

# Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th August, 1925.

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

## QUESTION—STATE WHEAT MARKETING SCHEME.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Premier: 1, What amount of unclaimed moneys or surplus proceeds remained after the 1921-22 State Wheat Marketing Scheme? 2, What is the sum remaining on hand to date? 3, Is it held in a trust fund?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, Unpresented certificates, £2,573 2s. 7d.; unpresented cheques, £13 17s. 9d.; surplus funds, £2,728 2s.; total, £5,315 2s. 4d. Less claims paid, £215 13s.; balance, £5,099 9s. 4d. 3, The money was transferred to Revenue, upon receipt, in accordance with the provisions of the Unclaimed Moneys Act.

## BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Water Boards Act Amendment.
- 2, Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment.
- 3, Land Drainage.

Introduced by Hon. J. Cunningham (Honorary Minister).

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Ninth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. MILLINGTON (Leederville) [4.36]: I congratulate the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) on her election and on the very able and creditable manner in which she moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply. The timber workers have in her a capable representative, one who understands them and who will be able to give sympathetic consideration to their many requirements. From what she told the House, there is ur-

gent need for reform, particularly in the conditions under which the timber workers live. I congratulate the electors of Forrest on their good fortune in having a representative who understands their needs so well. The Governor's Speech is a comprehensive record of the achievements under the Labour Government during the last 12 months. Although the Speech is longer than usual, it is a concise record of what has been done. I cannot point to anything that could have been omitted from the Speech, but later on I shall refer to something that I think might well have been included. During the year important commissions of inquiry appointed by the State and by the Federal Governments have pursued their investigations, and reports in respect to them have been laid on the Table. Amongst the reports are those of the Royal Commission on group settlement and of the Federal Commission appointed to inquire into the disabilities suffered by Western Australia under Federation. The State Government threw themselves whole-heartedly into the latter inquiry, and the case presented by them concisely and ably indicates the disabilities under which the State is suffering. Those disabilities have formed a theme of discussion during recent years and the document will be a most valuable one for reference purposes. The State Government can claim to have definitely recorded their views regarding Federation as it affects the State. It remains to be seen whether the Federal Government will view the matter in the same light, and whether they will realise the necessity for remedying some of the disabilities under which we are suffering.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I wish they would let us write the recommendation and approval.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I wish the Federal authorities would take the view of those people who are in close touch with the affairs of the State and extend to us sympathy such as has been extended to other portions of the Commonwealth. However we have not yet lost hope that the Federal Government will afford us some relief, and I believe much will be gained as a result of the manner in which the State's case has been presented. The Federal Government at least know what we want, and they have before them accurate and comprehensive tabulations such as had not previously been compiled. The Government should be congratulated on having risen to the occasion and had the State's

case prepared so thoroughly and well. Another report to which I shall refer later is that of the Royal Commission which inquired into the metropolitan milk supply. There is no question anterior to that of the milk supply for none of us can remember when he first became interested in the milk question. The report of the commission deals with the metropolitan milk supply, but it is valuable also because it affects the whole State. The Commissioner of Railways has presented statements showing the financial position of the railways, tramways and electricity supply. The report of the Commissioner is of considerable importance in that it has a material bearing upon the question of tramway extensions, in which I am particularly interested. I should like to discover why certain extensions have not been agreed to. It is pleasing to note the financial recovery of the railways during last year.

Mr. Mann: During the last three years.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is so. The recovery is due to an extent to the increased volume of trade and to the increased population, and credit should be given to the management. The Commissioner has shown that despite inevitable increases in costs, the figures have been kept down to the utmost. The report, viewed as a whole, indicates that we have greater efficiency in our railway management to-day than there ever has been. One point to which I must direct attention is the number of locomotives. Despite the fact that the volume of trade has increased, as is shown by the statistics relating to haulage and ton mileage, the number of locomotives has decreased from 423 in the year 1921 to 405 last year. I hope that the improved financial position is not due to starvation of the system. If we get behind in regard to rolling stock and locomotives, it means that the recovery is really on paper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The department have much heavier engines now.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is true, but there is a danger, which has made itself felt under previous Commissioners, of an endeavour being made to show a good financial position by starving the rolling stock and the upkeep of lines. Owing to the advent of motor transport, in the shape of private cars as well as motor buses, the passenger journeys have decreased from about 18 millions for the previous year to about 17 millions for last year. That is a distinct

disadvantage to the Railway Department, but in spite of it the management have been able to present a considerably better financial position than in previous years. The matter of the decrease of passenger journeys will have to receive attention, but it can be discussed under other headings. Certainly it is well worthy of consideration by this Chamber. A portion of the report with which I desire to deal further is that referring to the charges on various classes of goods. I notice that fertilisers are still being carried at a little over  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton per mile, and also that wheat is still the next most favourably considered freight. Timber occupies the highest position in percentage of traffic—18.15 as against 17.27 for wheat; but on local timber there is a considerably higher rate than there is on wheat. It seems that more special consideration is being given to one of our primary industries than another. Those who maintain that our railways are not what they should be, may refer to the fact that wheat is carried at 0.06d. while timber is charged 2.27d. All the advantage appears to be with the wheat growers in that respect. We must realise that the railways occupy a dual position—firstly that of a freighting concern which we insist shall pay its way, and secondly that of an agent in the fostering of industry. Next I desire to refer to the Government Electricity Supply. This big State trading concern, one of the most important we have, is suffering under a heavy disadvantage owing to its having been badly launched. This fact, in its turn, is due to the agreement made by the Government with the Perth City Council. Attention has frequently been drawn to the matter, but it is a very prominent feature in the Commissioner's last report. During the year 44 million units of electricity have been produced, and of this number the Perth City Council have taken nearly half—21 million odd. The difficulty is that whereas it costs 1.02d. to produce a unit, the City Council under their agreement pay for their electricity supply at .75d. per unit. The general manager estimates that if the Perth City Council paid the actual cost of production, and that would not be asking too much, then on the system of book-keeping the Government Electricity Supply would be a properly financed concern, in that there would be no loss, and from a State point of view that is all we ask. However, instead of getting the actual cost of production, 1.02d.,

the State receives from the City Council only  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What agreement are you referring to?

Mr. MILLINGTON: The agreement whereby the Perth City Council are entitled for 50 years to current at  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You know who made that agreement. It was one of your Ministers.

The Premier: I think the chief man concerned was one of your colleagues.

Mr. MILLINGTON: There is such an assortment of members now on the Opposition side concerned in the matter, that there will have to be a spreading out of responsibility if individuals are to be dealt with. However, we have to consider the position as we find it to-day.

Mr. North: It will get worse as time goes on.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Of course it will.

The Premier: We are adding to the plant in order to add to our loss through the City Council.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Perth City Council are in a position to demand all the current they require. If we were short of current—and as a matter of fact we have been—it means that if they notified the Government of certain requirements, those requirements would have to be met even if we had to curtail the supply of electricity to the tramway system. The Perth City Council have first call. We are under engagement to supply them with all their requirements at cost for another 40 years. The agreement was made before the war, and at that time the cost of coal was 4s. per ton, plus 6s. 4d. freight, or a total of 10s. 4d. On that basis the cost of production of electricity was estimated at  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit. Since then the cost of coal has gone up to 12s. 6d. per ton at the pit's mouth, and railway freight has risen to 12s., making a total of 24s. 6d. per ton now as against 10s. 4d. at the time the agreement was made. If this position is to continue for another 40 years, it means that a big State trading concern, which should be run in the interests of the whole of the people, will be run in the interests of the City of Perth. We must remember also that all the power supplied to the Perth City Council is not used for what may be termed purely public purposes. The Perth City Council in their turn have become a trading concern, and the agreement

means that private persons and companies are getting the advantage of this electricity supply at under cost. If it were merely the citizens of Perth who received the benefit of the concession, it would not be so bad; but the fact is that a State trading concern is being starved in order to bolster up various private trading concerns.

Mr. Mann: Do you suggest repudiating the agreement?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I expected that. I quite realise what a terrible word "repudiation" is. I presume the Perth City Council are going to hold the Government to the agreement for its full term, placing themselves in the position of demanding electric current at 75d. even if the cost should go up to 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 2d.

Mr. Mann: Suppose the cost had gone down?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Some of us have gone to sleep on this question. Agreements made prior to the war took into consideration the conditions then obtaining, and were all subject to review during the war. Many of them were actually reviewed. Had the Government of the day taken advantage of war-time conditions and war emergency legislation, they could have had this agreement made subject to alteration on account of changed conditions.

Mr. Mann: The City Council closed down their own works, you know.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, but does the hon. member suggest that for a term of 50 years that obligation to sell at under cost must be observed?

Mr. Mann: Suppose the cost of production had gone down?

Mr. MILLINGTON: There was no danger of that. Indeed, it is greatly to the credit of the management that electricity can be produced now at a little over 1d. per unit. From what I can gather, no agreement of this kind made recently, or during the war, or prior to the war, is without a clause stipulating that the terms can be reviewed in accordance with fluctuations in the price of coal, which means 60 per cent. of the cost of producing electricity. Now I wish to point out that whereas the City Council have the advantage of an electricity supply at  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. under cost, the tramways, in which we are all interested, are in an altogether different position. This is my complaint. The tramway system has shown a slight profit, £700 odd, for the last year. During the previous year there was a small loss.

The impression is abroad that the tramway system is not paying. But whereas the Perth City Council get their supply of electricity at  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. under cost, the tramway system is charged considerably over the cost. They have to make someone pay and it means that, whereas the City Council can get electricity supplied at .75d., the trams have to pay more.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And, in addition, the City Council get the agreement over an area that they should not have got.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. The trams have to pay 1.37d., or 60 per cent. more than the City Council.

Mr. Mann: Would you prefer to see the City Council running their own works in opposition?

Mr. MILLINGTON: The City Council would have no possible hope of running in opposition. They were treated very handsomely.

Mr. Mann: It was not thought at the time that there was no hope of opposition.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The City Council are holding on to their agreement, which is favourable to them. They farmed out electric current in a scandalous way until the fact was pointed out to them, and then they had to reduce their charges. It would have been more decent on the part of the City Council had they been prepared to review the agreement for the supply of electric current. Although the City Council received those supplies at the rate I have mentioned, they have not given the consumer the benefit of the cheaper rate. They have shown themselves capable of sharp practices in the past.

Mr. Mann: It was not sharp practice.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, it was.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Government did not take advantage of the position that arose to have the agreement reviewed, owing to the increase in the cost of coal, freights, and so on. That was not done, however, and it means that other customers have had to be overcharged for electric current. Because the City Council receive the current at such a cheap rate, the tramways have had to pay more than they were entitled to, and have had to pay a price that was above the cost of production.

Mr. Mann: Which Government made the agreement with the City Council?

Mr. MILLINGTON: We fixed it up before you came in. We have a lot of respon-

sibility, but a great deal of the responsibility is on the Opposition side of the House now because the agreement was not reviewed when the opportunity arose.

Mr. Hughes: Did not those now in Opposition adopt the maker of the agreement?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, as a very keen financier. When we have asked for tramway extensions we have not received that consideration our requisitions justify, even from the present Government. The trouble is, they say, that they are afraid the trams are being superseded by motor buses, and that on the figures it is just touch and go whether the tramways will pay. The point is that the tramway system is being starved in order to pay more than the actual cost of electric current. During last year the current used by the tramways was 8,000,000 odd units at a cost of 1.37d. Had the actual cost of production been paid instead of the inflated price, it would have meant that the trams would have had to pay £10,000 less and that would have meant, instead of a profit of £700 this year, a profit of roughly £11,000. If we could show such a profit in connection with the metropolitan tramways, we would have a better case when going to the Government for extensions, and the Government would not be so cautious regarding the construction of additional lines.

Mr. Taylor: Collie coal is a big item.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, the price of coal has gone up considerably, and we cannot get any redress from the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson).

Mr. Wilson: What about the extra cost of new machinery?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Regarding tramway extensions, I have shown that if the tramways were able to obtain electricity at even cost price, a profit of £11,000 odd would be shown.

Mr. North: But has not the price been reduced to the trams?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, and they are now being charged 1.37d. That is the lowest price at which the trams can be provided with electric current. That is the lowest because someone must pay for someone else who is doing the electricity supply.

The Premier: The city councillors, as fair-minded men, will agree to release the Government from the contract.

Mr. Mann: What would the ratepayers say?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I think the City Council should be asked to review the agreement. I have always found the mayor and city councillors enthusiastic in regard to tramway extensions, particularly in regard to one I am interested in.

Mr. Panton: That does not cost them anything.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I refer to the Cambridge-street extension. The City Council have some thousand acres, or more, of endowment lands through which the line would go, and therefore the construction of that extension would be all to their advantage. I believe on one occasion they offered to finance the Government if they would extend the line. As the city councillors are so anxious to have the line extended to improve the value of their property to an untold extent, I think they should be willing to do business with the Government so that the supply of electricity would be available at the correct price, and make it possible for extensions to be constructed. The council should be willing to negotiate the terms upon which such a line should be built.

Mr. Taylor: They say that the line is justified right through to the beach.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I do not say that the construction of an extension of the existing line to the beach is justified. I am more modest and I am advocating the construction of a shorter length. However, when we asked for tramway extensions we were told to wait for 12 months or so as the Government were afraid that the trams would be superseded by motor buses for short-distance passenger transport. At that time the motor buses were something in the shape of a novelty, and were called the poor man's motor car. I find, however, that where bus routes have been established the buses are not nearly so popular now as they were at the outset. We have a motor bus running to West Leederville, and the difficulty the people there find is that those in charge of the buses cannot be induced to run to a time table. If they agree to a time table they break away from it. I can understand what would happen if the Government had undertaken such a responsibility.

Mr. Taylor: What service do you get?

