

toral Department to a large degree for the abuses that crept in, but these abuses were attributable to interested parties. The experience of the last election, should be a guide for the Electoral Department, and I hope that it will be possible to prevent a recurrence of the abuses. The position of the Electoral Department to-day in its relation to members of Parliament, is important, but we find that the Chief Electoral Officer is without power to act and that he is under the aegis of the Under Secretary for Law. That position should not exist; the Chief Electoral Officer should be given the status it is necessary he should have. He should be the head of his department, responsible alone to a Minister of the Crown. I am sure all members here will agree that that is a desirable course. The less this officer is interfered with by members of Parliament, or by Parliament, the better service will be given and the more respect will he command. If faults have been found in the past, they have arisen out of dual control, and also insufficient funds with which to conduct operations. I hope the dual control will be removed, and that more money will be provided. In the Governor's Speech there is only one matter to which I wish to refer, and it is in regard to the proposed legislation. There is reference to a Bill to amend the Constitution. I am not aware what shape that legislation will take, but if it takes the shape that I am hoping, it will receive my hearty support. The Constitution to-day requires that there shall be six portfoliod Ministers and that one shall have a seat in the Legislation Council. In addition to the six Ministers, we have three Honorary Ministers. The Constitution under which we are working is 30 years old, and if six salaried Ministers were necessary when the Act was passed so long ago, it is obvious that more are needed now. We find that the Government for some time past have fallen back on the expediency of appointing Honorary Ministers and paying them from their own—the Ministers—salaries. That is really unconstitutional, and if the Government will introduce a Bill to provide an increase in the number of Ministers who shall hold full rank, that Bill will I am sure receive the hearty support of every member of this House. With the progress that we are making and the work that there is to be done, the Government are justified in following the course I suggest. I have nothing more to

say other than to hope that the Leader of the House will be shown every consideration during the current session and that he will extend similar courtesy to the House as he has invariably done in past years. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. Burvill, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.23 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 9th August, 1927.*

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

### SWEARING IN OF MEMBER.

Hon. G. Taylor (Mount Margaret) took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

### TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I have appointed as temporary Chairmen of Committees the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), and the member for Menzies (Mr. Pantou).

### QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

*Kalgarin project, legislation.*

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: Do the Government intend to introduce during this session a Bill for the con-

struction of the Lake Grace-East Jilikin-Kalgarin railway on the route recommended by the Railway Advisory Board?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, for the Premier, replied: Action in this direction is awaiting the report of the special committee to inquire into the provision of new trunk lines to meet future needs.

*Advisory Board's report.*

Mr. CORBOY asked the Premier: When do the Government anticipate receiving the report of the further Railway Advisory Board on the Kalgarin railway route?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, for the Premier, replied: This report is expected at an early date.

### QUESTION--INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

*Commissions on purchases.*

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that the Industries Assistance Board receive 5 per cent. commission from machinery and other firms for duplicate parts and other requisites supplied to assisted settlers and paid for by the board? 2, Is he aware that this 5 per cent. commission is passed on to the assisted settler, who is charged a higher price for his duplicate parts and requisites? 3, As the assisted settlers are charged the ruling bank rate of 7 per cent. on all advances, will he see that the board give each individual settler the full benefit of commissions received on his account in future? 4, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, On duplicate parts, oils and twine only 2, No. The agreement with merchants specifically forbid this. 3, Assisted settlers are in exactly the same position under the agreement as an unassisted settler buying for cash. 4, The commission is allowed by merchants, on the definite undertaking that it is not passed on to the individual settler; but borrowers collectively get the full benefit of all commissions which are used to maintain services and to meet losses on the board's administration.

### QUESTION--ROAD REPAIR, PERTH-ALBANY.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Are the Main Roads Board aware that the Perth-Albany road is in an appalling state of disrepair, consisting of a series of ruts, bog-holes and ditches, and that consequently the lives of persons using it for ordinary traffic are endangered? 2, Will the board carry out their promise to repair the section between Armadale and Williams, by sending out flying gangs to attend to the most dangerous places? 3, If so, when will this be done?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (Honorary Minister), for the Minister for Works, replied: 1, The Main Roads Board are aware of the condition of the Perth-Albany road. 2, The board intend executing necessary repairs. 3, Within the next few weeks.

### QUESTION--VERMIN TAX.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, How much money was collected from landowners during the financial year ended 30th June, 1927, under the new vermin tax? 2, What amount of this sum has been expended in destruction of vermin during the same period? 3, Do the Government intend to introduce during this session legislation to reduce or repeal this heavy taxation?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (Honorary Minister), for the Minister for Agriculture, replied: 1, £22,931. 2, Not any, but the Government have decided to refund to all vermin boards throughout the State the amounts paid by them during the year in bonuses on wild dogs, foxes and eagle-hawks. 3, No.

