it is still going on.

Hon. J. EWING: I know that during the last two and a half years the population increased by 9,000, and that is made up by the excess of births over deaths. If that is the position, it shows that something is wrong.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Dr. Saw says it does not matter, because they may not be the same people.

Hon. J. EWING: The departures exceeded the arrivals by over 1,211. While admitting that, one wonders how all this happens; one wonders why these people come here and then go away; one wonders who they are who come and who they are that go away. It is difficult to find this out; but surely those people who are brought here to settle on the land do not leave it.

Hon. H. Stewart: Some leave after a few weeks.

Hon. T. Moore: Some do not settle down at all.

Hon. J. EWING: I believe that this difficulty will be largely overcome under the present scheme.

Hon. T. Moore: What is the scheme?

Hon. J. EWING: I will tell the hon. member in a few minutes. He was not here when I commenced speaking or he would have heard something about the scheme. I will not repeat myself, but I will show later on something of what I believe to be the scheme.

Hon. J. Cornell: Everyone appears to have an idea about the scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: I believe the conditions under which these men are to be settled in Western Australia are such good conditions that it is hardly likely that those who come to Western Australia will not stay here. If these people settle on the land and start producing they will pave the way for hundreds and thousands of other people to come along and assist in the great task of developing Western Australia. I believe the present Premier in preparing his scheme has seen that the conditions are such that people will

be pleased to come to Western Australia. Some hon. members say that these people go to other parts of Australia. Perhaps that is so, but I am sure that afterwards they will return to Western Australia as being the best part of the Commonwealth in which they could settle. In what State are there better conditions? In what State can cheaper land be obtained? I know that some may be of a migratory nature who will gravitate to other parts of the Commonwealth, but I feel certain that they will come back to Western Australia, which I am convinced they will find the best part in which to stay. I regret Mr. Baxter is not in his seat at the present time. When he spoke last night he was in a very pessimistic mood. He did not seem to think there was any great good in the development of the South-West. He did not seem to think that in that wonderful part of Western Australia these things can be successfully done. So far as I can see the desire of some hon. members is to break down—not to build up. They are iconoclasts. There are people who do as I say, always aiming at breaking down and always criticising any proposals that are brought forward. Those men always find fault and are convinced that nothing can succeed. That is not the attitude to be adopted by members of this Chamber. They should be prepared to assist in anything that will develop this great territory of Western Australia. Mr. Baxter has had some experience and is a farmer. I should like to have heard him in happier vein. He said that 20,000 cattle would be required to satisfy these people within five years. If that is so, we will have to get them. He has exaggerated the position. If the necessity for the stock arrives, then that stock will have to be provided. What we have not got to-day, we will get to-morrow. Mr. Baxter was not in a happy mood when he delivered his speech. I imagined from him that the whole of the land settlement policy outlined by the Premier was merely to apply to the South-West. That is a point which should be cleared up. Sir James Mitchell has said that these six millions can be expended anywhere. He stated that he can spend the money doubling the wheat production or in other directions. I understood him to say that he could help the wheatgrower or the orchardist or the vine-grower. We should have this position cleared up, for it is not clear to my mind nor do I think it is clear to the people of Western Australia. Certainly it is not clear to Mr. Baxter. Sir James Mitchell in a Press statement, said that all this six million pounds, according to the Imperial arrangement, would be spent in the South-West. If that statement is read baldly, it will create a terrible feeling in the minds of some hon. members. They will say, "Here is an amount of six million pounds to be spent in the South-West. What will happen to the wheat areas and to the North-West?"

The Minister for Education: The money is to be spent in the South-Western division of the State.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: That extends from the Murchison River to the South.

Hon. J. EWING: I stand corrected. That is not the way the Premier put it. If he had referred to the South-Western division, it would have been different.

The Minister for Education: That is in accordance with the agreement.

Hon. J. EWING: I am glad to have that assurance.

Hon. T. Moore: Are you clear on the scheme now?

Hon. J. EWING: I think so, seeing that we have now got information from an indisputable authority. The mere fact that I mentioned that question here has cleared the atmosphere. It has enabled the Leader of the House to say that that money will be spent in the South-Western division of the State. I am pleased to hear it. I would like to have a scheme developed for all parts of the State. At any rate, the six millions will not be anything like sufficient to develop all that vast territory. We shall have to borrow further money, and that at a normal rate of interest. As Sir James Mitchell has said, the great advantage is that we are to have six millions of cheap money which for the first five years will cost us only 2 per cent. One cannot believe that the wheat belt will be left without further development. That wheat belt is capable of increasing the State's production of wheat three-fold within the next few years. Still, it is clear that it will be necessary to borrow more money. I am prepared to support Mr. Lovekin in that contention. The North-West is well represented in the House. I am very pleased indeed to be able to welcome back Mr. Miles, who has been doing good work in the Old Country. He will be able to tell us of the work he has done, and of the task accomplished by Sir James Mitchell. At the same time, no doubt, he will tell us of the possibilities of expansion in the great North-West. However, I do not intend to dwell upon those possibilities, because as I say, there are others here who know so much more about them. If I appear to dwell too much on the South-West, it is not because my sympathetic support for all portions of the State cannot be relied upon; it is merely that I want to show the glorious heritage we have in the South-West. Last year the Leader of the House took a Parliamentary party down there. Those who were fortunate enough to be of that party will remember what they saw on that occasion—beautiful rivers, magnificent lands, and crops not easily to be forgotten. I was delighted with expressions I have heard from hon. members during that trip.

Hon. J. Cornell: Speech is given man to conceal his thoughts.

Hon. J. EWING: From the Leader of the House downwards, everybody was gratified

at what he saw. What is the use of saying that it is better to develop the Irwin River flats than to develop the South-West? I do not know whether the hon. member has been in the South-West.

Hon. J. Mills: I have been far enough.

Hon. J. EWING: That is a most discouraging remark. The hon. member ought to pay a visit to the South-West. If he does, he will be gratified at what he sees. The South-West has a regular rainfall, rich lands, and numerous rivers from which to irrigate the flats. It is capable of producing root crops, maize, oats, barley, fruit, cattle, sheep and dairy products.

Hon. J. Mills: I admit all that.