Mr. MILLINGTON: It is a day service with no bus running on Saturday afternoons or Sundays. The night service is very in-

adequate, too. This difficulty regarding the motor buses not adhering to time table arrangements has resulted in the people appreciating the fact that they cannot place any reliance on the service, and the result has been that there is a continual demand for the extension of tramway facilities to that district. It is well populated, and should have had tramway facilities 20 years ago. For some reason, however, the trams were not taken there, although other portions of the metropolitan area, where the population is no greater, have been enjoying the benefits of a tramway service for over 20 years. After a fair trial with the motor buses the people in that district are unanimous in their demand that a tramway extension shall be constructed to their area. There have been several inquiries in the Eastern States regarding the relative positions of motor buses and trams; more particularly does that apply to Melbourne and Brisbane with reference to short-distance passenger transport. The decision arrived at in Brisbane was that all the evidence went to show that motor buses cannot supersede the trams for short-distance passenger transport. The same decision was arrived at in Melbourne. There has been a general impression, not only in Perth but in other Australian cities, that the motor buses would supersede the trams, but so far it has not been proved that the motor bus service is as satisfactory as a tramway service. As in this State the Government are responsible for the tramway services, I believe it means that they will have to do the job thoroughly, or make way for someone else. Motor buses have received a fair amount of custom in certain areas because the tramways have not been extended. In another part of my electorate the terminus of the tramway line is in Angove-street just off Fitzgerald-street. When it was decided to terminate the line there many years ago, there was not nearly the population we find there to-day. I have had the Minister, the Commissioner of Railways, the manager of the Tramway Department, and other officials at that terminus, and all agree that it is ridiculous to have the terminus at that point when the district is thickly populated for at least half a mile further on. As that tramline has not been extended, a motor bus service has been installed and the trams have been robbed of a lot of traffic. I believe the Government will

be forced into extending the tramways where justified. The same thing applies to the Walcott-street extension. That part of the metropolitan area has gone ahead more during the last ten years than any other part. I believe that the extension must be made but there is no way of compelling the Government to do it. Now that a trial has been made and it has been shown that the motor buses are not as satisfactory as the tramways, in that they do not give the same permanency, the time has come when the Government should seriously take into consideration the question of tramway extensions in the metropolitan area. The justification is as plain in other metropolitan areas, and members representing those districts can speak to the question for themselves. When we took our last deputation to the Minister for Railways we pressed the point that we desired a declaration from the Government that they would agree to carry out all necessary extensions within the metropolitan area.

Mr. Mann: You will get that next year.

Mr. MILLINGTON: We are not selfish or parochial and therefore it is for the Government to decide on the necessary tramway extensions to be carried out in the metropolitan area. If that were done, the first line to be built would be the Cambridge-street extension, the most necessary line in the metropolitan area. The people in that district are going to keep on hammering away at their project, and the Government will have no peace until they grant the request. Every man, woman and child in the district is in favour of that tramway extension, so they are a perfectly united party on the question. In the Speech are many things that have been attended to during the recess. The only question of importance omitted is that of tramway extension, of which there is not one word in the Speech. That, of course, makes it necessary that we should continue to hammer away until we get our requirements attended to. It must be remembered that the metropolitan area is materially increasing in population. When, 18 months ago, I was elected to the House, the numbers on the Leederville roll were 9,000 odd; to-day they have increased to 11,400. So, too, in the Canning electorate, the numbers on the roll at the last election were 10,000 odd, whereas to-day they stand at 13,500. The member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) also is asking for tramway extension. Where the population is increasing at that rate, the facilities for transport must

also be increased, and the Government will have to sit up and take notice of the growing needs of the increasing population in the metropolitan area. I am particularly interested also in the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the metropolitan milk supply. That Commission went about their work assiduously, and produced a report that is a credit to them, dealing most exhaustively with the practical, commercial, and scientific view points of the question. In the past we have talked by and large about the manner in which the milk producer was handicapped, and we have instanced the inefficiency of the distribution and called attention to the depot-keeper. The Commission have now set out exactly what each of these three factors receive from the industry. The Commission point out that at present the price of milk in the metropolitan area averages 2s. 10d. per gallon, although many customers are charged 3s. At the time the Food Prices Commission were sitting, it was laid down that a fair price for the milk producer was either 1s. 7½d. or 1s. 8½d. I should like to think the producer was getting that amount. As a matter of fact the evidence before the Milk Commission shows that he is getting from 1s 2d. to 1s. 5½d., and that it costs as much as 1s. 2d. for the feed necessary to produce a gallon of milk. One of my friends in the industry told me the other day that he had great difficulty in getting 1s. per gallon for his surplus milk. This matter has been discussed for years, and a great deal has been said about encouraging the primary producers. At present we are supposed to be doing our utmost to establish the dairying industry. This report of the Royal Commission is dealing with the dairying industry, and it shows definitely that the producer is not getting a fair return. The report is based on evidence taken from the principal producers and distributors, and from Mr. R. S. Sampson, M.L.A.

Mr. Taylor: What does he know about it?

Mr. MILLINGTON: It seems to me he knows something about everything.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Therefore he is a very suitable man to be in Parliament.

Mr. MILLINGTON: One could tell the class of witnesses the Commission had, by their putting Mr. Sampson, M.L.A., last on the list.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did they call you?

Mr. MILLINGTON: No, they overlooked me. The fact remains that this Commission went about their work very thoroughly. They show that a fair price for the producer would be 1s. 7½d. per gallon, and that to the depot-keeper a fair return would be 1½d. per gallon, and that the distributor is getting 1s. 3d. per gallon. So it is the distributor who is getting the best of the deal. The Commission point out that the unorganised producers and the unorganised consumers have no chance against the organised distributors.

Mr. Taylor: The producer gets 1s., and the others 1s. 10d.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The producer gets less than 1s. and is not able to sell the whole of his product, the surplus being left on his hands. The Commission put up the proposition for the establishment and financing of a central depot. The time has come when an organisation of producers will have to be formed; otherwise it is useless to talk about establishing the dairying industry in Western Australia, for we will not succeed in inducing anyone to engage in a sweated industry at the mercy of the middlemen and distributors. The Commission have drafted a feasible scheme for a central depot run by a board representative of all parties concerned. That scheme provides for compensation for those driven out of the business of distribution. I am not going into that, because the producers I represent are not favourable to it. Recently they have been forced to organise, and have formed a dairy producers' company. About 90 per cent. of the producers have taken shares in the company, their object being to control, not only the production, but also the distribution and the receiving depot. Already they have secured a site on which to build a factory, and they say that in addition to treating their own milk they will be able to deal with the milk from the Peel Estate and adjacent districts engaged in the dairying industry. I do not know what view the Government take of the Commission's report and recommendations, but I can say that the producers, having organised, are anxious that their co-operative company should be given a fair run. The Westralian Farmers have made the advice of their experts available to the company, and have also in a measure, extended to it their financial backing. In view of this, I should say the

newly formed company is bound to make good.

Mr. Pantou: It is to be hoped they will not have half a dozen carts distributing in one street, as at present.

Mr. MILLINGTON: A dairy farm with 30 cows and all equipment would entail a capital outlay of at least £2,000. The evidence given before the Commission shows that the men running such farms at Osborne Park are not even making wages, despite all that outlay. Then it is shown, on the other hand, that milk rounds have been purchased at a price of £10 per gallon. If they can show that 20 gallons are distributed they charge £10 a gallon for that.

Mr. Taylor: That is selling their goodwill.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. They had it cut up in such a ridiculous fashion that the Commission presented a table which shows the amount of running about that is done. We speak of milk and bread carts passing the door, but the Commission brought it down to a definite figure. The secretary followed the carts on the round in a motor car, and he has all the matter tabulated. In one instance of a round of 115 gallons, the number of streets over which it was distributed was 248, and the number of customers 565. This means that in some instances there is not more than one customer in a street. The carts must be going by dozens of houses and leaving half a pint here and there. Having organised the round in this manner they now demand as compensation, if this proposition is put into operation, £10 per gallon. This would be of no use to the scheme if they were organising the distribution. In any case the matter has reached such a pass that the producers themselves are organising. They will arrange for a central depot for the proper treatment of milk, and for the block system of distribution. Considering that the producers have first to be considered—their existence depends upon better organisation—I hope that every encouragement will be given to them. I refer particularly to the producers in the Osborne district, but would also include the greater metropolitan districts. They are all endeavouring to overcome this difficulty, which is at present crippling their industry. Another matter of interest is that of the development of the Herdsman's Lake scheme. I understand this

has been handed from the Drainage Department to the Lands Department, and that it will now be the business of the latter to cut up the land into blocks suitable for settlement. I have been in touch with residents who have had 20 years and more experience of Lake country, and of the industries suitable to such country. They say it will be necessary if this settlement is to be a success, that each holder should live on the property he is working. I believe there was an idea of placing the people in a sort of settlement, and that they would have to walk in some instances a mile or a mile and a half to their work. The residents point out that in market gardening it is essential that the settlers should live on their holdings. They, therefore, desire to consult with the Minister and his officers before the surveying is carried out so that some of the high land surrounding the lake may be attached to each block, in other words, that the district may be surveyed in strips.

The Premier: Land would have to be repurchased to achieve that object.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is so. To a great extent the high land is included in the land that is resumed.

Mr. Taylor: There is a large acreage there.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. I have every confidence in the officers controlling the department, but I think a good many mistakes could be avoided if they would consult with these residents and get the benefit of their experience. I believe this would lead to the successful development of market gardening and dairying in that district. I commend the Government for their reference in the Speech to the metropolitan water supply. At one time this was a question of paramount importance, but owing to the manner in which the job has been tackled by the Minister and his department, we now find there is very little cause for complaint. This is fortunate for members representing metropolitan constituencies. The matter has been tackled in such a way that during the past summer very few complaints were made.

Mr. Taylor: The water was very discoloured in Leederville last week; it was as bad as ever.

Mr. MILLINGTON: There has been very little dissatisfaction.

Mr. Taylor: It is no good complaining now.

Mr. MILLINGTON: In order to keep pace with the growing needs of the metro-

politan area it will be necessary that the schemes now in hand should be proceeded with as speedily as possible. It does not take long for a growing population to outgrow its water supply. We must, however, commend the Government for what they have done. The report of the Royal Commission on group settlement has given rise to a good deal of discussion, but I understand an opportunity will be afforded members of going more fully into the question at a later stage. It should be gone into, considering the importance of the subject, and the volume of evidence that has been adduced. I always felt that the inquiry was justified, and failed to see why even those who solidly supported the scheme objected to the investigation. We must all admit that the group settlement scheme was an experiment, and that there were many difficulties in the way of organisation. Those who took exception to the inquiry now say that the report shows it was not needed. In my opinion both the majority and the minority reports demonstrate that it was completely justified. The evidence should prove of the greatest value to those who have to administer this scheme. The report also contains most valuable information. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [5.40]: I congratulate the member for Forrester (Miss Holman) upon her election, though I regret the circumstances that led up to her standing for the seat. We know that the timber workers, many of whom are in my electorate, have a great champion in their lady member. I was impressed by her remarks, and by the black picture she painted of the lives and conditions of bush workers. I do not know whether someone had been "pulling her leg," or whether it was that she was having her first experience of bush camps. Those of us who have been in the back country know these camps, and are aware that they are established only for temporary occupation in the one place. The iron is taken off the sheds, the camps are re-erected elsewhere, and that is probably how the 63 holes came to be found in the iron covering one of those camps. We have also seen places where the floor boards are much more than an inch apart, and where the wind does more than merely whistle around one's ankles. The unemployment at present existing in the State has been brought under the notice of the



Government. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) struck the right note when he told us in no uncertain voice that it was the function of the Government to find employment for their people. It is not right that we in Australia should boast that we have employment in plenty for all, when there are people in our midst who are obliged to cudge for a meal. It is not so bad if people are unwilling to work, but of the 1,800 souls in question in Perth, fully 1,700, besides many others scattered about the State, want work and cannot get it.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Why do not some of the private firms employ a few of them?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is the duty of the Government and every member of Parliament to do their best to find some method by which the people can be absorbed in employment.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: What do you suggest?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I suggest the construction of half a dozen railways in my electorate and roads in different parts. The money involved would be well spent. The other night a deputation visited Parliament House. For the first time within my knowledge extra police control was brought up here for fear that the unemployed, who could not get a meal or a bed, would break into Parliament House or do something desperate. I think, however, their whole idea was to get work. The Minister controlling the Charities Department should go to the Treasurer and say, "We must do something to alleviate the sufferings of these people and see that they are decently fed." We know the Honorary Minister has been brought into disrepute to a certain extent, because he has not been lavish in his expenditure in this respect. The unemployed in Perth have complained that they receive only two meal tickets a day. What is not generally known is—I believe this to be a fact—that a good deal of this relief has been provided by the Trades Hall.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is not so. The Trades Hall has not provided one meal ticket.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Then some of the officers of the Trades Hall have done so.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Nor any of the officers.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, beds.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Some beds have been provided, but not meal tickets.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I wish to be fair, and I accept the Honorary Minister's statement. It is the duty of the Minister controlling the Charities Department to see that people get a meal and a bed as well. Many of these unfortunate unemployed do not belong to unions, and because of that is it the policy of the Government that they are to be starved? What does it matter if a man belongs to a union or not when his stomach is empty? Is he to starve? There is such a thing as humanity. Members opposite made it a war-cry that they were out for the uplifting of the people.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: And who is responsible for the present position?

The Premier: I heard you eloquently defending our policy at Bridgetown one night.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Is it humanity that because a man does not belong to a union he should be allowed to starve.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You are all wrong.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am told that that is the position.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Well, you have been told what is not correct.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was also told that a man who was a unionist was not able to get a job he was after because he did not happen to have his union ticket with him. He tried to get a duplicate, and when he returned to the bureau the job had been filled.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That may be so. If he was not there on time and another unionist came along, that unionist would probably get the job.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Anyhow, something should be done to absorb the unemployed. Unemployment is an anomaly in this State and should not exist.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I want you to realise that the present Government are employing more people in the State than were ever employed by any Government before.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It seems remarkable that when the present Government assumed office there were no unemployed.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We had a legacy left us.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: And that is how you showed a surplus for the last financial year. The ground had been paved for you and there was no unemployment.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Nonsense!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is all very well to say "Nonsense"; it is a fact. I could go

on for a long time discussing this question but I shall change the subject.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You had better do so; you are on dangerous ground. I believe in preference to unionists.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I can quite understand that. Unionists have to pay fees for political purposes, but of course there are many who refuse to do that. That is why you believe in preference to unionists.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The point has never been raised before me.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have heard it referred to dozens of times. I wish now to say a few words about the Federal grant for roads to open up and develop the country, and on this subject I shall refer to the Traffic Bill and the Main Roads Bill. Complaints have been made in country districts that people residing in the different towns are not given an opportunity to participate in the work of road construction. I want the Minister for Works, when he is making these grants to country districts, to see that the married men in the different localities are given preference of employment.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Is not that the position now?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No; men are sent down from here and the work costs a great deal more than should be the case.

Mr. Lambert: Why not tell the people of Bridgetown to do a little more work on their own holdings?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Why does not the hon. member talk a little more about his manganese deposit? The Bridgetown people hold the record in Western Australia for development and anyone who has been there will agree with what I say.

Mr. Lambert: The town has not shifted for 40 years.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We do not want it to shift: we want it to remain there for all time. There have been complaints regarding the Traffic Act and I understand it is the intention of the Minister to revise it because it is creating a hardship. The Main Roads Bill, or the nationalisation of main roads, has been a burning question for many years. I have attended road board conferences for years and this measure has always been discussed. I am pleased that at last we are going to achieve something, and I am glad to know that the Premier has seen fit to fill a long-felt want by the appointment of a capable engineer to supervise the construction of our public works.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been squandered in the past because we have not had a competent man at the head of affairs. I want the Minister for Works to explain to the people living at Menzies, Leonora, Bridgetown, Manjimup or at any of the outback places the manner in which they are going to benefit by the Main Roads Bill when it becomes law. The people know that they will be obliged to pay taxation that the Minister will impose to permit of the construction of main roads, but it is not known how the construction of those roads will be commenced. The idea seems to be that in every case a commencement will be made from the metropolitan area and the work carried on in an outward direction.

Mr. Panton: It shows that you have not read the Bill.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Can the hon. member, who represents 466 electors at Menzies, draw any other conclusion from the Bill? The position is that if it is the policy of the Government to commence work in one particular locality and then work out, it may take ten years or more to construct a road to a particular locality. If that policy is adopted, parts of the road may remain impassable for all that period. That has been the policy of the past and it looks as if it were going to be the policy of the future, in which event the Main Roads Bill will be useless for ten years or more. The Minister has taken up the stand that he refuses to do anything to the roads until another place comes to heel. Are the pioneers to suffer because another place will not pass the Bill as the Minister wishes? I tried to get a few hundred pounds for a bridge in the South-West, but fortunately we were favoured by providence; otherwise a main artery in the South-West would have been closed for two or three months. The Minister declared that he would refuse to spend a penny piece on main roads until the Bill was passed.

Mr. Lambert: It is a wonder that your constituency gets 2s. the way you misrepresent them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: My people think I am wonderful, and they elected me in spite of strenuous opposition from the friends of members opposite. I hope the Minister for Works will tell us what he intends to do and what the policy will be in regard to the construction of roads, because what he says will make a big difference regarding the sup-

port he will receive for his Bill. A few words now to the Minister who controls the railways. We have read and heard all about the hold-up that took place at Pemberton a couple of weeks back.

Mr. Chesson: Where were you at the time?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It was fortunate for me that I happened to be in Perth. The previous Government in office were careless about the requirements of the people in that southern area, and the present Government are no better in that respect. Promises were made that officials would be stationed down there. It is dreadful to think that there should be between 4,000 and 5,000 people in that locality without adequate protection. Those people have their goods scattered helter-skelter about the place, and the position is worse now because the railways do not carry those goods free of charge between Pemberton and Jarnadup. The railways will allow you to book right through now, but a safeguard is not given that the goods will be protected. The Commissioner takes everything he can get at this end, and then says to the people, "I have the money; I am secure." He does not care what happens at the other end.

The Premier: You are exaggerating.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is a pity the Premier was not down there depending upon the railways for his requirements. Valuable goods are being pilfered day after day. At Northcliffe, 20 miles from Pemberton, there are group settlers receiving a mere pittance by way of sustenance, and the cost of living there is very high. Some of them endeavour to save a few pounds by ordering their goods direct from Perth, but the goods do not come to hand. They are pilfered at Pemberton and en route to Northcliffe. That cannot be denied. When the Minister for Railways took office he told me he was considering the question of erecting a shed and placing an officer at Pemberton. Eighteen months have since passed and nothing has been done. I want to know what his intentions are. The hold-up by a highwayman the other day and the stealing of £2,000 was only a small matter, compared with the thousands of pounds lost through pilfering in that area during the last four or five years. Parliament passed a Bill for the construction of a railway south from Pemberton. A road was constructed from Pemberton to Northcliffe

at a cost of from £38,000 to £40,000. That road runs through about 14 miles of State forest. Under the Main Roads Bill the Warren Road Bill will be required to maintain that road after the first 12 months. To open up the South-West, railway communication is essential. Roads are absolutely futile because, owing to the heavy rainfall, they cut out after a year or so. When the previous Government were in office, the then Premier got a Bill through this House authorising railway construction, and he moped about for two or three hours because another place doubted whether the railway was warranted. After further consideration the Bill was amended to provide for the construction of a section of the line as far as Northcliffe, and simultaneously it was agreed to construct the line from Denmark to the Frankland River. What has happened since? The present Government decided to carry on the work and sent a gang of men and plant to Pemberton. Then the Group Settlement Royal Commission was appointed, but so far back as January last, before any indication had been given of the nature of the Commission's report, the Minister for Works had the plant returned to North Fremantle, and so far as I know it is there at present.

Mr. Panton: Was the plant pinched?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It may have been; at any rate the Minister for Works pinched our rights when he gave instructions for the plant to be taken to North Fremantle. The people of the South-West want to know how they can make a success of their farming if they have to cart their produce 25 or 30 miles to a railway. It is disheartening that the promises made have not been kept. The Minister must have been fully aware of the promises made, and some influence must have been brought to bear to get the plant taken to North Fremantle. I want the Government to appreciate the wonderful possibilities of the South-West and to realise that railway communication is absolutely necessary. We were promised railways so far back as 30 years ago by Lord Forrest. Even in 1911 the present Premier told us he was quite in accord with the proposal to open up the territory from Bridgetown to Albany. When Sir James Mitchell was Premier a deputation waited upon him in Bridgetown and his reply to the deputation was, "You can go home and sleep comfortably; the railway will be built."

Mr. Taylor: And they are still sleeping.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A deputation representative of the South-West will be interviewing the Premier at the week-end to urge again the need for railway facilities. The deputations that have waited upon the Government from time to time have incurred sufficient expense almost to build the first five miles, and I do not know the extent of the abuse and curses that have been showered upon various Ministers in connection with the railway. If the Premier would only grant these facilities, he would never again be worried about deficits. To show that the railway is warranted, along the line between Boyup Brook and Cranbrook within a 12½-mile radius, 479,320 acres of land has been selected. That is an immense area when we remember that only 15 or 20 acres is required to enable a man to make a living.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: I wish you meant it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I can produce facts and figures to prove it. Men working small areas are able to ride about in motor cars, and some of them have families numbering eight or ten. The Royal Commission took no evidence from settlers of that kind. Of the area mentioned 1,646 acres has been cleared outright at a cost of £10 to £12 per acre, and is under pasture. Of part-cleared land there is over 22,000 acres, and its cost is estimated at a couple of pounds per acre. Two years ago the stock in that area comprised 90,686 sheep, 1,616 horses, and very fine horses they are, 1,333 dairy cows, and 500 pigs.

The Premier: Who collected those statistics?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier will hear all about that when the deputation waits upon him. These statistics were certified to by the farmers in the area.

The Premier: The 500 pigs would make only one decent pig farm.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am aware of that, but there are many thousands of acres of first-class land upon which the advisory board has reported favourably, and I presume the Premier has read the report recommending that the railway be built immediately. The Lands Department have reserved the whole of that area for group settlement. That is another matter we have to bring before the Premier. The sons of farmers in the district will be debarred from taking up land along the route of the pro-

posed railway, because it has all been reserved for group settlement. That fact, however, shows that it must be a wonderful proposition. If the Premier wants to provide work for the unemployed, he should send men down there, and he would then have no further worry about deficits.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How many settlers are there?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have not the figures, but the settlers are practical farmers on small holdings.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is not much good referring to the holdings and the stock unless you can tell us the number of people.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Those figures will be placed before the Premier by the deputation. We hear a lot of talk about our wonderful jarrah forests. A gentleman applied for a timber concession for five miles on each side of the proposed railway, and he offered to pay the present royalty, build the first 30 miles of railway, run a service, and hand the line over to the Government at the end of 10 years. I thought the ex-Premier would have jumped at that offer, but he did not. Anyhow, the offer is still open for the present Premier to consider. People in the district have been trying to grow fruit, but it is a heart-breaking proposition on account of the long carting distance. I hope the deputation will not have to say much to convince the Premier that the railway is warranted. I trust that the survey will be made immediately, and that the construction will be begun within the next month.

The Premier: Last Friday I had railway requests representing two millions of money.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I read of that, but I want the Premier to realise that we can show results, whereas some of the deputationists last week might not have been able to assure him of success.

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

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Another railway that is required for the opening up of the South-West has been proposed for many years past, and has been favourably reported upon by the Railways Advisory Board. That line represents part and parcel of the scheme for developing the South-West in group areas. The Premier has, in fact, committed himself to this railway, having placed group settlers 20 miles out from the existing system, with-

out even a road to the market. In preference to building an enormously costly road like the Northcliffe road, he should build a railway which would link up Pemberton and Denmark, extending south from Manjimup, and crossing the Warren River, then going down by Lake Muir and so to the Frankland River. The line will open up some of the finest agricultural land to be found anywhere in the world. The settlers who have pioneered that country are there now, with their sons and grandsons. They proved dairying a success in the South-West 40 odd years ago. That railway will have to be built. Its construction will be submitted to the Premier by a deputation next Friday, when probably a great deal more will be said on the subject. A glance at the railway map shows that the South-West is not yet opened up by any railway system. A very convincing case can be made on that point. I am going to quote the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) to prove what a wonderful country the South-West is, and also to prove what the present Government thought of the South-West in 1914. The member for Guildford, as Minister for Lands, then said—

I recognise that we have a great asset in the South-Western portion of this State, but it is almost heart-breaking to try and get that asset developed. The settlers who have good land do not seem to realise the enormous possibilities of intense culture.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: On good land, yes.

The Premier: Was the member for Guildford trying to get you into Parliament then?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. At that time I had no Parliamentary ambitions. The member for Guildford went on—

They seem to take up land, and make sufficient out of sheep.

With intense culture the South-West will produce wonderful fat lambs in the near future. The Fremantle Freezing Works, in which so much Government money is invested, will be made a success by the export of fat lambs from the South-West.

They are getting enough out of sheep, and they do not propose to do any more.

That is what the then Minister for Lands represented the old settlers as stating.

While we have that feeling to contend against, we cannot expect to get such results from the South-West as we ought to get. Undoubtedly the South-West is the dairying country of Western Australia, and what I want to do is to develop the South-West in that direction. What influenced me largely in leaving the dis-

trict lands office in Bridgetown was to get land selected in that district in smaller holdings—

People are making a living at Bridgetown off 10 and 15 acre blocks, but now we are told that 100 acre blocks are not sufficient. —and then endeavour to promote the manufacture of butter. I do not wish to enter into much detail.

No doubt the member for Guildford could have elaborated largely had he desired to do so.

I have a very high opinion of the South-West, and I look forward to the time when we shall be able to develop it to a far greater extent.

To-day we get reports so pessimistic as to suggest that those who make them want to prevent the development of the South-West.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Your methods have been wrong.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I agree that many mistakes have been made.

I sympathise with Mr. Connor in his very difficult task of inducing the people of the South-West to develop the land in the way it can be developed.

Mr. Connor was around preaching to the settlers what they should do. We are endeavouring to do it now. The then Minister for Lands appreciated the difficulty.

They do not seem to follow the example that has been set at the State farms, but let us hope that the future will be served better in that respect.

Then Mr. Robinson interjected, "Does he make the State farms pay?" The then Minister for Lands continued—

He demonstrates what the South-Western lands can produce, and that success follows the planting of certain grasses.

I use those observations as an argument for the opening up of the South-West by railways. On the eminent authority of the member for Guildford, South-Western lands are the finest in Western Australia. At that time the wheat areas were passing through a very strenuous period; they were suffering from the worst drought ever experienced. Actually stock from the bark country was being depastured in the discredited South-West. Droughts are unknown in the South-West.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why do you say, "the discredited South-West?"

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will explain that later.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have heard that the group settlements are discredited, but not

that the South-West is. It is the blundering administration of the group settlements that is wrong.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I wish now to refer to the famous Redistribution of Seats Bill of many years ago, and to its revival in an amended form a couple of sessions back. Perhaps it was a pity that the Bill did not go through. The present Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, put up a formidable case against the Bill, on account of what he termed its unfairness. We were then told that if a change of Government took place, another redistribution of seats Bill would be introduced.

Mr. Richardson: No chance!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We are patiently waiting for that Bill, of which there is no mention in the Governor's Speech. I trust the Premier will give us some enlightenment on the subject, because the way in which some electorates are represented here is most inequitable. Some members represent thousands of electors, while other members represent only 300 or 400.

The Premier: The matter is receiving the serious consideration of the Government.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I hope so, but the Treasury bench seems to have a wonderful attraction for different Premiers and different Ministers. The people expect that the Bill should not be sprung on Parliament at the last moment, or in the dying days of the session. There should be full opportunity to discuss it.

The Premier: You have two years to go yet.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Something should be done to remedy a position that is distinctly wrong. The member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale), for instance, represents about 13,000 people, while the adjoining electorate has only 3,000 or 4,000 voters. As I have said, some constituencies number only 300 or 400 electors. The Subiaco and Perth electorates, and even my own electorate, are far too large. Under the last Redistribution of Seats Bill the quota for an agricultural constituency was fixed at 2,000. On that basis my own electorate is unfairly represented; it should have two or three members. The Nelson roll contains 4,000 or 5,000 names, and it is growing every day.

Mr. Taylor: You are quite capable of representing that number of electors.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know that, but that is not the question. My people must have more representation. I would like an assur-

ance from the Premier that he will fulfil his promise.

The Premier: You cannot produce that promise.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We know that in connection with the last Redistribution of Seats Bill the present Premier by his wonderful eloquence induced some members sitting on the Government side of the House to vote against the measure. We want him to keep his promise and introduce a Bill on a fair and equitable basis.

The Premier: Did I make such a promise?

Mr. Richardson: Yes, you did.

Mr. Hughes: Do you want to transfer the goldfields representation to the city?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No, to the agricultural areas.

Mr. Clydesdale: I thought you were sympathising with me just now.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: So I was because I think the distribution of constituencies should be on a more equitable basis. I do not think, however, that the city should have more representation. The city lives on the prosperity of the country and the country should have more representation so that the city shall not dominate the whole.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Premier has a lot of promises to carry out yet.

The Premier: I did not make any promise.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Oh, yes, you did. I will next refer to the timber industry and offer some good advice to the Government. I urge them to open up the Crown lands in the South-West. Members representing the agricultural areas are jealous of their wonderful wheat yield and are always telling us what it has done for Western Australia. I agree with them, but we have another important primary industry that has returned more revenue to the State through the railways than has agriculture. In the South-West, too, there is a dearth of railways compared with the agricultural belt.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: How long will the timber last?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: For another 100 years. But that is not the point. The point is that we have vast areas of timber lands lying dormant. Under the regulations, timber that is under 70 inches in girth cannot be cut. At the same time there are very many 50in. trees that have matured and are deteriorating every year. Yet those regulations are not waived!