Hon. J. EWING: And the South-West will grow wheat also, magnificent wheat, the only trouble being that it is liable to rust.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: They have grown 60 bushels to the acre in Busselton.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member knows the South-West. In addition to the commodities I have enumerated, it produces timber, coal, and tin. All this wealth lies there awaiting development. Nobody can say that the coal mining industry of the South-West is fully developed. It is a land flowing with milk and honey. The development of that great area will require the expenditure not of six millions, but of 60 millions. In that part of the Commonwealth, or even of the world, is there another such territory to be opened up as the South-West of Western Australia? Mr. Potter and Mr. Willmott have spoken of the land between Fremantle and Bunbury. We have at our door the Peel estate, now in course of development. Between here and Rockingham lie 20,000 or 30,000 acres of rich swamp land, which, as soon as drained, is capable of growing magnificent crops. What a heritage lies there awaiting development! We are told that the work on the Peel estate is going ahead most satisfactorily.

Hon. T. Moore: It is too early to say that.

Hon. J. EWING: I am only quoting what other members have said. The Premier himself declares his complete satisfaction with the work. Yesterday I was surprised at hearing Mr. Willmott say he had found no record in the Lands Department of all the good land between Rockingham and Bunbury. I am astounded at that.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: The work was abandoned when they reached Mandurah.

Hon. J. EWING: At a public meeting in Fremantle some time ago, a practical farmer who knew the country declared that there were 50,000 acres of swamp land between Fremantle and Bunbury. The hon. member says the Government have not that information. I say the sooner they get it the better, so that those lands may be opened up as quickly as possible. There is sufficient land in that district to settle practically all the immigrants coming from the Old Country. Mr. Willmott spoke of the inefficient manner in which those swamp lands have been dealt with. I know the officer who attends to drain-

age work in the South-West, and I understand it has all been done in piecemeal fashion, draining one swamp into another. I have been connected with bigger swamps than those, swamps in New South Wales which have been systematically and successfully drained. Some of those swamps successfully drained lay well below the level of the sea. I well remember one swamp which, because of its exceedingly low level, was regarded as incapable of being thoroughly drained. Yet it was taken in hand and the work carried to a successful issue. Surely some similar scheme could be devised in this State! Not all the engineers are in New South Wales. Some of our borrowed money should be expended in that direction. I urge that when the work is done, it shall be done in a permanent manner.

Hon. J. Duffell: What about Coolup?

Hon. J. EWING: I shall be going down there next week, and if the hon. member will accompany me I shall be delighted to have him.

Hon. J. Duffell: I have been there.

Hon. J. EWING: The people there cannot farm successfully, simply because one property is draining on to another. I do not blame the Government for it, nor do I blame the departmental officers. The trouble has been the want of money for the organising of a thorough scheme.

Hon. T. Moore: Is it only the swampy portion of the land down there which is of any use?

Hon. J. EWING: If the hon. member will continue to listen, he shall have my views on that point. The swampy portion is a very valuable asset to the State. Between Bridgetown and Pinjarra lies the bulk of the population of the South-West. It is not necessary to dwell upon that, because hon. members know how successfully farming is going on in that district. From year to year they are increasing their supplies of butter, and so adding to the wealth of Western Australia. Mr. Macfarlane has done something for the support of that industry, and I know he is willing to do even more. Between Bridgetown and Bunbury there is a large area of unproductive land. I am not going to say where it is, but I know of it, and I know also that it is in close proximity to the railway. All that land should be made available. Here is where I do not quite follow the Government: it is their desire to bring in a Closer Settlement Bill which shall only apply to land held in fee simple. In my view the whole of the land in that area should be brought under the Bill. Still, I say there is no necessity whatever for the Bill. If the Government are earnest in their desire to open up unimproved lands, all they have to do is to find out from the owners what price they require for them. Mr. Willmott said that only one estate in this district—the Blythwood—had not been offered to the Government. He might have given us more information than he did after perusing the files. I know of many estates which have

been offered to the Government and recommended by experts. The Premier seems to be afraid of repurchased estates. They are, of course, higher capitalised, and there is often greater difficulty in placing returned soldiers upon them than might be anticipated in regard to ordinary settlers. If inquiries were made it would be found that the owners of these lands would only be wanting a reasonable price. I could procure as much satisfactory land, that is not being used, as would be required for the settlement of 6,000 people.

Hon. J. Duffell: C.P. land.

Hon. J. EWING: No, land held in fee simple.

Hon. R. D. Ardagh: Adjacent to railways?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: It would make it easier if you included C.P. lands.

Hon. J. EWING: I do include them. I do not think the obligation we owe to holders of C.P. land is anything like that we owe to our settlement scheme. If a man was offered £5 an acre for his land and he agreed to accept it, the whole thing would be done.

Hon. J. Duffell: You would pay £5 for land for which a man only paid £1 an acre?

Hon. J. EWING: If 20 years ago a man paid 5s. an acre for his land and developed it he is entitled to the value of that land to-day.

Hon. J. Duffell: That is a different proposition.

Hon. J. EWING: If it is worth £5 he is entitled to that sum. I would make sure before I gave him the £5 an acre that I could satisfactorily settle immigrants upon it. All this land could, I think, be secured within a limited time. There may be difficulties of which I have no knowledge, but were it secured, such prosperity would follow in the South-West as could hardly be imagined. Our railways are not paying to-day and constitute a burden upon the State.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. EWING: To-day we are paying enormous freights and fares. Upon the Perth-Fremantle road we can see lorry after lorry carrying merchandise from the port to the city, which merchandise used to be sent by rail. People are getting used to this means of transport, and find that it is cheaper than the railways. The higher the freights become the more does this go on. The policy of the Railway Department is wrong. It should be one for the development of this country, as well as one to enable business to be carried on in Perth and elsewhere. I have for years advocated the zone system in connection with our railways. It is wrong that a person, living 100 miles from Perth and developing his particular portion of the State, should have to pay a heavier freight than the man who lives only 50 miles away. It is impossible for the former to compete with the latter under those con-

ditions. During the recess I travelled through the South-West, and from what I have seen of the group settlement scheme I am satisfied with it. I was a settler in New South Wales, away from mankind for many years, and I felt the isolation. I do not think it does a man much good. It is not good for man to be alone. People should be congregated together, so that they may enjoy the comforts of life, and give pleasure one to the other. I know the trials men have in developing this country. If the policy of the Premier is carried out, I believe we shall have happy communities, and a most prosperous people. I sincerely trust the experience of the last year or 18 months, during which period we have spent 4¼ millions in the settlement of returned soldiers, will constitute a lesson to the Government. It cannot be denied that the settlement of soldiers upon the land has been very expensive and difficult. The conditions of clearing and settlement, as well as the high prices for stock, are now re-acting upon the situation. I trust the experience, especially in regard to clearing, will be of use to the Government. I believe that is the case to-day, for the clearing in the South-West is being done under different conditions and more cheaply than was the case a year or two ago. The new settlers, therefore, will not be suffering from the same disability as our soldiers have suffered from, up to the present. I have endeavoured to tell Mr. Moore what I thought of the country from Fremantle to Bridgetown. I have not seen the whole of the State south of Bridgetown, but I know it is an enormous and wonderful territory. Mr. Burvill knows it well, and has worked all through it. He has told us in no uncertain voice exactly what he thinks of it. As a practical man I am glad to be able to endorse what he said. Anyone travelling from Manjimup to Pemberton and on to Nornalup would be astonished at the wonderful territory awaiting development at the hands of man. The same thing applies as far as Mt. Barker. There is plenty of timber and good agricultural land. It is the best dairying country in the State. The climate also is delightful. There are thousands of acres of good land without its being necessary to touch the timber country. The timber there can be conserved and protected, as it ought to be. The whole thing is a question of policy. Some Governments are wise. If those Governments have lots of money and are well off, and the revenue is sound, they will not hesitate to go ahead. It is when times are critical, and Governments do not want to spend even £1,000 without due consideration that they become too careful. Other parts of the world possessing territories of such value immediately open them up by railways in advance of settlement. Mr. Burvill pointed out that in such cases the Government obtained revenue at once from the timber. Our industry, though not flourishing at present, will soon be in a sound position. The timber I speak of is a marketable commodity and is required all over the world. If that be so, the little differences of opinion

that exist now will soon pass away. The time will come when all this timber will be needed. If this territory is opened up by railways, there will follow in their train the timber hewer, the sleeper hewer and the small mill-owner. Following the opening up of the timber resources, the settlers will come and develop the land. Mr. Burvill knows from experience of the Gippsland country what happened there, and he has offered his advice to the Government. If one visits any part of Australia one cannot find a territory such as this awaiting development. It is no wonder Sir James Mitchell looks with longing eyes towards it. Far-seeing man that he is, he knows that once he gets the money to develop that territory, Western Australia is saved. No doubt other parts of the State will also be developed, but I am told this particular portion is equal to the Gippsland country.

Hon. J. Cornell: If he had seen Esperance through those glasses, things might have been different to-day.

Hon. J. EWING: The Government should take time by the forelock and open up this territory. I am sure the Premier, if left in office, will do so. Hand in hand with the development of the South-West, it will be necessary to open up all our ports. The Norralup port will have to be opened up as well as Flinders Bay, Busselton and Bunbury. Unless the Government open up the port at Bunbury, and give the people the decent harbour accommodation they are entitled to, it will be very hard upon the settlers who go to the South-West.

Hon. T. Moore: They have been spending money on the harbour for years and it is becoming worse.

Hon. J. EWING: I admit that. They will have to construct cool storage accommodation, and enable fruit to be exported direct from Bunbury to overseas markets. What is the use of settling people in that part of the State unless Bunbury is made the port of the South-West. With cool storage accommodation all the apples grown in that district could be exported direct from that port. Mr. Willmott spoke about the "Largs Bay" shipment. What he said was correct. There are many other instances of the kind to show the disabilities under which the fruitgrower has to suffer in getting his fruit to market.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Your colleague said the cool storage had to be erected at Fremantle.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member must have misunderstood my colleague. He said the existing conditions at Fremantle were not to the credit of the Government. Indeed, they were very bad. He also advocated cool storage at Bunbury. It is necessary that all the fruit grown in the South-West that is going to the Old Country should be shipped from Bunbury.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: What about the other ports?

Hon. J. EWING: I am not saying anything against them, for I advocate that every port should have its geographical claim re-

cognised. Wherever a port is situated, the people around it should get the use of it.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: You will never get enough ships to call at three or four ports.

Hon. J. EWING: Much depends on where the produce is for. I want to make the conditions at Bunbury such that any boat trading with the Old Country will call there.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: You will not get enough freight to induce the boats to call there.

Hon. J. EWING: Of course we will.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member should address the Chair.

Hon. J. EWING: Last year we endeavoured to get fruit sent direct from Bunbury to the Old Country, but there was opposition in the Eastern States which seemed to prevent it. You, Sir, will know from your commercial experience that these things do exist. There is something going on in the Eastern States which prevents us from shipping fruit from Bunbury. We must endeavour to overcome that opposition. We intend to endeavour to get the fruit sent from Bunbury as it is produced in the South-West. If that is done, surely it will be a good thing for those developing the South-West, and also for the success of the immigration scheme. I just wish to touch on the fact that in the South-West we have a coalfield that is still starving for development; and I was intensely interested in Mr. Seddon's speech on this subject, showing what had to be done for the gold-mining, the coal-mining, and all other industries by the application of science. So far as I see, science is not applied to the industries of Western Australia. The expert talent available in our Mines Department is not utilised to the greatest extent. We should have officers here to advise those engaged in mining coal or gold or any other metal, because in connection with those industries there are many scientific processes which have not been put into use here up to date. Let the Government make an effort in that direction. And here I desire particularly to mention the Greenbushes tin fields. It is rather sad to mention those fields just now, because years ago they represented one of the most prosperous districts in Western Australia. To-day the Greenbushes tin mining industry has gone right down. Not that the tin is not there, or that the conditions for working are not right as regards alluvial tin; but I presume the condition of the market is unfavourable. In 1912 tin was sold from Greenbushes to the value of £79,738, whereas last year the value sold was only about £5,000. Something is wrong.

The Minister for Education: The price has gone down.

Hon. H. Stewart: The price of tin is now one-third of what it was before the war.

Hon. J. EWING: We hope the price will recover. What has been asked for during many years, and what I ask for now, is that the Government should see whether lode formations cannot be found in Greenbushes by boring, so that those engaged in tin mining there will not have to rely entirely upon the alluvial. I wish to congratulate Mr. Cornell

upon the practical and highly valuable work he has done in regard to miner's phthisis. Mr. Dodd mentioned the matter yesterday, and as one who has read the record of Mr. Cornell's work I wish to join in the views expressed by Mr. Dodd regarding the value of that work to the Mines Department. I consider that the thanks of the community are due to Mr. Cornell for his practical efforts in this connection. I feel sure that all members of this House and all the people of this State will render their utmost assistance to the Premier in the great work he has in hand. Criticism is no doubt required in order to point out where possible errors may be, but if we do not criticise more than necessary, and rather extend to the Government and the Premier the right hand of help, assisting Ministers in every possible way—

Hon. T. Moore: Have we not done that for years?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, and the Premier has made use of our help.

Hon. T. Moore: We have seen no results.