Mr. Richardson: Who is responsible?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Conservator of Forests will not do it. I waited for the last Government to take action and now I am waiting for the present Government to amend the Forests Act. Timber companies are out 22 miles from the railways and are paying up to 10s. 6d. a load. I guarantee that if the Government throw open the Crown lands in the South-West and allow their expert officers to mark the timber that has matured and thus enable it to be cut, they will get up to £2 or £3 in the square as royalty. I estimate that if that were done the Treasurer would collect £100,000 in royalties next year.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: And the year after that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: And the same again for the year after that. If railways were built in the South-West as I have suggested for a long time past, I believe that in no time the royalty on timber would more than pay for the construction.

Mr. Lindsay: But there would not be any timber then.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Under a proper reforestation policy there would be timber coming on all the while. Some of that country is of little use for agriculture. On the other hand, we are tying up those areas and preventing the timber cutters from going there and thus losing money to the State. I want to see those regulations altered and the Crown lands thrown open so that employment may be given to thousands of people who require it. The freight on timber from the South-West last year was £380,000, which exceeded the freight on wheat by £100,000. Then again on timber 1s. 6d. a load is paid for wharfage dues, whereas export wheat goes over the wharf free. People seem to have forgotten what the timber industry means to the South-West.

Mr. Richardson: You mean, to the whole State.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is so. We are suffering serious disabilities in connection with our natural port of Bunbury. Governments in the past have toyed with the harbour problem there and have squandered hundreds of thousands of pounds. They have spoilt a good harbour. I can assure members that our growers in the South-West are not anxious to pay 5d. extra on a case of fruit in order to send it to Fremantle rather than ship it from Bunbury. We are anxious to have the Bunbury harbour brought up to date so that we may ship fruit and

other products from that port instead of from Fremantle. The same applies to other ports as well. Generally speaking, the people do not seem to realise the possibilities ahead of the South-West. Regarding fruit growing and the marketing of our products, at a conference held in the South-West the other day, it was made clear that the fruitgrowers do not desire a compulsory marketing Bill. The Minister controlling that department has been good enough to tell us that the Bill he intends to introduce will not follow the lines of the Queensland legislation because he does not intend to make it compulsory. He has intimated that he will take a vote of the fruitgrowers before putting the Act into operation. I agree that something should be done to deal with the marketing of our products, which is indeed a great problem. It is pleasing to know also that a Vermin Bill will be introduced this session. Let us hope that it will meet a better fate than did the previous Bill which was withdrawn at the last moment. We want a measure that will apply to the South-West as well as to the North. From the Leeuwin to Denmark the dingoes are probably worse than in any part of the North-West. Not only do they kill sheep there but also foals and ricketty beasts which have no hope against the pest. Therefore I trust that the Bill will have a State-wide application because every hoof we lose is a national loss. I do not see anything in the Governor's Speech dealing with State insurance. Why is this? It has been one of the boasts of the party now in power that, if given the opportunity, they would introduce a Bill to provide for State insurance and for insurance against unemployment. With such a large majority behind them I should think the Government would introduce such a measure at an early date. In my opinion it would be a good move. Now we come to something that distinctly affects the South-West. I refer to the Royal Commission on group settlement. I have had a good deal to say on this subject previously and I have not altered my opinions one iota. If I cared to follow the attitude that has been adopted by someone else, I could say: "I told you so." I cannot see how the Commission could arrive at any other finding on the evidence they secured. On the other hand I say that the evidence was faked. The Commissioners did not go out of their way to any extent whatever to get evidence that would be of advantage to the South-West. They did

not go to any of the original settlers there. They examined 17 settlers in the South-West, 44 officials and 60 odd group settlers. The Commissioners libelled a very fine section of the community. Let hon. members not forget that the first 40 groups were drawn from our own Australians and from English people who have been out here for some years. It is only latterly that we have been placing people on the land who have come direct from the boats. The Commissioners did not do their job. They held 64 sittings. They talk about the land in the South-West! They refer to the poorer land at the Abba River. The Commissioners did not visit half the groups. As a matter of fact they went to a little over 30 per cent. of the groups. On the strength of that they put this report before not only this State, but before the world at large! They let it go out that the land is unsuitable, that it was not up to their expectations; that the settlers have no chance of making good; and that these men and women on the groups who receive sustenance at the rate of 10s. a day to keep body and soul together are paid altogether too much. Why, Mr. Speaker, in the dark days of the wheat belt period sustenance was paid. That system is no new thing. We gave the settlers their 9s. a day to keep them on the land.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: For how long?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: For a considerable time. And look at what has resulted in many instances. Speaking the other evening the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) combated the statements that the war had made the wheat and the wool growers.

Mr. Panton: The war made more than them too.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Toodyay denied that that was so, but I say it did. Because of the war and its aftermath the wheat grower has been able to get fabulous prices for his wheat.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are wrong.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is all very well to talk in such a way, but people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. We have the advisers of the Agricultural Bank saying that it is unsafe because of the rainfall and therefore they will advance only 50 per cent. in the Southern Cross area. Why not have a Royal Commission to inquire into that question? What would the wheat growers say if we agreed to that step and we appointed to act as Royal Com-

missioners people who had made their living in the South-West and had never grown a blade of wheat? Would it not be reasonable to expect those people to report unfavourably? In this instance the Royal Commission did not get evidence from the people who had farmed their lands in the South-West for many years, but from people who had just gone on the land, and in consequence we have got such a report as they have presented.

Mr. Panton: Are experts always appointed on Royal Commissions?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know, but I protest against this business.

Mr. Panton: I was wondering where the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) got his experience in connection with timber?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I trust that the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) will change his views in the course of a few years. The report of the Royal Commission bristles with inconsistencies. It is deplorable that they did not examine one old settler. I defy the Commissioners to prove that they did.

Mr. Panton: We will have it over again.

The Premier: Why did not the old settlers wake up and go along?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Had not the Royal Commission power to call any evidence they desired? They did not do this, however, for the simple reason that this action was taken on account of the wholesale protests that had been received and of something that transpired at that particular period when the Labour organisations and the Trades Hall said that the State had been spending too much money and bringing too many people into Western Australia and that it would have to cease. That is why the Commission were appointed. In my opinion the Commission fell down on their job because they did not inspect more than 30 per cent. of the groups but condemned the whole lot, although they did not call one old settler. The trouble was that there was a great deal of jealousy and a great deal of antagonism to the Leader of the Opposition who, as Premier, had been responsible for the scheme. It would have been no trouble for the Commission to have seen some of the older settlers of the district, such as the Mottrams, the Muirs, Doust, Wheatley, Giblets, and others.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: But they are not on 160 acres of land.



Mr. J. H. SMITH: How much cleared land have they? Perhaps not 40 acres. In the olden days, before I was born, the South-West was a cattle country.

Mr. Lindsay: Mottram refused to give evidence before the Commission.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, you had the power to make him give evidence. You did not want him.

Mr. Lindsay: Why didn't you, as member for the district, bring along the old settlers?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Because I was never invited to do so. The point was that you did not want them. Despite the Commission's report, the South-West will be opened up and developed, and will succeed in stopping this drain of a million of money to the Eastern States every year. The Commission recommend that the existing groups go on until, in perhaps six or eight years' time, we shall know whether they can pay interest, but that in the meantime no further groups be established. The Government have committed themselves to an immigration scheme. What then are they to do in the meantime? Are they to go beyond Southern Cross and build railways and try to develop that country, and then afterwards appoint a Royal Commission to see whether the country is suited to the purpose?

Mr. Lutey: What did you think of Groups No. 126 and No. 127?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You kissed the babies down there, and thought you knew all about the groups.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Again, the Commission did not give any credit to those men and women who have been putting in spare time effort. If the Commission's findings are justified, there can have been no spare time effort put in on the groups visited by the Commission. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) asked what I think of groups Nos. 126 and 127. It is only six months since those groups were established; yet look at the spare-time effort put in on them, resulting in two or three acres cleared around each of the homes! The Commission suggest that the settlers should have experience, should be put into training camps. That is all very well. It means spending another £20,000 or £30,000 and then blaming the scheme for it.

Mr. Lutey: Have they not had training?

Mr. Latham: Some of them had never seen an axe before.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If 50 per cent. of the group settlers succeed, it will be a much better record than was achieved in the early days of the wheat belt. Moreover, we shall not be very long in filling up the other 50 places. This wonderful Commission that know the South-West from one end to the other recommend the Government to establish experimental farms so as to give the settlers local knowledge. But the people who are going to make good on the groups are making good already, gathering experience from spare-time effort. In many instances they have cows and are gradually extending their knowledge of the conditions of the district. That is what we want, for one ounce of practical knowledge is worth a ton of theory acquired in training camps. The Commission, after examining 44 officials, 70 odd groups and 17 new settlers, some of whom have been only two or three years in the district, come along and recommend that the whole scheme should be suspended for six or eight years while it is proved whether or not it is going to be successful. Is not that a bold, progressive policy showing touching faith in our country?

Mr. Richardson: It is altogether too optimistic.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Then they qualify it by a summary in which the first thing they say is that the better class of land in the South-West is suitable for dairying and mixed farming, and should be put under pastures that would allow dairying to be carried on. But they have not told us where this better class land is to be found. Then they say the settler requires from 30 to 40 cows and 25 acres of pasture, and that 100 acres of land is not sufficient to keep a family. We know that dairying is going to be a success, but that just the same it means a lot of hard work and that those engaged in it cannot be gadding about the country. The Commission are only throwing cold water on the efforts of those settlers who came out here to earn their livelihood and do a great service both to this country and to the Old Country. Now the Commission say, "You might as well get off, because you are doomed to failure." And they not only talk about 40 cows being required for each settler, but they tell us the capital value of those cows. How they ever arrived at the figures passes my understanding. If the

Commission had been a commission of farmers from Victoria, where dairying has been successfully established, no one would have complained of their findings. But no, this bright Commission say that each settler must have 30 or 40 cows, to make a success of it. They do not say the settlers must also have small orchards and pigs and poultry. Instead of that they pin their faith to the cow.

Mr. Lindsay: What is a good cow worth?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A good cow will produce anything up to £3 a month. Yet we are told that the settlers require from 30 to 40 such cows! Nothing is said by the Commission about the value of a litter of pigs. At the South-West Conference held at Bunbury last week we were given the illustration of a man who, taking on poultry as a side-line, had made a profit of £168 out of 400 fowls. Yet the Commission make no reference to the value of fowls as a side-line. It is not necessary that I should say much more, because everybody knows my opinion of the South-West and of group settlement; but I do object to this pessimistic report by the Commission. It is a bad advertisement for Western Australia.

Mr. Richardson: Absolutely.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Just now, when the Government have entered into a new migration agreement, we get this Commission's report, condemning Western Australia, broadcasted all over the world. I predicted that this sort of thing would occur, when first I opposed the appointment of the Commission. Had the Commission been appointed after the groups were disbanded, we might have been able to accept the Commission's findings. As it is, however, we have only the evidence of people who know nothing about the South-West. It is all pure supposition.

Mr. Richardson: Of course it is.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Because the groups are not yet disbanded. Mistakes have occurred in administration, and the cost of clearing has been a great deal too high. However, I will not blame those men and women who are battling down there on 10s. a day. I am surprised that the Commission should have said that those people are not earning their sustenance. It would have been just as easy to put up a recommendation that the contract system be adopted. Personally I believe it would be the better system. It would be sufficient to clear four or

five acres, put it under pasture, and then allow the settler to clear the rest of his holding under Agricultural Bank conditions. The capitalisation would not then be so high. However, I object to the condemnation by the Commission of those settlers who are putting in spare-time effort. The Commission say they have not been earning their 10s. per day. Apparently the class of settler the Commission would like to see established down there is the robust Herculean man who could tear down the forest with a minimum of effort. But is it such a man who will make a success of dairying? I say no, that it is the man who will stick there and potter along from daylight to dark who will make a success of it. As I say, I have no objection to the contract system. It would be sufficient to put down pasture, give a man his ten cows and his pigs and poultry and leave him to do the rest. He will make good, for I know people who are doing it. At Bridgetown one farmer is getting a return of £100 per month for his butter fat. Some people there are milking between 60 and 80 cows. There is no such thing as pasture, and they do not hand-feed their cows. They milk the cows for six or seven months, and then turn them out. The Commission say it takes from three to four acres of first-class pasture to feed a cow. It is no such thing. If you get first-class pasture you can run a cow on 2 to 2½ acres. These group people have another 100 acres on which to run their cows. Let them feed the cows on their pasture, and run them on the other 100 acres. There is no chance of eating down the pasture. The settlers can have their silos and their ensilage. The prospects for these people seem excellent. I want the Government to say to them, "You are doing wonderful work. Carry on, and we will give you all the assistance we can, despite the Commission's report."

Mr. Richardson: I think the Government will do so.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no constructive policy in the Commission's report.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, there is, piece work.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They say the men are not earning their 10s. a day. That is a libel. I am sorry such a thing should have been stated. There may be a few who do not earn it, and there may be others who are doing twice as much work as some, but I say 10s.

is not too much for any man. It is a mere existence to say the very least, especially in view of the heavy losses they sustain in regard to their provisions, because the Minister for Railways does not give them decent transport conditions.

The Minister for Railways: You know that is not so.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is. I can show the Minister letters that I receive every day on the subject. He also has received letters.

The Minister for Railways: You know it is in connection with the sawmills line.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The previous Premier promised that the railways would take over that line. I believe an opportunity is to be given to members to discuss the Commission's report at a later stage. I cannot understand how the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) could change his opinions in such a short time. I have no complaint concerning the Minister for Lands. He is one of the most ardent supporters of the scheme. By accepting the new immigration agreement, the Premier has shown that he is prepared to go on with it. I say to members and the people in the State, "Forget the Commission's report and the expenditure of £1,200 upon it, which is only a drop in the ocean; let us go ahead with the scheme." It may be necessary to give the foreman of groups more authority to dismiss unsuitable settlers. Again, if that power is given, it may be abused by impatient foremen who should not possess it. I am pleased to know that the finances of the State are improving, due to the wonderful foundation laid by the previous Government. They had things well in hand when, through a stroke of misfortune, they were thrown out of office. I think the Premier is alive to the unemployment position. If the Government would develop the South-West along the lines I suggest, they would soon relieve us of the trouble. I hope the Minister for Works will not forget, when spending his road grant money, that there is a certain amount of unemployment in the country towns. Greenbushes is the most important town in Western Australia because it produces all the tin that comes from the State. At present it is languishing for want of Government assistance.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Through neglect.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, through neglect on the part of past Governments. We were

exporting from Greenbushes 400 tons of tin a year, and there is plenty of it still left.