Hon. J. EWING: There have been results in the wheat belt.

Hon. T. Moore: The wheat yield is no greater now than it was in 1913.

Hon. J. EWING: Undoubtedly the Premier has done great work so far as wheat production is concerned. I look forward to his doing equally good work in the development of the South-West, and I believe that with our support he will do that work to the best advantage of the State.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.37]: The Address-in-reply debate seems to me to resolve itself into four heads—immigration and agricultural development, with which is associated soldier settlement; finance; mining; and, lastly, legislation. I propose to make some remarks first with regard to the last of these subjects. As to legislation the position of this House strikes me as peculiar. On the last night of last session, for instance, a strange set of circumstances arose. Reading the report of the proceedings in both Houses on the following day, I observed that in connection with the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill an amendment carried in this House and transmitted to another place was not agreed to there, and that when that amendment, with others, came back to this Chamber, that particular amendment was not put before the House, though the other amendments were dealt with. I communicated with the Leader of the House on the next day, and he eventually, after the matter had been investigated, informed me that some mistake had occurred in the passage of messages between the two Houses. The position, he informed me, was that the Government intended to ask for the Royal assent to the Bill in question and to instruct the Commissioner of Taxation not to put into operation the clause which was the subject of the amendment to which I have particularly referred. When I received this reply from the Leader of the House, it

seemed to me my duty, as a member of the Council, to lodge a protest in the proper quarter; and accordingly I sent the following telegram to His Excellency the Governor:—

Respectfully direct attention to the fact that Clause 3 of Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, owing to error in transmitting Assembly message, has not been agreed to by Legislative Council, and protest against assent being given to that clause.

I did not know just where I stood when I sent that wire. However, it seemed to me that the position of this House was somewhat peculiar. I received the following reply from the private secretary to His Excellency:—

With reference to your telegram of the 2nd February, addressed to His Excellency the Governor, in connection with Clause 3 of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, I am desired by His Excellency to inform you that he referred your telegram to his Ministers, who reply as follows:—"The Council's amendments to the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill were returned by the Assembly with a message that it agreed to the amendment No. 1a, but disagreed with the amendment No. 1. The amendment No. 1a was to delete the word 'further' in Clause 5. The amendment No. 1 was to strike out Clause 3. The Council resolved not to insist on amendment No. 1, and the Bill was passed. The effect of Clause 3 is to delete the proviso to Subsection 2 of Section 10 of the principal Act, whereby the improvements made on one parcel of land shall extend to any other one parcel belonging to the same owner if such parcels are not a greater distance apart than 10 miles. In dealing with the message from the Assembly, the Council resolved not to insist on amendment No. 1, believing that it was considering No. 1a, striking out the word 'further' in Clause 5; and it was by inadvertence that the Council resolved not to press the amendment No. 1. In these circumstances, until there is an opportunity to bring the matter again before Parliament, Section 10 of the Act of 1907 will be administered by the Taxation Commissioner, with the approval of the Treasurer, as if the proviso to Subsection 2 had not been repealed."

The letter I received from the Leader of the House was to the same effect, and in my opinion it was quite satisfactory in that it met the position in the fairest manner that was possible. Of course I do not know what right the Government have to tell the Taxation Commissioner that he shall not carry into effect a certain section of an Act, nor do I know whether the Taxation Commissioner would be prepared to abide by such an instruction. But it is a position which I think the House should know of:

and it is the result of one of those incidents which crop up in the declining days of the session, owing to the manner in which legislation is heaped upon this House, a manner which precludes hon. members of this Chamber from dealing with legislation as its importance merits.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. STEWART: I presume that some time during this session we shall have an explanation from the Leader of the House regarding the peculiar position created, and possibly there will be some amendment of the Act in question. As regards the measures foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech, if the number of Bills to be brought before Parliament is to be limited as indicated in that Speech, it will probably be a very good thing. In my opinion, we have had too much legislation for some years past. I feel that the amount of legislation which has been passed must tend to increase the cost of administration and to build up the Public Service beyond that extent which is really necessary for carrying on the functions of government. In speaking on the Address-in-reply it has been my practice to deal more particularly with the primary industries, chiefly agriculture, but also with mining, of which I have an intimate knowledge. I have tried to deal with the primary industries from the aspect of one who believes in the absolute necessity for the application of science to industries. In that connection I have great pleasure in welcoming a new colleague to voice the claims of science: I refer to Mr. Seddon. The matter with which I wish to deal as regards mining is one I have mentioned in this House before. The mining resources of Western Australia are extremely great, and it is simply a matter of time when a very large revenue will be obtained and there will be a big out-turn from that industry. At the present time we might say that mining is at its lowest ebb, and we should do everything to bring into operation new methods. In past years I voiced the belief that there was a necessity for some regulation in connection with the transactions between vendors and company promoters, in order to safeguard the interests of the investing public. I contended that for the public protection, prospectuses should not be issued without the report of a qualified technical man. It is absolutely necessary in the interests of the soundness of the industry in Western Australia that this should be so. The principle is recognised and adopted elsewhere. Do we not see auditors' reports in connection with the statements of companies? Last year, or the year before, I quoted from one of the leading financial journals of the United States to show the wonderful profits that had accrued from mining investments in that country, profits which exceeded those from such industrial enterprises as railways, insurance and other joint stock companies. What I wish particularly to refer to is the position of

affairs that exists with regard to oil prospecting areas. Hon. members will realise that in 1920 a Bill dealing with prospecting for oil came before this House, if not actually on the last night of the session, certainly in the closing days of the session, and it was not finalised until the last night. The measure did not receive that consideration to which it was entitled. At the present time a position of affairs has arisen which is contrary to what were the intentions of Parliament when that Bill was brought forward, and it is preventing the freest activity in the prospecting for oil. It is interesting to refer to the remarks of Mr. Scaddan in 1919, before that measure actually came before Parliament. I have a cutting from the "West Australian" of the 19th October, 1919, in which it was foreshadowed that licenses issued under the Mining Act to enable the holders to prospect for oil would lapse, and the Minister then declared that he was going into the question of the issue of new licenses. Further on in this news item the Minister stated he wanted to see that large areas were not held by a few people when there were so many others who desired to prospect for oil. He was referring then to proposals which had been made for taking up large areas to prospect for oil, and that was before the amending Act was passed. Incidentally the Minister also declared at that time that he had received a lengthy communication from the Imperial Government dealing with the importance to the Empire of oil discoveries. Subsequently to that, in 1920, another cutting which I have from the "West Australian" instances the time, just before the Bill was passed, when the Anglo-Persian Oil Company were endeavouring to get a concession over the whole State of Western Australia to thoroughly prospect and explore our territory for oil. That company were prepared at that time to form another company with a capital of £100,000 of which £50,000 was to be available for geological surveys and for boring. Fortunately the monopoly was not granted. Yet when the Mining Act Amendment Bill came before another place, Mr. Scaddan placed on the Table a file containing the correspondence with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company as an argument in favour of the Bill, and when the Bill came before this House, reading from the file, I quoted from the report of the State Mining Engineer, which set out that in his opinion, to grant a large area like that would certainly not be in the interests of the rapid and thorough exploration of this State's possible oil resources, and pointing out that as much freedom as possible to prospect was likely to lead to a more thorough exploration of the country in a shorter period of time. Subsequently the Bill passed through Parliament. When the Bill was before another place Mr. Scaddan showed an inclination to favour large areas. Late last year, after the Bill had been passed, and when indications of seepages and of asphaltum were discovered in the Kimberley districts, in a very short while the whole of the State was apportioned into about 30 prospecting areas all of a very large size, so

much so that I doubt if in any civilised country there are to be found areas of a comparable size allotted for such a purpose. When Parliament passed the measure, there was provision for prospecting areas for oil and for work to be done, and conditions to be observed, but a lot was left to the discretion of the Minister as to the granting of a reward for the discovery of oil. There was also in view the bonus of £50,000 offered by the Commonwealth Government. The Bill provided that the discoverers would receive a reward area of 640 acres and two other leases of 48 acres each. Now comes the part which I think is detrimental to mining interests in Western Australia from the point of view of the investor. There are many people who will put money into a mining enterprise, but what they desire is that they shall get a fair run. The position in this respect is more deplorable in Western Australia than it is in any of the other countries in which I have resided, and I have been in Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales, and the various States of South Africa. During my period of residence in this State, since 1909, I have almost invariably found that the vendors' greed for cash is great. With very little work done we find that companies are floated and that something like 50 per cent. of the paid capital goes to the vendors who perhaps have spent only a fraction in securing the right they possess to dispose of the property.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: They apparently agree with Omar—"Take the cash and let the credit go."

Hon. H. STEWART: That is evidently the principle they have followed. Holding the opinions I do I am justified in expressing them in this House. Let me quote as an instance the Freney Kimberley Oil Company. The prospectus of that company was issued for private circulation only. The company consists of 150,000 shares of £1 each. I am giving this information to show what transpired later on when the company received further concessions which, in my opinion are not in accordance with the spirit of the Act. Of the total number of shares 50,000 were to be issued for public subscription, payable 2s. 6d. on application and 2s. 6d. on allotment, the balance to be paid in six equal instalments. The vendor according to the prospectus was to receive 50,000 fully paid up shares—one-third of the total. By the time the allotment was made there was only £13,000 in cash actually available. The vendors were to receive £10,000 in cash out of the £50,000. What they had to offer was a reward lease on the conditions under which exclusive licenses were issued with the sole right to bore for five years from March 18th, 1921. The lease was to consist of 640 acres, and two ordinary mineral oil leases of 48 acres each were to be granted on the discovery of any payable oil basin. The vendors came into contact with the man who discovered the indications and

who spent time and money in prospecting. The next step was to report to the Government. The services of the assistant State Mining Engineer, Mr. Blatchford, were secured, as well as those of the Government Mineralogist, Dr. Simpson. Granted all this I say that the vendors got a very good cut out of it. I do not blame them, because such a position of affairs can take place at any time. It is however, a position that I think is not in the interests of the encouragement of investment on the part of the people for the purpose of developing our resources. There is an instance of another flotation about the same time, the Okes-Durack Kimberley Oil Company, No Liability. A Government office reported favourably to the effect that eventually oil might be found. A company was floated with a capital of £250,000 in £1 shares, 85,000 shares of £1 each by public subscription, payable 5s. on application, 5s. on allotment, and the balance as called for.

Hon. J. Duffell: Do you call that a wilful cut?

Hon. H. STEWART: I certainly would not. In addition, 85,000 shares fully paid up were to be allotted to the vendors together with £17,500 cash, and 80,000 shares were to be held in reserve. I believe I am right in saying that the vendors did not get the £17,500 cash. The public were so slow in taking up the shares that the vendors voluntarily—I do not know whether permanently or not—surrendered their right to a considerable portion of the cash. No doubt members here, if they had the opportunity, would take advantage of it—they would be quite entitled to do so—but I must emphasise that these conditions are not favourable to the development of the mining industry. If the Government could evolve some better system they should do it, but these people are obtaining further concessions. What they had to sell originally has been rendered more valuable since.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Good old private enterprise, is it not?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, and it certainly has progressed. If the Government endeavoured to carry on this sort of thing, it would be infinitely worse. In the circumstances, these people are getting money from only a section of the public. Those who do not care about the scheme can stand out. If the Government undertook such a scheme, we would all jolly well have to pay in the shape of taxation, whether we were agreeable or not. In the event of oil being discovered, these people will receive a reward lease of 640 acres together with two ordinary mineral oil leases of 48 acres each. In addition to the stipulation that the vendor be paid £17,500 cash, the following consideration is provided:—

The original discoverers are to receive a fair share of any bonus for the discovery of oil made by the Federal Government, and

in the event of the £50,000 bonus, as stated in the "Gazette" proclamations, being secured by the company, £10,000 out of this is to be paid to the vendors, the remainder being taken by the company.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Who is to pay the bonus?

Hon. H. STEWART: That will eventually be paid by the people of the Commonwealth. Already the Commonwealth have undertaken some prospecting in Papua, but if any Government endeavoured to embark on oil prospecting in Australia, there would immediately be an outcry for them to desist. The "West Australian," in a leading article on oil concessions dated the 13th April, 1922, stated—

As at 10th February last, 36 concessionaires held exclusive prospecting rights over the whole State, and the individual areas ranged from 100 square miles up to nearly 100,000 square miles. For a paltry payment of £5 per annum, fortunate concessionaires were created, for a term of five years, lords of principalities with exclusive rights to exploit them for one of the most valuable commodities known to civilisation. The fact of concessions being given over such large areas for such small amounts has an important bearing on the financial position of the State. In the Northern Territory the Commonwealth Government have not been nearly so liberal. They stipulated that the area held by any one concessionaire should be 1,000 square miles, and the annual fee payable is twice the amount fixed in Western Australia. The article continues—