The Premier: Tin does not grow, unfortunately.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is a commodity that all the world wants. It seldom fluctuates in price, and never goes down for very long. If the Government would put in diamond drills they would be of great advantage to the people in determining whether the lodes were payable or not. The Minister for Mines has promised to visit Greenbushes, and I hope he will do so, and assist the mining people there. I would stress the importance of throwing open some of our heavily-timbered Crown lands. The other day there was a block 10 miles from Busselton that was sold through the Forests Department, and it realised 35s. a load in the square. Think what it would mean to the revenue of the country if more of this land were thrown open! There is plenty of timber deteriorating that many men are anxious to get at. The Forests Act requires to be amended in regard to hewers' licenses. Those who were possessed of a license before 1918 are fortunate, but many of the old school of hewers are going out of existence, and new schools are coming in. It has been customary to grant fallers' licenses from month to month, but this practice has been curtailed. I hope the Minister will so amend the Act that licenses may be given to hewers to work on Crown lands in cases where the timber is known to be deteriorating. I hope, too, the Minister will honour the promise he made last year, when he influenced some members to vote against the Redistribution of Seats Bill, and that he will in his turn introduce such a Bill in the near future. I wish to refer to the salary received by members of Parliament. The existing allowance is all very well for affluent members and those who sit on the Treasury bench, but what about the poor individual who is continually struggling on £400 a year, and who represents a country electorate? Metropolitan members are much better off than are country members. It is time that members were given a salary that at least represents a living wage.

Mr. Richardson: There is a greater cost to metropolitan members than there is to country members.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is only a hop, skip and a jump for metropolitan members to

traverse the whole of their electorates, and they can go from one end to another in a tram that costs them nothing. Country members are allowed £10 a year for stamps, but they have to pay for the use of the telephone. Country members should have the same privilege as town members of being able to use the telephone free on public business. I was sorry to see that the negotiations regarding the Midland Railway Company had fallen through. I had hoped that the Premier while in England would have been able to negotiate on reasonable terms with the company for the purchase of the line. It is not fair that one section of the community should be at a disadvantage as compared with another. The Midland railway settlers have not the same privileges in respect to the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank as are enjoyed by the other settlers. I hope when the Minister for Agriculture is framing the Fruit Marketing Bill that he will take into consideration the views and advice of our export growers, who are directly concerned in that piece of legislation.

**MR. HERON** (Mt. Leonora) [8.25]: I congratulate the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) upon her election to this Chamber, and trust she will have a long and successful career as the representative of the Forrest electorate. The member for Leederville (Mr. Millington) talked to us about tramways, electricity supply, water supply and other matters connected with the metropolitan area. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) spoke to us about group settlement and railways for other settlers in the South-West. I will now shift the ground to the pastoral and mining industries in my electorate. I am not asking for any railways at present, any tramways, or the extension of the East Perth power supply to Leonora. There are, however, a few matters I wish to bring under the notice of the Government. I am pleased to say that during the past two or three years there has been a wonderful improvement in the pastoral industry in the north-eastern district. When the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) was speaking, he referred to the dingo pest and the cost to the local authorities and the settlers. I endorse his remarks concerning the difficulties that are being experienced by owners of these outback sheep stations. He pointed to the expenditure of the Meekatharra Road Board upon dingo scalps. Those who are on the outskirts of these runs are putting up the biggest fight against the pest, and it is costing

them a lot of money. The hon. member stated that the Meekatharra Road Board had paid for 1,100 scalps during the past 12 months. At Wiluna between 350 to 400 scalps have been paid for, at Lawlers 350, and the Leonora Road Board district just on 200. This shows that on the outskirts there has been the heaviest fight against the dingoes and the greatest expense has been incurred. I am glad to know that during the past 20 months a large amount of capital has been put into the pastoral industry, and a good deal of money has come from South Australia. I have a list of the properties that have changed hands during that period. These properties were all north of Menzies. Some were in the Mt. Margaret electorate, some in Menzies, and some in my own district. These properties have changed hands at good prices. About 20 months ago I mentioned the fact Mr. Jim Withnell had bought Edjudina station. That property is now being used as a sheep station. It was sold for £21,000 at the beginning of last year, and was recently purchased by Mr. L. Hawker, of South Australia, for £51,000. That amount does not of, course, include what it is proposed to spend on fencing. I am informed that it is intended to spend another £71,000 in erecting fences to make the property dog-proof. The new owners had a disastrous experience with dogs that got amongst the sheep and killed as many as 30 in one night. Then it was thought better to truck the sheep away from the locality until such time as the work of fencing was completed. Coming nearer, towards Kookynie, Robinson and Padbury bought Yerilla station for £10,500; L. Wilkie bought Laffer's cattle station and Chisolm's cattle station for £10,000 and £7,000 respectively; Killicoat and Pearce bought Yundamundra station for £19,500; L. Gare bought Cornacopia station for £13,500; Nichols bought Melita sheep station for £11,000; McBridge & Hawkes bought Archdale cattle station for £7,400; Hawker and Chomley bought Sturt Meadows station for £42,000; L. Hawker bought Edjudina station for £51,000; Goerling bought Pinnacles station for £10,500; the Mt. Malcolm Pastoral Company bought Murnong station for £19,500; McNeil bought a property for £7,500 and Killicoat Bros. bought Ida Valley station for £15,000, a total of £244,900. Further west Brooks Bros., of Buckland Park, South Australia bought Dandaraga station for £51,500, and Bateman & Sons secured Weld station

for £7,500. There we have a grand total of £303,900. Those men anticipate doing between 60 and 100 miles of fencing at a cost of £60 to £70 a mile. Hon. members will thus see that the northern parts of the Eastern goldfields are gradually being converted into sheep propositions. It is certainly pleasing to those who represent the outback centres to know that money is coming in very freely from South Australia for the purchase of these properties. Whilst on the subject of the pastoral industry in this part of the State, I would appeal to the Government for assistance for that section of the pastoralists that need help. The South Australians who are acquiring propositions are able to do their own development work, but there are some who have been battling for many years who require help for fencing and for well sinking, and to carry on development generally. The Government might well take this matter into consideration to see whether it is possible to assist the small pastoralist, he who has 200,000 or 300,000 acres and who has battled along for years without a fair chance of making good. Whatever advances were made by the Government could be added to the rents. I know that several of the smaller men would be agreeable to that course being followed. It is the policy of members on this side of the House to encourage the establishment of smaller holdings rather than the big ones. We realise that where there are enormous tracts of country held under pastoral lease few are employed, perhaps, one or two overseers with a number of stockmen, aborigines and half-castes. It is in the interests of the State that a greater number of people should take up pastoral areas and that there should be more homesteads. Therefore it would be advisable to render assistance to those who have been battling for years on what may be regarded as small holdings. Of course those who have lately come into the field with considerable capital are well able to look after themselves. In regard to the mining industry, I congratulate the Minister on his earnest efforts to assist those who are engaged in that occupation. He has done all that is possible to assist mining. He has visited most of the different centres and has seen first-hand for himself. His visits to outback districts and, generally speaking, all that he has done to keep the industry alive, has been appreciated. I also

wish to refer to the courteous assistance that has always been rendered by the officers of the Mines Department to myself and others. I am sorry that the industry is not in the flourishing condition in which we would like to see it. There are many who are still putting up splendid fights to keep the industry going. We recognise that it has done a great deal for the State, and we trust that it may continue to do so in the future. Some of the properties that are still being worked give promise of becoming good shows, and it is hoped that one or two will develop into big mines and that they will be the means of giving the industry a fillip. At present all eyes are directed towards Wiluna, and I hope and trust that it will turn out as we expect, and that in the not distant future, a big centre may be seen there. With sympathetic administration from the Mines Department and economical management by those in control, we should have a revival in mining. At the same time there are some things that press heavily on this as well as on other industries that are far removed from the metropolitan area. I have in mind railway freights on mining requisites and mining machinery. I can quote an instance of excessive freights that have had to be paid by the Gwalia mine. It is necessary about once in every 12 months to renew the wire ropes used on the winding engines on that mine. To convey those ropes in two trucks from the coast to the mine cost the mine no less than £230, or £115 per truck. I think the total weight would be about 10 or 12 tons, representing about 3,600 feet of wire rope. Members can imagine that with the operations as they are carried on at that mine it requires a fair length of rope for use in the shafts. Such excessive freights press heavily. I would point out that if the company got two trucks of super delivered at the mine the cost would be somewhere about £17. I am not finding fault with super being carried at this low rate; I recognise that it is essential that that should be so, but there is no justification for imposing such a heavy penalty on the mining industry.

Mr. Latham: Ore is carried at a cheap rate.

Mr. HERON: Yes, but even then it is double the rate charged for super.

Mr. Latham: A half-penny per ton.

Mr. HERON: It is possible to carry super to Leonora for 14s. 6d. whilst the

back loading of ore costs 22s. 6d. The member for Mt. Margaret can support me in that statement, because he and I endeavoured to bring about a reduction when a previous Government was in power.

Mr. Taylor: That is quite right.

Mr. HERON: I have no fault to find with the Railway Department for carrying super at a cheap rate, but I urge upon them the necessity for considering the advisableness for reducing the freights on mining requisites. There should not be the wide disparities to which I have referred. If the railways can carry two trucks of lime to Gwalia for £30, they could convey the wire ropes at a cheaper rate, especially when we remember that lime is liable to set a truck on fire. Three weeks ago I was at Gwalia when the train arrived with 192 tons of freight for the Sons of Gwalia mine alone. That freight included new machinery and a month's stores of timber, cyanide and other requisites. On Saturday there was no more than a four hours' shift to do the unloading, and only Monday then remained in which to empty the trucks before the train picked them up on the Tuesday. Consequently demurrage was incurred and an amount of £9 was charged. This shows how difficult it is for mines to keep down their costs. I hope the Minister will consider this matter and see if that amount of demurrage cannot be remitted. A lot of fencing is being done on the Eastern goldfields pastoral areas, and the Government might well lower the freight on wire and wire netting required by pastoralists. Fencing is costing £60 or £70 a mile which represents a considerable item. The Government should assist in every way possible to further the development of the outer areas. The member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) referred to the Traffic Bill passed last session. There is no doubt that the new rates have borne more heavily upon teamsters than we expected. A ten-ton wagon now costs £18 per year, and when to that is added two tons of freight, the traffic fee is £20. This is a heavy impost on men in the outback country. In conclusion, I congratulate the Government on having shown such an improved financial position at the end of June. A month before the close of the financial year, the prospects did not look at all bright.

Mr. Latham: You should remember that we had a good harvest.

Mr. HERON: Yes, and capable management in the Treasury accounted for a good deal more. I feel confident that the Labour

Government will have a long term on the Treasury benches.

**MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH** (Beverley) [8.47]: I congratulate the Government on the state of the finances, although I am bound to believe the Leader of the Opposition when he says the results have been achieved somewhat at his expense. That is possibly so. No doubt all Treasurers do the same thing, so that probably the Leader of the Opposition is suffering from a dose of the medicine that he himself administered to others in the past.

Mr. Davy: That is a guess.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I regret that the expenditure of public moneys on group settlement in the South-West has not tended towards greater success. Had even a portion of that money been judiciously expended in other areas, the State would have received a more substantial return than it has got or is likely to get.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You do not know anything about it.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The hon. member's colleague told the House the scheme was so simple than anyone could understand it.

Mr. Latham: He said nothing of the sort.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: According to the Press he did say it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He was referring to men of ordinary intelligence.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I wish to refer to the criticism levelled against members of the Royal Commission. I believe the members of the Commission were men enough to judge the position on the evidence placed before them, and that was clear enough. Despite the optimism of those who stood by the scheme in the past. I believe the report of the Commission will be borne out by experience. The fundamental principle behind the group settlement scheme was to establish the dairying industry. Advocates of the scheme have pointed to Gippsland by way of comparison, but even there inquiry by Royal Commission on similar settlement showed that it was impossible to expect successful dairying on areas of 100 acres. As time progresses I believe that the South-West will improve as regards pastures, but how can anyone expect to make a success of dairying under present conditions? In the wheat areas there is ample opportunity to undertake dairying, provided it is a pay-

able proposition, and until it becomes a payable proposition, not even in the South-West or in any other portion of the State are people going to engage in it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are doing it in the South-West now.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Only on sweated child labour, with long hours and uncongenial conditions can dairying be made to pay in any locality in Western Australia.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Name one dairy farmer who employs sweated child labour.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I have a recollection of my childhood days.

Mr. Taylor: Things have changed since then.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Even to-day, except in connection with mixed farming on big areas, it is not possible to make a success of dairying.

Mr. Latham: You do not say it has not been made a success of in Victoria, New Zealand, and parts of New South Wales.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: In Victoria and New South Wales it is probably progressing in some centres, but it is not a paying proposition in other parts.

Mr. Latham: Not a paying proposition?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Only under the most favourable conditions where the natural pastures are good. If anyone wants to undertake dairying in Western Australia, he can do it as successfully in the wheat farming areas as in the South-West.

Mr. Latham: But the people there will not do it.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: And they are not going to do it in the South-West. There is a chance to carry on dairying successfully by growing ensilage, but that can be done in the dry areas. Dowerin, I think, held the record for the production of cream, and that is a dry enough area. If people want to tackle dairying, let them do it under more favourable conditions than prevail in the South-West. The group settlement proposition, on the face of it, did not contain the germ of success because the people were not suitable.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We put men in Parliament who are not suitable.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The group settlers should have had experience before being dumped on to their holdings. It would have been infinitely better if some scheme ensuring previous experience had been devised. I cannot see that there was

any policy at all in connection with the scheme; it was just haphazard.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could not understand it even if you could see it.

Hon. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am not blindly optimistic; I like to call a spade a spade. When I speak of group settlement I speak with some knowledge of dairying combined with mixed farming on suitable areas. I presume there will be an opportunity later on to discuss the report of the Royal Commission and I shall not labour it at this stage, except to express strong resentment of the criticism levelled at members of the Commission. Those gentlemen have done their best under trying circumstances. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) referred to the fact that other settlers in the South-West had not been called upon to give evidence. The chairman of the Commission was one of the oldest and most successful settlers in the South-West.

Mr. Davy: He made up his mind before he ever sat on the Commission.

The Premier: It was open to anyone to give evidence.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Of course it was. I object to the statement that the members of the Commission, who gave their time to grapple with a difficult question, were biassed. I daresay they were, and I daresay that the member who presented the minority report was biassed. He was biassed beforehand and he maintained his bias. To state that the other members of the Commission have deliberately decried the South-West is wrong. On the evidence, the report is a true and faithful one. One pleasing feature of the farming industry is the satisfactory price obtained for wheat during the season. That no doubt had a decided bearing on the financial position, combined of course with careful administration. It is consoling to the farming community to know that the wheat pool has been such a pronounced success.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Oh! Has it?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: In my opinion it has. The position of the pool at present is even more satisfactory than it was at this time last year, inasmuch as finance has been satisfactorily arranged with an overseas company, and it is not necessary to hang on to the tail of any Government or private institution in the State for finance. The position is very clear, and the trustees and the manager are deserving of great

praise for the successful results. I look forward to even a more satisfactory issue for next season, because things are looking very promising now. The season is late, but everything points to a good return. Given reasonable rains during the latter part of the season, I am satisfied the coming harvest will be better than the last. It is pleasing to know that the farmers of Western Australia have supported the pool to the extent of 14 million bushels out of a possible 23 millions. I am eagerly awaiting the legislation promised by the Governor's Speech, more especially the Vermin Bill. This is a matter which farming representatives are interested in very particularly. Without knowing the contents of the measure, I say that rabbits must come under it. There is a suggestion, I believe, that the Bill should cover only dingoes and foxes. That may be all right for the newer areas, but I belong to the older settled districts, where we have already dealt with the dingo problem, our present trouble being the rabbit. I regard with apprehension the suggestion that the existing rabbit-proof fence should be pulled up and the netting distributed among the farmers. It would be a disaster to Western Australia, because the fence stands as a barrier of protection to all coastal settlement. Moreover, if the fence were pulled up the netting would be useless for re-erection: it would not stand once it was taken out of the ground. The present season is one of the worst on record for rabbits. Serious depredations have already been made on crops throughout the State, and particularly in the eastern areas. I myself have seen paddocks of 250 acres entirely destroyed by rabbits. The early summer rains are mainly responsible, because they enabled the rabbits to breed up freely. Fencing is the only effective means of dealing with the pest, and I join with other members who have dealt with the question of netting. Every effort should be made to induce the Commonwealth Government to provide large quantities of netting, not only for the pastoral industry but also for the wheat industry. There is a scarcity of land for farmers' sons, owing to the reservation of large areas from selection. The difficulty of placing our boys on the land is being brought home to us. The Minister for Lands might well make special provision for the sons of Western Australian farmers. What better settler can

we get than the local lad, especially if he is keen on agricultural pursuits? At present he has to take his chance for a block with perhaps 50 or 60 applicants. It would be a fine thing if the Minister for Lands could set aside an area for the sons of local farmers, as suggested, in the Eastern districts. I go even further and say that Western Australian farmers' sons should be given preference over migrants. In many cases the father would be willing, and to a certain extent able, to assist his boy, especially if the son's selection were handy to the father's property. I have my annual grievance about the Armadale-Brookton railway. I see it stands favourably on the list of proposed railways, and I would like the Government to make some special effort to get that list reduced. The line in question has been before various Governments for many years, and the first section has been surveyed. I would like to see effect given to the promise to construct that first section as soon as possible. I wish to draw attention to the recent conference at Fremantle on the proposal to construct a railway from Brookton via Armadale to the port. In the same connection I would call attention to the pamphlet issued by Mr. W. N. Hedges on agricultural railways, in which pamphlet that gentleman put forward a scheme to utilise grades in favour of the load. I look upon that as a statesmanlike proposal, and commend it to members of this House. The proposal would serve a very useful purpose, if only by doing away with the bottle-neck through which all the traffic from the eastern wheat area has to pass on its way from Midland Junction to Perth and Fremantle. Fremantle is the natural port for a large proportion of the products grown in the eastern areas. Although the Premier did not give a very favourable reply to the deputation which waited upon him, I believe that fact was due to the loophole which was afforded him, and through which he was able to wriggle out of a very unsatisfactory position, as far as he was concerned. He made a foolish suggestion—that the farmers themselves should provide the money for the construction of the railway.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: An unheard of proposal!

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The Premier also suggested that the money should be free of interest. However, it is a serious matter



to the people concerned. I would add that the suggestions of a gentleman like Mr. Hedges, who does know something about railway construction, are worth considering by those who control the destinies of the State. I cannot let the opportunity pass without referring to the non-realisation of the Premier's promised reduction in railway freights. That promise was given when he thrust upon us increased land taxation last session. The reduced freights have certainly not become appreciable up to the present time. At all events, I have failed to see them. The imposition of the increased land tax is, however, perfectly apparent.

The Premier: The reduction in freights is felt in the railway returns month by month.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Possibly, but the reduction is spread over so large a section of the community that it is not realised by those upon whom the increased land tax falls most heavily.

Mr. Panton: Surely one section of the community is not paying the whole of the land tax.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I know that my land tax has gone up to double what it was last year, while my railway freights are on about the same level as last year. I wish to refer now to the Federal road grant. The conditions of contract in connection with that grant are not what they should be, especially in new districts. I believe the Minister controlling the grant is not absolutely harsh in his attitude, which is imposed upon him by the Federal authorities. The subletting of contracts is a matter of great importance to local governing bodies, and to insist upon the Federal conditions as they are can only increase the cost of road construction. Most road board districts have quite a number of contractors who have worked for the board during many years. Those men have plants of their own, but under the conditions imposed they are debarred from contracting because of not being in a position to put up a guarantee for the completion of work. I wish to impress upon the Minister the necessity for getting that condition waived, because its only effect can be to increase the cost of construction. Another desirable point is the removal of the objectionable feature that any man owning a block of land shall be debarred from contracting. Under the conditions, no farmer

can contract. Now, in new districts many of the settlers have proved the best contractors the local authority could obtain. So long as prices are not cut, I fail to see why settlers should be debarred from a chance of getting over what is possibly a trying time by contracting for a local job. The barring of farmers in this respect has tended to create much discontent. I recently had the pleasure of taking the Minister for Agriculture through my electorate, where we passed through quite a large area of light land. The light lands question is not one that can be dealt with under one heading, because there are many different classes of light lands. In the Toodyay electorate, for instance, the light lands are not similar to those in the central part of my electorate, nor to those in the eastern area. In the central portion of my electorate there are large areas of pure sand plain country, which by cultivation can be made to carry large numbers of sheep. That condition does not apply in the eastern area. The member for York (Mr. Latham) will agree with me that to grant large areas of light lands there would be a mistake, because it is only by cultivation that those lands can be made useful. Taken up in large areas, sheep would prove a success in the more central districts, where conditions are entirely different, where feed follows the cultivation of light lands and water is readily obtainable. I commend to the Minister the question of light lands, and trust that when he is dealing with the matter he will bear in mind the various qualities of light land existing in Western Australia. I hope he will not introduce a measure which may perhaps suit only certain districts. Another local matter to which I must refer and which is also another hardy annual, concerns the Avondale estate. It is controlled by the Group Settlement Department for cattle holding purposes. I voiced my protest against this position some time ago, and I am assured by the Minister that it must continue for some time. I look forward, however, to the future, when the estate will be handed back to the Agricultural Department, under whose direction it should be put to more reasonable use. It is now controlled by the Lands Department and it is an eyesore to my constituents. I commend to the Minister for Agriculture the desirability of taking charge of it again as soon as possible so that it may again be

used for its proper purpose, the production of pure seed wheat, or research work in connection with stock diseases and so forth. That brings me to the dreaded sheep disease that has again made its appearance in this State. It is called "Beverley disease" although it makes its appearance in other parts, and I suppose it will be designated as such for all time. The disease was localised in its name because there are a number of stud breeders in the Beverley district, and the scourge broke out amongst these valuable sheep and, of course, the owners made a song about it. That was the first time the disease had been brought under notice and for that reason, seeing that the complaints came from the Beverley district, it was called the Beverley sheep disease. I thank the Minister for the appointment of a veterinary pathologist whose laboratory has been stationed at Beverley. He has been handicapped through lack of plant, but that is being remedied, and I appreciate the action of the Minister in taking the matter in hand. I hope beneficial results will follow. He has not confined his attention to the Beverley district, but has authorised the establishment of field laboratories at Brookton, Pingelly, and, I think, York. Thus it will be seen that the Government are attacking the disease from several points, and I hope that tangible results will follow. I trust that by the end of the next financial year the Government will be able to report that the finances are in an even better position than is the case to-day.

**MR. HUGHES** (East Perth) [9.18]: It is gratifying to find that the deficit has been reduced to a very small figure, and I take it that now, after long years of waiting, the metropolitan area will receive some consideration. We hear so much about the neglect of the country districts and the wonderful work done on behalf of the metropolitan area that I confess that, during the last 12 years, I have not seen anything done for the metropolitan area.

**Mr. Latham**: You are getting cheap electricity.

**Mr. HUGHES**: No, we are not.

**Mr. Latham**: Well, the City Council get it for less than it costs to produce.

**Mr. HUGHES**: But the people are not getting cheap electricity.

**Mr. Latham**: That is your fault.

**Mr. HUGHES**: The people in the metropolitan area have paid dearly for their electricity and have done so for years past. A few years ago, I believe, we paid 6d. per unit for electricity. I want to congratulate the Government on the extension of the 44-hour working week. With the advance of scientific application to industry there is no need for any worker to labour for more than 44 hours. When a man has done 44 hours' work he has done a fair week's work. There is another provision, however, that has not been extended to the metropolitan workers. I refer to the small question of long service leave. For years past the more fortunate clerical workers in the State service, who commence work at 9 a.m. and knock off at 4.30 or 5 p.m., and who work under better conditions than the men who drive engines, for instance, in all sorts of weather, have enjoyed the privilege of long service leave. I hope it will not be many months before long service leave is granted to other workers in the metropolitan area. There are one or two questions of importance that appear to have been omitted from the Governor's Speech. I refer particularly to the question of workers' homes. If there is one thing that stands as a monument to the memory of the previous Labour Government it is the introduction of that scheme. I know of men who were able to get their homes under the conditions laid down by that Government, and all through the period of rising rents, they enjoyed moderate payments that went towards the purchase of the home for themselves, whereas had they been renting the home they would have had to pay double the rent at least. One of the biggest problems the working man has to face is to find a home for himself so that he may have security of tenure. He desires that so that he may be safe from the ravages of the rapacious landlord. There is no person in the world so rapacious as the landlord. The work done by the Workers' Homes Board is reflected in the annual report. While I do not propose to make an extensive examination of the financial statement, there is one point to which I would refer. In the last report furnished by the Auditor General there was one reference to the then Treasurer who had transferred £7,000 from the Workers' Homes Board to Consolidated Revenue, for which transfer there was no authority. The Auditor General adversely criticised that action. I suggested to the

present Treasurer that an adjustment should be made, transferring the money back to the Workers' Homes Board with a corresponding debit against the accumulated deficit. I do not find any evidence in the latest financial statement to indicate that the money has been transferred back to the Workers' Homes Board. On the other hand, I find a striking statement in the appropriation account. It shows that after appropriating £2,382 to the sinking fund, £189 to capital reserve, and two other small amounts, a very in-offensive item appears as follows:—"Treasury revenue, £3,782." I wonder what that item means. Does it mean that another £3,782, representing portion of the accumulated profit of the Workers' Homes Board has been transferred to Consolidated Revenue? If it does, it means that £10,000 has been taken from the Workers' Homes Board and transferred to Consolidated Revenue in two years. If that is so, it is a violation of the law. There is no authority for any such transfer. The Workers' Homes Board is a trust operating under the authority of Parliament and the accumulated profits certainly belong to the trust. If there is no provision for that money to be transferred to Consolidated Revenue, I take it that that money should be kept by the board and used for their own purposes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It cannot be, under the law.

Mr. HUGHES: Then the law should be amended. It cannot be transferred to revenue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course it can.

Mr. HUGHES: The Auditor General told you you had no authority to do so, but you did transfer it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Have you asked this Government if they have any authority for doing it?

Mr. HUGHES: I suppose the Auditor General will say that in his report.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At any rate the money cannot be used for workers' homes.

Mr. HUGHES: If there is one thing upon which we differ from those sitting in opposition it is on the question of State trading.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We believe in workers' homes.

Mr. HUGHES: We did not have many during the hon. member's years of administration.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, we did.

Mr. HUGHES: The Workers' Homes Board was hamstrung by the Leader of the Opposition who had £15,000 of the board's money lying at the Treasury on which 1 per cent. was allowed although the board was paying 4½ per cent. for it. That does not seem to be a very enthusiastic way of expressing appreciation of the work done by the board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you had £10,000 in an ordinary bank you would not get 1 per cent.

Mr. HUGHES: I would be a very poor commercial man if I borrowed money at 4½ per cent. and lent it at 1 per cent. It is not right that money belonging to the Workers' Homes Board should be transferred to current revenue and not be utilised for the erection of more workers' homes. If it is true that there is no authority for the accumulated profits to be capitalised, then the Act should be amended. The £10,000 that has been transferred to Consolidated Revenue would mean the erection of another 12 or 13 houses for working men.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We bought 1,000 in one order.

Mr. HUGHES: If that £10,000 were returned to the Workers' Homes Board it would tend towards the alleviation of the difficulties of people in the metropolitan area and in the other parts of the State as well. If that money were re-invested in houses, housing would grow. I am satisfied that one of the greatest evils the working classes suffer from is the inability to own their own homes. Only by such a scheme as the Workers' Homes Board will many people be able to own their own homes and secure accommodation at reasonable rates. I had hoped that the scheme would come in for revision and a general overhaul, and that the board would be authorised to borrow more money, or that more money would be borrowed and invested in the scheme.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It will be, this year.

Mr. HUGHES: In 1912 the limit allowed to a borrower was £550 and in those days a very fine house could be built for that sum. I have seen houses built for that sum in 1911 and 1912 that would be valued to-day at £1,000. To-day, with the increased cost of building it is not possible to erect ever a four-roomed house for £550. The argument is used that if the amount be increased it is then beyond the capacity of the worker to pay interest

and sinking fund. There is not much in that contention. When, in 1912, the Act was passed, the railway man's basic wage was 54s. per week. To-day it is 80s. So, if in 1912 a man on a basic wage of 54s. could purchase a home at £550, it is only reasonable to say that on a basic wage of 80s. he can pay interest and sinking fund on a home costing £814.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Everything, including the all-round cost of living, has gone up in the meantime.

Mr. HUGHES: Still, as I say, if he could pay so much then, he can pay so much more now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think he could.