A further safeguard against monopolies is contained in the provision that no company shall be permitted to hold more than one license unless specially authorised by the Minister. That the granting of such authorisation is not lightly regarded is attested by the reception of a recent deputation to the Minister for Home and Territories which sought approval for the consolidation of four licenses totalling in all 4,000 square miles. . . . The Minister would do no more than promise to give the request "serious consideration" at the same time emphasising his belief that 1,000 square miles was sufficient for any one company to operate upon. But so highly are the advantages of creating monopolies apparently esteemed in Western Australia, that not only was a single company permitted to become the holder of no fewer than nine prospecting areas aggregating 33,478 square miles, but it was allowed subsequently to acquire an additional area containing 49,128 square miles. Of the 36 licenses current on the 10th February, only four comprised less than 1,000 square miles, while a round dozen each contained upwards of 30,000 square miles. . . . On the 25th March it was announced that the West Australian Oil Exploration Coy., Ltd., which already held nine separate leases with a total area

of over 33,000 square miles in the South-West and south of the State, had acquired a further area of 49,000 acres in the North and had parted with it to the Lass o' Gowrie East Gold Mining Company for £2,000 cash and 25,000 fully paid £1 shares in that company. For this lease, granted for a period of five years, the State would receive a fee of only £5 per annum, or a total of £25 during the currency of the lease. It would be instructive to learn what development work had been done by the holders of the lease which enabled them to demand successfully a consideration of £2,000 cash, together with shares of a face value of £25,000. It should be the business of the Mines Department to encourage legitimate prospecting, but its achievements appear to have been mainly in the direction of encouraging the dealing in options.

There was a provision which seemed drastic when the measure was before the House—the provision giving the Minister power to take a portion of one area and add it to an adjoining lease and thus alter the boundaries subsequent to work being done. I do not necessarily subscribe to the views stated in the article I have quoted; neither can I vouch for the authenticity of the information. However, it reveals the position that a single company, with areas aggregating 33,000 square miles, was allowed subsequently to acquire an additional area of 49,000 square miles. It it will not weary members, I should like to quote further from the article.

The PRESIDENT: If it will enable the hon. member to lead to the object he has in view, he may do so.

Hon. H. STEWART: It will. Reference is made in the Speech to the mining industry. The position of the industry is deplored. I am trying to indicate that the administration in connection with oil is not such as is likely to lead to a thorough prospecting of possible oil areas in accordance with the spirit of the Act passed by Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member will find that most of his listeners have had some experience in the class of business he is referring to.

Hon. H. STEWART: The article proceeds—

At a meeting of the Freney Kimberley Oil Company a few weeks ago the chairman of directors announced that the Government had "subject to certain conditions" granted the company an extension of tenure to a total period of 10 years instead of five years, as originally provided. Pressed by a shareholder to disclose the conditions of the extension, the chairman replied, "There are very serious objections to stating that and the directors absolutely decline to say what they are. In no circumstances will we assist the people who are in opposition to us. In the mining news of the "West Australian" dated the 24th June, appeared the following:—

The Minister for Mines has approved of the Freney Kimberley Oil Company's application for a 10 years' lease instead of a

five years' lease of its oil prospecting areas, Nos. 2H and 3H, in the Kimberley division. The area has been cut into four, and the company undertakes to work them separately in consideration of the Minister permitting it to grant buying options over four small areas under guarantee for proper working.

That is one of the important points in connection with the administration of the Act. There was a definite regard for the successful seeker after oil. That area carries certain rights and we do not know what rights the sub-lessees have. There are four parties working on one prospecting area and they apparently have claims which Parliament never intended they should have.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. STEWART: Proceeding from where I left off at the tea adjournment, I wish to refer further to the question of oil prospecting areas, the administration by the Mines Department and the development of our mining resources generally. This is a question in which the public take a deep interest and that is evidenced by the large amount of correspondence which is published in the daily Press, as well as the comment in technical and semi-technical journals. Quite a number of people who are interested in these subjects have been writing to the papers. Here is a letter written from Williams in the South-East Province by someone signing himself "Producer," which appeared in the daily Press of this State. It deals with the position of the Freney Oil Company. The writer says—

The Freney Company were granted the right to prospect over a certain area for oil. On the discovery of oil, their reward was to be the granting of a reward claim of six hundred and forty acres and certain minor leases. The State was to have the balance. Now it appears that instead of this, the Freney Company has arrogated to itself a right enjoyed by no other class of permit-holder, to wit, the right to allot areas within its permit, and to give the new allottees the same reward privileges as they themselves possess

Those powers seem to have been granted by the Minister, so that they were not arrogated to themselves by the company. I do not know if the writer has any definite information on the point.

. . . . The State comes amongst the also starters as far as ground rights are concerned. In every other instance when a holder abandons a permit or portion thereof, the abandoned portion is thrown open for public competition through the "Government Gazette." If these abandoned permits are as valuable as the statements show, then it is for the State Treasury, which has so far paid almost all the money for geological reports and services the Freney Company has based flotation upon, to receive due consideration. No one

should have the right of usurping Crown privileges and naming the owners of abandoned areas carrying any rights. If this to be done, then we shall have the same game played with conditional purchase of leasehold lands, fishing rights and so forth. As a producer and pioneer settler, I find am being called upon to pay most excessive railway freights and heavy taxes of every kind, while others are allowed a free hand in the exploitation of the State's attractions.

Coming right up to date, I have here an extract from the Sydney "Bulletin," dated the 3rd August, last. This question was dealt with in the "Wild-cat" column of the paper. That column is well known for its terse and often sound criticism of various mining questions. A writer in that journal and the "Bulletin" people are rather particular as to the views they publish in the column—had the following to say:—

"Talpa" in the "Wild-cat" made some very pertinent remarks on the subject of the oil prospecting licenses issued by the Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments. Why do we not benefit by the experiences of the greatest oil-producing country in the world—the U.S.A.? The prospecting permits are granted for ten years, over areas of 2,560 acres on (1) proof of citizenship or naturalisation, and (2) an affidavit by applicant that he does not hold or have any interest in another permit. The terms provide stringent conditions, including the installation of a substantial and adequate drilling outfit, a commencement of actual drilling operations within six months (one year in Alaska). The reward for the discovery of oil or gas is one-fourth of the land included in the permit, and the penalty is forfeiture of the permit, failing to comply with the conditions of the permit, or not exercising due diligence in the work of development. As soon as prospecting has proved successful the permit holder has to take up a lease of an area not exceeding 640 acres, or, instead, exercise the royalty right. Lessees are required to install sufficient equipment and commence drilling within three months of signing, and they cannot assign the lease, or any interest therein, nor sublet any portion without consent. The application of similar conditions in the Commonwealth, where no payable oil has so far been discovered, would no doubt check prospecting. Nevertheless the areas granted are far too large; it takes years to locate likely sites on them, and that policy also has the effect of restricting genuine prospecting by parties other than the successful licensees.