Mr. HUGHES: Does the hon. member not know that the people have to pay it in rent to-day? If a man has his own home, he not only has the security of that home, but it gives him an additional interest in life. War service homes have been built at a cost of £800, and those who have the homes are paying interest and sinking fund on that amount.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is too much for them to pay.

Mr. HUGHES: But if they do not pay it on their own homes, they have to pay it in rent. The amount under the Act should be extended to at least £750, which is £50 below pro rata on the basic wage of 1912 and that of to-day. We are told that money is available to the Government at 6 per cent. It would be a boon to the workers if the Government were to invest another half million in the Workers' Homes Scheme and allow the people to have the money at, say, 6½ per cent. At present no money is available for residential homes at less than 7 per cent. We often hear about the unfortunate landlord who invests in property and has no return from his money. Still, I see no record of big landlords going through the bankruptcy court. Most of the wealthy men in Perth have made their money from property. I have tried to determine the natural rent a person ought to pay for a dwelling. From the Commonwealth Statistician's figures I learn that the great bulk of those who marry, do so between the ages of 20 years and 30 years. I do not know whether that is the age at which one reaches his mental zenith, but certainly it is the most popular age for marriage. Then the statistics show that at least 25 per cent. of the people in this State die before reaching 20 years of age. Of the

remainder, 40 per cent. of those who pass 60 years of age seem to go on well past 65. Altogether the statistics show that, generally, when people marry they live for 35 or 40 years. Now if a married couple occupy a dwelling for 35 years, and if during that period they pay 10s. per week rent, they would pay altogether £910. So it may be said that on the statistics the natural rent a married couple should pay is 10s. per week, plus rates and taxes, which, of course, would not amount to more than 5s. per week. If we were housed scientifically, and if the community provided us with houses just as the community provides us with streets, 15s. would seem to be the natural rent payable for a dwelling house. But, instead of paying 15s., people have to pay 25s. and 30s. The fact that people are obliged to pay twice what they ought to pay in rent is due to the curse of interest. Various economic definitions of interest have been given, but interest always seems to me to be something for nothing, something one person in a difficult position pays to his more fortunate neighbour. As a result of this system we find the great mass of the people, through having to pay something for nothing, are deprived of all opportunity for owning their own homes. A person earning £400 is usually in a position to raise sufficient to buy a home for himself from private finances; but a man on £4 10s. or £5 per week finds it impossible to pay £100 deposit on his home, and so he has to go on being exploited while he remains on earth. I hope ways and means will be found to transfer to the Workers' Homes Board the money that is rightly theirs, and I trust that the scheme will be extended as I have suggested. Although there appears to be a building boom in Perth at present, and although statistics quoted at the Arbitration Court tell us that there are 297 bricklayers and 170 plasterers employed, we find that there are practically no apprentices learning those trades. The result is that whilst our local boys are deprived of opportunity to learn those trades, we are obliged to import our adult artisans in those trades from overseas. The argument used is that, owing to the intermittent nature of the trade, building contractors cannot have apprentices. Something should be done, even on the lines laid down in the Eastern States, where boys are apprenticed, not to a firm, but to a board. It is a difficult job in Western Australia to find work for a boy. While we are not teaching our boys those

two trades, we are training them for occupations that really are non-existent. The report of the Education Department deals with the boys being trained at the James-street school for different walks in life. The commercial and professional courses are open to boys and girls alike, in addition to which there is an industrial course for boys and a domestic course for girls. In 1924 the numbers taking those courses were as follows:—Commercial, 910; professional, 755. For the money being expended to fit the children for after life, only 1,226 are being taught domestic or industrial work, while 1,665 are being taught professional and commercial work. The Commonwealth statistics for Australia as a whole, I take it, are a fairly safe guide, perhaps with some modification, for Western Australia. According to those figures the percentages of bread-winners are:—professional 8.7, domestic 9.1, commercial 15.3, transport and communication .9, industrial 31.2, primary 25.8, independent .9. According to those figures 31 per cent. of the population are engaged in industrial pursuits, and only 23 per cent. in professional and commercial work. There may be a greater percentage of industrial workers in the Eastern States as compared with Western Australia, but on those figures we were last year training 1,665 boys and girls in the professional and commercial courses whereas there were opportunities for only 613 of them. Thus we were spending money to train the remaining 1,052 for occupations which there was no chance of their obtaining. The money so expended could well be diverted to vocational training. It should be made available to the technical school for trade classes. It is useless to train a boy for commercial or professional life if there is no opening for him. He simply becomes a labourer. While the technical school is starved for funds to teach trades which would be useful for those boys, money is being expended without benefit to the children or to the State. The education system in that respect particularly should be modified. Eventually we shall be obliged to adopt some form of vocational training; otherwise we shall have to import building trade artisans from the Old Country while our own boys lack opportunity to engage in the building industry.

Mr. Latham: Why not encourage apprentices?

Mr. HUGHES: If the hon. member will get the Master Builders' Association members to take apprentices, I will supply him with plenty.

Mr. Latham: The conditions are so difficult.

Mr. HUGHES: We can supply all the apprentices they will take.

Mr. Latham: On your own terms.

Mr. HUGHES: On the terms laid down by the Arbitration Court. Does the hon. member suggest that the master builders should be free from the obligations of the law? I thought he stood very staunchly for law and order.

Mr. Latham: I am not suggesting that they should break the law.

Mr. HUGHES: Surely the hon. member does not suggest that the master builders should be exempt from the law?

Mr. Latham: I say the unions make it too difficult for them to take apprentices.

Mr. HUGHES: They do not. The building trade unions will be only too glad to see more boys apprenticed to bricklaying, plastering, etc.

Mr. Lambert: The member for York thinks that all underpaid labour should be monopolised by the farmers.

Mr. Latham: Has the member for Coolgardie awakened?

Mr. HUGHES: Here is an anomaly. At the University adult students can be educated free of cost, and yet fees are charged to adults attending the technical school. That is an absurd discrimination. If a young lady has a wealthy parent who can send her to the University in a £600 motor car, with a 100-guinea fur on her shoulders and a footman to lift it off before she enters the University, she may attend free of charge. If a young lady is slaving all day in a shop and wishes to improve herself by taking instruction at the technical school at night, she has to pay a fee.

Mr. Latham: Then charge the other people fees, also.

Mr. HUGHES: If we are to have fees, the people able to pay should pay, but I am opposed to asking fees from people unable to pay, while exempting those in a position to pay. This is an anomaly that has escaped the attention of the Government, or I am satisfied it would have been rectified. The report of the Education Department shows that the num-

ber of adult students has decreased, regarding which the director commented, "The reimposition of class fees for students over 21 years accounts for the decrease of numbers in the last three years." Although the decrease was small, it is a great pity that any young person working for his living and prepared to develop his talents by studying at the technical school at night, should be debarred from so doing on account of the imposition of fees.

Mr. Latham: How much are the fees?

Mr. HUGHES: That does not matter; they are sufficient to preclude certain people from obtaining the benefits of the school.

Mr. Latham: You suggest that they would rather spend the money on picture shows than on attending the school?

Mr. HUGHES: That platitude is worn out.

Mr. Latham: It is not worn out; it is only too true.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member's friends, who attend the free University, would sooner spend it on motor cars than in payment for knowledge.

Mr. Lambert: It shows want of knowledge when he does not know the fees charged at a technical school. It is about in keeping with his knowledge of other things.

Mr. HUGHES: No person should be deprived of education because of the imposition of fees. The technical school offers facilities for the education of the masses. Some people boast of the work of the University, but I believe the work of the technical school is much superior. The people privileged to attend the University are generally able to go in their own time; they are not obliged to earn their living. If people are obliged to earn their living in the daytime, they cannot take advantage of the free education at the University. On the other hand, any person earning his living and battling for additional education can go to the technical school at night and receive all possible assistance. It is remarkable what pains the technical school instructors take to give to adults some of the advantages of education. These instructors have never received the credit due to them for their efforts to educate the people. I hope the Government will lift the fees levied on adult students at the technical school. It is not as if the institution were in need of money. With a little reorganisation of the staff, the amount charged to students could be saved. We

have a director of technical education. Why do we need an assistant director? I am aware that in the military, if there is a colonel, there must be a lieutenant-colonel, a major and so on, so that the colonel may not have to give an order direct to a private. My encyclopædic friend from Coolgardie reminds me that the assistant director is paid an additional £400 for supervising the School of Mines.

The Premier: No, he gets only half-salary from each school.

Mr. HUGHES: Where is the need for an assistant director? I have a suspicion that there came a time when a lecturer had to be dismissed from the school as a surplus officer. During my 15 years' experience as a civil servant I found that if a man receiving £4 10s. or £5 per week became a surplus officer, there was not the slightest compunction in retiring him as such. Whenever three jobs could be rolled into two and a junior clerk could be got rid of, he was retired as a surplus officer. But somehow when a leading official became surplus, there was always solicitude for his welfare, and instead of his being retired, another job was found for him. The only instance that I know of a leading officer having been retired was when one had the misfortune to mix himself up with a strike.

Mr. Panton: Would you apply that to members of Parliament?

Mr. HUGHES: I think we could abolish half this House and the whole of another place.

Mr. Lambert: Speak for yourself.

Mr. HUGHES: With a reorganisation of the technical school staff, there should be no difficulty in eliminating the obnoxious charges to adult students without incurring additional expense. Conspicuous by its absence from the Governor's Speech is reference to a Fair Rents Bill. There is no need for me to detail the various ramps put up regarding rents in the city of Perth. When speaking on the subject two years ago I pointed out that the idea of certain landlords was to run up the rent roll, make a quick sale of property and clear a good profit. That is exactly what is happening. Bairds' Arcade was bought for £48,000. The purchaser raised the rents from £4 10s. a week to £14 a week, and after enjoying that beautiful rent roll for two years, he sold the property for £80,000. That means that in the short space of two

years the man shrewd enough to buy Bairds' Arcade and sell it again has netted £32,000, in addition to the enormous rents that he collected for the two years. I suppose if we could get at the figures we would find that he had cleared £50,000 on the deal. No doubt many people will say that was good business acumen. It was certainly bad business for the community which has to pay. The £50,000 that has been converted to the use of one individual will come from the pockets of the workers of the metropolitan area and the country districts. No wealth is created by a man simply transferring one property to another. Every reduction in rent means so much reduction in the standard of living for the working people who buy the commodities that pass through the property in question. The individual who has made a profit of £50,000 in two years has made it by creating a reduction in the standard of living for the workers. As time goes on, unless something is done to check this sort of thing, the same properties will in 50 years be changing hands for £200,000.

Mr. Lambert: It will not trouble us much then.

Mr. HUGHES: It may trouble some of us. I do not like to contemplate the time when the hon. member will not be in this Chamber.

Mr. Lambert: Contemplate something nearer home.

Mr. HUGHES: The increase in the value of property is in every case due to the community.

Mr. North: It shows that the place is prosperous.

Mr. HUGHES: It shows that we are increasing the population through our immigration policy. Every person we bring over the wharf adds to the value of city property.

The Premier: It shows the enormous amount we must be spending on public works for which property owners are getting value.

Mr. HUGHES: If in 30 years we treble our population we shall find owners of properties disposing of them at treble their present value.

Mr. Latham: What will you do about it?

Mr. HUGHES: I hope we shall have some legislation to divert that unearned increment from the wrongful owner to the community, which is the rightful owner.

Mr. North: I understand the New South Wales Fair Rents Act is being amended, because it was not satisfactory.

Mr. HUGHES: It may not be satisfactory to some people, but there were many satisfactory reductions in rent. It means that some people were fortunate enough to own the best land in the city. They can well talk immigration and be pleased to see people coming to this country, for on every migrant they are levying a toll. If it could be financed it would be a sound proposition for the Government to resume all the land in the city and collect the rents charged upon it. In 50 or a hundred years' time they would derive a substantial return.

The Premier: The Sydney City Council have done that already in a large way.

Mr. HUGHES: And they have reduced rents also. Our migration policy is largely run for the benefit of certain landowners. It is a pity there is an obstacle to the passing of legislation to divert the money to the community.

Mr. Latham: There is a change now. Last year it was a question of cheap labour.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not remember cheap labour being discussed on the Fair Rents Bill.

Mr. Latham: It was discussed in respect of migrants.

Mr. HUGHES: I know that another place is the obstacle. They are like the Assistant Director of Education, a surplus civil servant who could well be dispensed with. I do not know whether the Speech contains all the legislation proposed for this session, but I do hope the Premier will consider the question of introducing a Fair Rents Bill. Business men in the city are being squeezed. The man who has worked for a lifetime to build up a business and made a competence for his old age is being squeezed by the landlord to the last penny. In some cases when a lease expires the landlord requires sufficient ingoing to cover the value of the goodwill of the business. This means that the landlord is actually selling back to the business man the goodwill that the latter has built up. I fail to see how the community can tolerate that sort of thing. I now come to the vexed question of Carnival Square. The previous Government gave a certain individual the lease of a large tract of public property, for which he has been able to extract £200 a week out of the pockets of voluntary organisations. These organisations have been engaged in raising

money for charitable or other worthy purposes, and have suffered great injury as the result of this rental. I understand the lease will expire very shortly. I do not know whether the Government have any control over the Gardens Board. If so, I hope they will see that the lease is not renewed. If the Gardens Board can act independently, we should sound a warning upon the subject.

Mr. Latham: What about the people who are gambling there?

Mr. HUGHES: Money has to be raised for certain worthy objects. Public-spirited people give their services in a voluntary capacity night after night. Tired shop girls, and women who have done a day's housework, go there for two or three hours to assist in this object. The individual in question, however, takes £200 a week from their efforts. It is a scandal. These pernicious forms of gambling are necessary in order to pay that rent. I have been concerned in running two or three carnivals. I admit that anything in the shape of a sweat wheel should not be utilised, but they are brought into use in order to pay the landlord this rent. If the organisers were not obliged to pay this rent there would be no need for them to use these gambling devices. Carnivals could be run with minor forms of gambling with which very little evil is connected. The investments could be limited to 6d. or 1s., and a person's losses could be restricted to something very small. I do not think any objection could be taken to a small gambling affair like a chocolate wheel, for these are used at church bazaars and such like arrangements. The provision of a table with unlimited facilities for gambling is, however, a menace to young people. I am quite sure that if it were not for the high rental, many of the organisations could raise money without the use of these gambling devices. I should like a statement from the Premier with regard to the renewal of this lease.

Mr. Latham: I suppose that is where you are going to have that boxing contest of yours.