I do not wish to be unduly lengthy in dealing with this point. It was necessary, however, to quote some instances to establish what seems to be the case that large concessions have been granted for very little return in revenue to the Government of Western Australia. I also quoted them to establish that privilege seems to have been accorded to these parties.

which are not in pursuance of the spirit of the Act, and that, in general, the policy that has been followed has not been such as will lead to the most active exploratory methods and developmental results. Before leaving the mining industry, I wish to refer to that branch of it that relates to base metals. That branch of the industry is labouring under very serious disabilities owing to the low prices procured for base metals. Despite that fact, there is a move on foot to perpetuate and even make stronger the restrictions imposed under war conditions by the Commonwealth Government. Representatives of the mining industry, including some members of the metal exchange in New South Wales, waited upon the Premier of that State and advocated the abolition of the metal exchange and the restrictions I have referred to. Some of the biggest mining men in New South Wales, except the Broken Hill Corporations and the smelting representatives, are of one opinion on this question, and they share that opinion with the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland. It is desired by those connected with the base metal industry in Western Australia that the Government here should realise what the position is, and that they should co-operate with the Governments in the other States in approaching the Prime Minister to have the base metal industry relieved from all restrictions. They desire to have a return to the freedom of trade that was in vogue prior to the war. In 1920, some 12 months after the termination of the war, a conference was held in this State at which representatives of the base metal industry attended. The following resolution was agreed to on that occasion:—

That this conference is strongly opposed to any restrictions being placed on the export of base metals, either as concentrates or smelted metal, and urges our Government to use every means in their power to ensure the free open markets of the world as an incentive to the furtherance of the industry.

At the present time people interested in the base metal industry, if they are not members of the metal exchange, can only dispose of their output to certain established smelting works in Australia. They are only permitted to do otherwise after signing a number of forms and getting special permission. Unless the quantity is of such a restricted value that it would be a very small matter indeed, these people have to declare their position to their business rivals. Mr. Blakenore, consulting mining engineer and metallurgist of Sydney, in replying to a letter from the secretary of the Metal Exchange, dealt with the position at some length. I will quote a couple of items which appeared in his letter dated the 26th June, 1922, and which appeared in a Sydney daily paper. He said:—"The Metal Exchange is not a voluntary association. The Metal Exchange has never performed the functions of an exchange." The fifth paragraph in the letter referred to the restriction of trade, to the filling in of multitudinous forms and

statutory declarations, and a charge of 2s. per cent. on the value of the product. I desire to bring this matter before the Leader of the House, so that it may be gone into and the whole question followed up step by step. Regarding the proposal advanced by Mr. Seddon in connection with research work, the position in the Transvaal is interesting. It is the rule in a country where there is a recognition of the value of scientific knowledge and research work, that this class of investigation is carried out by private enterprise, unless it bears on the welfare of the people as a whole. The members of the Chamber of Mines of Johannesburg have at all times spent not only money, but time, in connection with this research work. Wherever possible, the Government should assist in this class of work, but there are many things that a Government cannot tackle, and those connected with an industry should be prepared to do their bit in assisting research work. There is a peculiar position in connection with immigration in Western Australia. Since 1919 we have only gained by means of the excess of arrivals over departures, 9,000 people. Some have said "Look what we have lost on account of the decline in the mining industry." During that time the men engaged in mining were reduced in number from 18,300 to 8,400, a falling off of approximately 10,000. But in the agricultural industry, including dairying and pastoral activities, during the same period the gain has been from 23,200 to 31,200, or an increase of 8,000, leaving a net loss of 2,000 in those two fields of industry. The fact remains that while we have at considerable expense brought into the State 45,000 immigrants, our net gain has been only 9,000. The position should be cleared up, and we should attempt to discover why the people do not stay here. One reason is because the taxation is altogether too oppressive. Again, we find that the number of people engaged in productive employment in 1920 was less than in 1911. This discloses a very serious position. I protest against the Government accepting the financial position as it is and relying on the immigration scheme to retrieve our fortunes. If they continue to do that we shall certainly get into Queer-street. If, on the other hand, as the post-war conditions tend to get back to normal, the Government will combine an attempt to improve the finances with a vigorous policy of immigration, our position will be surely if slowly retrieved. In the Governor's Speech we are informed that the recess has been devoted to the pursuance of a comprehensive policy of immigration. It seems to me we get the best idea of the Premier's immigration and land settlement policy from the report published in the "West Australian" of the 20th January last of the scheme put up by the Premier to the Prime Minister. I am hopeful that when the Leader of the House replies he will give us further details of that scheme. I

have come to the conclusion that anyone giving thought to that scheme will be able frankly to commend it. Still there is a general consensus of opinion that we have not been informed of the actual details of settlement work, and that indeed it is doubtful whether there is in existence a sufficiently detailed scheme for the accommodation of the additional settlers. If that be so, the sooner the position is remedied, the better. Country Party members in this House have not said very much about the policy of their party. It will probably surprise hon. members generally to know that at the annual conference of that party in 1915 there was formulated a land policy, the greater part of which has since been embodied in the land legislation of 1915 and 1917. At that conference a policy of group settlement for the South-West was adopted as being the best means of settling that part of the State. From the official report of that gathering it will be seen that Mr. Pickering, dealing with Section 19 of the then existing Land Act, said:—

There has been a great effort to settle the South-West. It has not succeeded. It is quite impossible to dairy on unimproved land in the South-West. The only policy is closer settlement. Our branch had the following motion on the agenda paper:—"That this conference affirms the principle of improved farms before settlement in group areas in the South-West Division, and that it declares its policy to be the giving of practical effect to the conditions contained in Section 90 (a) or Section 90 (b) of the Land Act, and any other clauses appertaining thereto, by providing sufficient loan funds on a long dated principle."