Mr. HUGHES: I will have one if I can find an opponent. We have been fortunate in obtaining the services of one or two engineers for the Public Works Department. I wonder that we have been able to induce an engineer to come to this State. We

have had the sad spectacle of civil servants being practically hounded to death by scurrilous rags published in this State, I am sorry to say, in some cases by members of Parliament. The hands of our engineers are tied. They are not allowed to reply to criticism levelled against them. I believe the Press should be at liberty to indulge in fair and reasonable criticism, but there is a vast difference between that and the hounding tactics indulged in by the yellow Press concerning engineers in State employment. Week after week we read in the "Sunday Times," which is not satisfied with having the scalp of the late C. Y. O'Connor hanging at their belt, 40 pages of scurrilous matter, less the pages of advertisements that appear in the issue. It is a wonder they do not go about like Red Indians clad in feathers and with scalps hanging at the waist belts. Every Sunday they are running down men whose intellects the State can ill afford to lose, and are hounding them to death. I wonder if the Press has any standard of morality. I also wonder if those who edit the leading Press of the State have any conception of that quality. Does it ever enter into their minds that there is a difference between truth and untruth? Cub reporters are sent out as go-getters, acting under instructions, to get copy about people who fall foul of their chiefs. They have no regard for the truth. Whatever they can imagine, they put into print; and if an attempt is made to correct misstatements, even the correction is mutilated. That seems a terrible way for a young man to earn his living. If he can get his living by Press work only through becoming a public liar, he had better go out and steal and take the risk of the law's displeasure. Is there any morality at all in the mental composition of the gentlemen who control the daily and the weekly Press? The doctrine that has gained currency in our law courts, that public men should not be too thin-skinned, has been carried to excess. Quite recently there was a case in which a civil servant's reputation was torn to shreds by the Press. When he went to the law courts for redress, the old familiar doctrine was trotted out, "You don't want to be too thin-skinned." Undoubtedly civil servants and public men should not be too thin-skinned, but there is a wide margin between being too thin-skinned and the right of a public man or a civil servant to have a character. Once



a man attains a decent position in the Civil Service or in public life, the Press thinks he has no right to have a character; and the courts, when appealed to, tell him not to be too thin-skinned. I dare say there is some justification for that maxim about thin-skinnedness, but a man should be permitted to take exception to unfair criticism that tears his character to pieces.

Mr. North: You want a Fair Press Bill.

Mr. Latham: Let us wait until his case is decided before introducing that measure.

Mr. HUGHES: I know that I incurred the enmity of a leading paper simply because I booted its reporter out of my office.

The Premier: He appears to have been too thin-skinned.

Mr. HUGHES: He did not take it kindly at all. Young cub reporters publish incorrect statements knowing them to be incorrect. They give an account of a member having done a certain thing at a certain place, whereas he was nowhere near the place. Next day they come round to his office wanting to know if he has something for them. In the case I have referred to, the cub reporter got the right thing.

Mr. Latham: Did you put the office boy on to him?

Mr. HUGHES: We put on to him what will be put on to the hon. member if he comes round.

Mr. Latham: I shall be delighted to call.

Mr. HUGHES: Unfortunately, our judiciary holds an exalted position, and has not the benefit of the criticism which others in public life receive.

The Premier: It is not even permitted to attack judges here.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, it is, provided we do not attack their integrity. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) spoke of the depreciation of public men in the eyes of the people. If the hon. member deplores such a thing, I do not know how he can have any sympathy with a Press that employs youths wilfully to misrepresent public men and to tear the reputation of civil servants to pieces. The member for Claremont should protest against conduct of that description.

Mr. North: As I have said, you want a fair Press Bill.

Mr. HUGHES: We want a little more firmness with pressman, and a little less of that doctrine of thin-skinnedness in our law courts. As the hour is getting late, I shall deal with only one more subject—a subject that is entirely domestic. It has been mooted

to increase the salaries of members of Parliament from £400 to £600 a year. In my opinion, such an increase is not justified. We know that being a member of Parliament is a part-time job. We know that members of Parliament are obliged to follow other occupations to fill in their spare time.

Mr. Teesdale: All of them, or some of them?

Mr. HUGHES: The great majority of them. I was about to say that in the case of North-Western members an additional allowance for travelling expenses is justified. One can well understand that the cost of representing a North-West constituency, obliging the member to travel over vast distances, is easily a couple of hundred pounds more than the cost of representing a metropolitan constituency. But I do not see how the representatives of metropolitan constituencies, or of constituencies convenient to the city by reason of railway communication, can justify the increase of their salaries by another £200 a year. One hon. member has said that he has never been afraid in all his life to ask for an increase of wages. But this is not asking for an increase of wages. This is taking it. This is job control in excelsis. It is as if Tom Walsh told the seamen to go to the offices of the shipping companies and take an extra £1 a week each. Would not such a suggestion be trumpeted throughout the country as job control? One does not go into Parliament for the purpose of getting rich. I take it the spirit underlying election to Parliament is that one is prepared to offer his services to the people as a representative.

Mr. Latham: What would you say to abolishing payment of members?

Mr. HUGHES: There is a complete answer to that. Between payment of members and the granting of an increase of £200 a wide difference exists. We know that if payment of members were abolished, the working classes could not be represented in Parliament.

Mr. Latham: Twenty minutes a day you said at one time.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member has got hold of another lie published in the capitalistic Press. What I said was that during the time Parliament was prorogued my parliamentary duties only occupied me for an hour each day. I repeat that statement. Is it such a horrible thing for a member of Parliament to tell the truth to his constituents?

Mr. Teesdale: There is no reason why you should take your case as an illustration. I

put in every day of my life on the mats of Minister's doors, trying to get information, and in the afternoon and evening I come here.

Mr. HUGHES: I am more successful when I go to Ministers' offices for information. I am not obliged to wait for hours.

Mr. Teesdale: You have the right of entree.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not think the hon. member is justified in saying that.

Mr. Taylor: The member for Roebourne is not referring to the present Government.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not think the member for Roebourne is denied the right of entree to Ministers.

Mr. Teesdale: I have lost more time over my own Ministers than over the present Ministers.

Mr. HUGHES: I accept the hon. member's explanation. There is no use in trying to beg the question. I know what my electors want.

Mr. Latham: I know what they will want shortly.

Mr. HUGHES: We know what the electors of the member for York want, too. However, from my point of view, this is a part-time job.

Mr. Wilson: It is not a part-time job.

Mr. HUGHES: What is the use of saying that? How many members of this House are running businesses or are otherwise employed?

Mr. Sleeman: How many are not?

Mr. HUGHES: There is nothing to prevent members who are not running other businesses from running them.

Mr. Taylor: What about the principle of one man one job?

Mr. HUGHES: That is not a principle of my party.

Mr. Taylor: Then you know nothing about it, brother. You are only a Labour fledgling. All the old principles went when you got in.

Mr. HUGHES: There was a time when the hon. member interjecting was a Labour fledgling and dealt out his lectures with a stirrup iron. The stirrup iron was his logical method. I wonder what the friends of the hon. member would have said if during the recent trouble, the waitresses had waited on their employers armed with stirrup irons? However, I do not think for a moment that this proposal to increase parliamentary salaries will see the light of the day. I shall be very surprised if the Premier is induced to bring down a Bill for parting with another £16,000

annually to give an increase of salary to 80 members. As regards my own constituency, this is a part-time job. It has been a part-time job for my predecessors also. The last holder of the East Perth seat had other avocations to fill in his time. The member preceding him had an occupation which kept him busy for 10 or 12 hours a day. Going further back, one finds a member for East Perth who ran one of the biggest law practices in Perth. Apart from the North-West members, to whose special situation I have already referred, there is nothing to justify a general increase of £200 a year.

Mr. Teesdale: I would not vote for a special increase, but I would vote for an all-round increase, because I think the job is worth it. I am going to vote for it, too.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member is at liberty to do so.

Mr. Teesdale: I deny you the right to say this is a part-time job for everybody. You have never inquired into the position.

Mr. HUGHES: I spoke for myself.

Mr. Teesdale: Thank God!

Mr. HUGHES: If it is not a part-time job, how is it that so many members of this Chamber are engaged in commercial pursuits?

Mr. Teesdale: I have no business.

Mr. HUGHES: How is it that so many members engage in other pursuits to fill in their vacant time?

Mr. Wilson: How many do that?

Mr. HUGHES: A good number. I could supply from memory quite a long list of names of members, on both sides of the Chamber, who are running commercial businesses or engage in other avocations. I am not referring particularly to the other side of the House.

Mr. Sleeman: They must be neglecting one of the jobs.

Member: It is an argument for reduction of the number of members.

Mr. HUGHES: Nothing of the sort. I know that we cannot have one man one vote, owing to the peculiar nature of the State, by reason of its scattered population. One man one vote simply cannot be carried into effect because we have practically half the representation in the metropolitan area. But there is a vast difference between departing from the principle of one man one

vote and having a single member representing 14,000 electors, as the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) does, and having another member representing 350 constituents. That is a very wide departure indeed. I would welcome a Redistribution of Seats Bill, but not a measure which would give more representation to districts already well represented. We might well have another four or five seats in the metropolitan area. Three members of this House between them represent 33,000 or 34,000 electors. It is a question of the voting strength in this House.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about my area?

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member has in his constituency three electorates. He represents 14,000 electors, and if there were an equitable redistribution he would not have more than 6,000 electors.

Mr. Clydesdale: I cannot do my job in 20 minutes.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member has another job. He does not regard his Parliamentary job as a full time job.

Mr. Clydesdale: Of course not.

Mr. Lindsay: Do you not call it a full time job sitting here until midnight?

Mr. Lamond: We work more than 44 hours.

Mr. HUGHES: Has the hon. member worked 48 hours a week since he has been in Parliament?

Mr. Lamond: I have worked at least 50 hours every week since I have been in this House.

Mr. HUGHES: Then the hon. member has done more than his cut and should go home. I know I shall be regarded as a "nark" on this question, but I am not prepared to vote contrary to what I think is right, much as I may desire to be in accord with the great bulk of members of this Chamber.

Mr. Clydesdale: Would you draw the extra salary if it were agreed to?

Mr. HUGHES: I would not leave it; I would put it to better use. If hon. members suggest that the extra salary is to be drawn to be distributed among others, that aspect has not been put to me before.

Mr. Clydesdale: You have placed that construction upon it yourself.

Mr. HUGHES: That seems to be the inference.

Mr. Teesdale: It costs some hon. members £200 a year for other purposes, not including the cost of living.

Mr. HUGHES: I know one hon. member of this Parliament who gives away £1,200 a year in donations to charities and so on.

Mr. Taylor: He would give it if he were not a member of Parliament.

Mr. HUGHES: That is so, but is that to be used as an argument to suggest that that money should be recouped by the State.

Mr. Teesdale: We are not talking about philanthropists. There are not too many of them in this House.

Mr. HUGHES: I wish to mention one other matter that concerns my electorate. I refer to the reclamation along the foreshore of the river. I wish to pay a tribute to the Minister for Works for what he has done in cleaning up the foreshore. One can almost see Victoria Park growing day by day. It is now a little city on its own. At the back of the Mt. Lawley railway station and around Maylands an astonishing number of dwellings have been erected since the extension of the tramway line to Inglewood. Despite this advance we have in the midst of this development the river from the Causeway to the Maylands bridge, which is an eyesore and a menace to the community. The late Government brought in an expert to advise upon the best means to be taken to deal with the difficulty. Colonel Longley reported on the work and his estimate for cleaning up the river was £65,000. That referred to work around the filter beds. The Minister for Works has had plans and estimates prepared for the reclamation of the foreshore from the Causeway to Maylands and unfortunately the departmental estimate largely exceeds that of Colonel Longley. Perhaps the Colonel did not have before him sufficient data, or perhaps he did not have sufficient time to go into the matter thoroughly. Included in the proposals put before the Minister for Works is the improvement of Harrison Island by transforming it into botanical gardens and recreation grounds. The dredgings from the river are to be utilised for that purpose, while a wall is to be taken along either side of the river from the Causeway to the Maylands bridge. At least 320 acres of land will be reclaimed and that will in time repay the cost of the scheme. There are many timber and other storage yards in and around Perth that would be only too glad to lease portions of the foreshore at handsome rentals over a period of years. This scheme must come because the health of the community demands it. The low-lying marshy land costs the City Council

£700 or more a year in an attempt to keep the mosquitoes in check. I hope that with the co-operation of the City Council we shall be able to carry out the admirable scheme for the reclamation of the foreshore. The Minister for Works has taken a keen and enthusiastic interest in the matter and I hope he may be retained in his present position for many years to come so that he may be able to give effect to the scheme.

On motion by Mr. Clydesdale, debate adjourned.

## LAPSED BILL—RESTORATION.

### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read requesting the Assembly, in accordance with the Standing Orders relating to lapsed Bills, to resume consideration of the Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill.

On motion by Mr. Taylor, ordered That consideration of the Council's message be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

*House adjourned at 10.38 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 20th August, 1925.*

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

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### *Tenth Day—Amendment.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. J. DUFFELL** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.36]: I desire to subscribe to the views so ably expressed by the Leader of the House at the opening of the session

with regard to the lamented departure of one of our number, Mr. Greig. No words of mine could be more fitting than those uttered by the Leader of the House, and I shall not attempt to improve upon them. The same remark applies to the welcome extended by various members to Mr. Glasheen. To judge by Mr. Glasheen's able speech of last week, much may be expected from the new member. The speeches already made on the motion before the Chair have been interesting and instructive, and it might be said that during the debate we have travelled from Dan to Beersheba. All sorts of complaints and all sorts of requirements have been voiced, and every member has viewed the situation from his own particular standpoint. This is only what might be expected from a debate on a motion of such elasticity as that under consideration. No doubt those who in the first instance granted such a wide range of ground to be travelled over were wise in their generation. The Address-in-reply enables members to forecast the requirements of their provinces for the information of the Government. Unless I, as a representative of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, raise my voice on the same subject, it will be assumed that there is nothing whatever required in my province, but that everything in the garden is lovely. The Governor's Speech makes early reference to the State's financial position. Hon. members have expressed their individual views as to what has led to the success achieved. Amongst other things it has been claimed that the very substantial reduction of the deficit during the past 12 months is the immediate result of the progressive policy of group settlement initiated by Sir James Mitchell. I shall not say that it is not so, but I feel bound to express my views, so that my constituents will know exactly where I stand on the financial question. I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction that the success achieved is attributable chiefly to the foresight of Sir James Mitchell in opening up the eastern wheat belt years ago. His optimism in that direction aroused enthusiasm amongst people in city avocations, many of whom went into the country and began growing wheat. That fact, combined with the bountiful season and the good prices realised for wheat and wool, explained the financial improvement. I was glad to hear