That was agreed to. Similarly in 1917, when the soldiers began to return, the land committee of that association provided in detail a scheme involving the appointment of committees and the sorting out of men. Practically, a Bill which came before the House was in accordance with the recommendations of that committee. That committee, which have done so much in the past, now want to help this immigration scheme, and in order that they may help it they are desirous of getting full details. There are in the House members who know of many cases of hardship and injustice suffered by people in process of settlement on the land. It is desirable that we should do what we can to prevent any repetition of those cases. From the scheme put up to the Prime Minister, it is apparent that £3,000,000 per annum for three years is asked for to be spent in extra clearing for men already established on the wheat belt; and another million per annum for three years to be spent on railways, roads and drainage, to facilitate the development of the South-West. Thus the provision of £3,000,000 per annum under those two heads is to enable us to bring to the State 25,000 persons each year. Many people have the

idea that unless there be a speeding up of settlement we shall not get the results we hope for. On the 31st October, 1920, there were 4,859 returned soldiers who had received their land qualification certificates. Of those, 1,428 had no land. Some 20 months later there were 6,229 soldiers who had received land qualification certificates of whom 1,402 had not got their land. I should like the Leader of the House to tell us what proportion of those soldiers have given up all idea of going on the land. If during 22 months the department have not been able to reduce the difference between those who have certificates and those who cannot get land, something must be wrong, and steps ought to be taken to remedy the position. There were 1,400 on the books awaiting to be settled. There are now another 1,400 awaiting the same event. In 22 months they have not settled 2,000 men, although there were 2,400 men in the whole period, counting the balance in hand and the number accruing, who wanted land. The position has not become worse, but there has been no gain, for there are 1,400 men who hold certificates but have no land. I hope the Leader of the House will make the position clear as to how many of the 1,400 are applicants for land, but have not been given any. For months past returned men have been walking about the streets holding qualification certificates but unable to get land. We are now expecting 2,000 men a year to come in. From the experience of the past, I should say there will have to be a speeding up in order to cope with the situation. In order to get £2,000,000 a year, we have to bring into the State 25,000 men, women, and children per annum.

The Minister for Education: We have five years in which to take 75,000.

Hon. H. STEWART: We have to be in a position to take that number in order to get the £6,000,000.

The Minister for Education: And settle 6,000 in five years.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am pleased to hear that. Other members have warned the Government that they cannot go on with the scheme without giving consideration to markets. Particularly is this applicable to the South-West. Some thought must be given to the marketing of produce and to co-ordination in this matter. Some 240,000 cases of apples have been exported this year to England. I doubt whether the growers will receive 1s. per case f.o.r. They encountered a bad market.

The Minister for Education: The majority of Tasmanian delegates at the conference said they would get 1s.

Hon. H. STEWART: The position is a serious one. Last year, however, was a good one. This year serves as an illustration of the difficulties facing settlers in the South-West in marketing perishable produce. If facilities were provided for holding and dealing

with perishable produce the settlers might be able to get a better market at some other time. It has been said that the Australian wheat grower has suffered under the pool, because of war conditions, and that a member of the British Government had stated that the Australian wheat farmer had sacrificed his profits to the extent of millions. Only recently a cable appeared in the daily Press enabling one to know what the position was. Representatives of the producers in and out of Parliament have asked Mr. Hughes for information regarding this. Mr. Prothero, a member of the British Cabinet, stated that the Australian wheatgrowers had sacrificed their profits patriotically. Mr. Hughes replied that he did not know Mr. Prothero. On the 5th of this month a cable was published showing that in the House of Commons, in answer to Sir Newton Moore, the Minister representing the Government, stated that the Government contracts for the purchase of Australian wheat during 1916-17 and 1919-20 amounted to five million tons. The contracts were delivered in full subject to an agreed allowance of 58,000 tons for loss and damage. The cost per bushel was 5s. 2d. f.o.b. in Australia. The average price of wheat produced last year in the same period was 9s. 3d. per bushel in the country of origin. That meant that the Australian grower received 4s. 1d. less per bushel in the country of origin for the five million tons than did other people in the country of origin. This meant 36 millions of money that the Australian wheatgrower lost.

The Minister for Education: Our freights would be much higher.

Hon. H. STEWART: This loss justified the wheatgrower in endeavouring to protect himself in the future marketing of his produce, and he had a tough fight in doing so. I had intended dealing fully with the report of the Agricultural Department. It is refreshing to see the report for the year ended 30th June, 1922, presented at this early date, and also to find that the anticipated expenditure has not been exceeded. I had also intended to deal with the action of the Minister for Agriculture in reducing the cost of administration and the manner in which he had organised the staff of the department. Time, however, will not permit of my doing so. I find that owing to experiments which have been made in potato storage, it should now be possible for growers to keep their produce in cool store during a period of glut. This should enable supplies to be carried over and obviate the necessity for such large imports from the other States. Dr. Saw referred to the attitude of members of the Country Party in not forcing the Government to build an agricultural college ere this. Members of that party realising the financial position and are prepared to be patient, and await the proper time for preferring this request. I should like to read a few remarks of Professor Whitfield, who made a statesmanlike speech to the institution of engineers in this State. I should have been

glad if Dr. Saw had been here to listen to these remarks. The professor went back to the time of the Romans and showed that they, too, were afraid of a drift to the city and took what steps they could to settle people on the land. He said—

If we glance back over the history of the world we see that the same tendency has been a preliminary stage in the ruin of many of the old States. Rome and Athens were healthy and strong when they were surrounded and supported by a population of free and independent farmers. Generally, however, the temptation was too great to spend the money on Rome itself. The capital cities might well provide not only the money for their own requirements, but help to develop the other parts of the State. It is fortunate for Western Australia that we have a Premier who is chiefly concerned to develop the country districts.

The professor went on to suggest that if the Government could provide for a free University in the metropolis, surely there were amongst the people of the metropolis enough persons interested in the University to raise a loan and enable the matter to be financed. I congratulate Mr. Burvill on the views he has advanced for the disposal of timber in light forest country. In 1918 I expressed much the same views as he has done during this debate. In Mr. Burvill's opinion a railway could be built out of the proceeds of clearing the light forest country. Settlement could then be completed right away. There need be no confusion between a good sound settlement policy and the reservation of forest areas. The Government could get rid of all the marketable timber that has to be cleared in process of agricultural settlement of light forest country. When the Government introduce a Closer Settlement Bill this session, I will deal with it, but I warn the Government not to submit a drastic measure on the lines of that of last session. At the present stage I ask the Government to consider the sound advice given by the Prime Minister when in this State. He deprecated any steps being taken in the nature of confiscation. The following words, coming from Mr. Hughes, ought to carry considerable weight:—

He believed the Government could get all the land they needed on equitable terms, if they only went about it in the right way. In my opinion, the right way is not that proposed last year in the Closer Settlement Bill. I cannot sit down without congratulating you, Sir, on your elevation to the high office of President of this Chamber; and I trust that you will be long spared to adorn the position. I support the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by the Minister for Education, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.17 p.m.