### QUESTIONS (3)--FOOD COSTS.

*Old Men's and Old Women's Homes.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Health: What is the cost per head, for food only, for inmates of the Old Women's Home, Fremantle, and the Old Men's Home, Claremont?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: Women's Home, Fremantle, at per head per week, 5s. 1d. Old Men's Home, Claremont, at per head per week, 6s. 0½d. Cost of cooking and serving is not included.

*Hospital for Insane.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked Hon. H. Millington (Honorary Minister): What is the cost, per head, food only, for the inmates of the Hospital for Insane, Claremont?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (Honorary Minister) replied: The cost per head per week is 5s. 5½d., not including cooking and serving. Produce of the Lunacy Department's farm is charged at a flat rate for vegetables of 1d. per lb.; for meat at the ruling contract prices for meat supplies to Government institutions; milk, 1s. 9d. per gallon.

### QUESTION—ASSISTED SETTLERS, REPAYMENTS.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Treasurer: 1, What was the total amount repaid by settlers to the Agricultural Bank during the year ended 30th June last? 2, What was the total amount repaid to the Industries Assistance Board during the same period?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, for the Treasurer, replied: 1, £570,129 8s. 10d. 2, £893,930 15s. 9d.

### QUESTION—GROUP SETTLEMENT, RECLASSIFICATION.

Mr. BARNARD asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In view of the paragraph in the Governor's Speech stating that a reclassification of all group settlement areas is proceeding, will he state who are the persons appointed to make that reclassification? 2, What experience of land classification and dairy farming in the South-West has each of them had, and what length of time does it cover? 3, On what basis are the locations judged—that is, whether a settler can reasonably be expected to make a living on a location, or whether the location can be expected to carry 20 milch cows, dry and young stock, horses, etc.? 4, Have the Government given the settlers an opportunity to farm their locations with adequate equipment of stock and machinery? 5, If so, on what groups?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Senior Field Supervisor, Field Supervisor, and Senior Foreman in each district, with the advice of one or more experienced farmers. 2, Officers' experience on the groups is from five years upwards. Outside advisers' experience cannot be stated before selection, but long experience is an essential.

3, Both factors have been considered. 4, Yes. 5, All groups on individual piecework are equipped with plant; all locations are stocked to their capacity, and a number of settlers on Groups 20, 30, 33, 35, and 91 have been stocked to 15 cows, the maximum departmentally advanced.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 4th August.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.43]: I wish to express my pleasure at the fact of the Weights and Measures Act being at last in operation. For years the people of this country have been robbed because of such legislation not being in force. However, all things come to those who wait. The people have waited for this Act a very long time, and now it is at last in operation, at all events in this part of the State. The Governor's Speech makes reference to prison reform in the shape of prison farms. This is another matter long overdue, and one for which there has been a public demand during a number of years. Now that a prison farm has been made possible, there will be some chance of reforming men who receive sentences.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The farmers are squeaking about it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Let them squeak. I understand it is a fact that in certain parts of the district where the prison farm is to be established some people are making a noise; but I do not believe that there can be any reason to be afraid of men working on a prison farm.

Mr. Corboy: No matter where the farm was established, the local residents would complain.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That is so. The Governor's Speech informs us that in connection with the State Shipping Service the new motor ship "Koolinda" began running in February. I hope that in the near future yet another vessel will be placed on the North-West run. We have been waiting a long time for her to be put on and for the "Bambra" to be scrapped. I repeat, it is to be hoped that another up-to-date vessel will be made speedily available for the service. The other boats at present on the run are of no use to the State. Another vessel like the "Koolinda" should be put on. That would

result in fairly good provision being made for the people of the North-West and, moreover, white people would get the benefit of the work on our coast. Most of the men on the State steamers are married, with their wives and families in the State, and so the money they earn is circulated in this country; whereas the other boats are run by black crews, very little of whose money is expended in the State. I am pleased to see that we are to have a State insurance Bill again this session. I hope it will be a thoroughly comprehensive measure covering all classes of insurance, including insurance against unemployment. The unemployed in our midst every winter have a very hard time in trying to make ends meet. The promised insurance Bill would be of great benefit if it were made to cover unemployment insurance. They have such a measure in Queensland, where it is working very well. I sincerely hope that unemployment insurance will be included in the Insurance Bill to come down, or alternatively that a separate Bill will be brought down to cover it. Then our unemployed will not have to go cap in hand every winter for food and beds.

Mr. North: Would it not conflict with Federal legislation?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not think so. At present every winter the unemployed have to go round cap in hand looking for food and beds. In Queensland, where they have unemployment insurance, it is proposed to carry it to greater lengths by increasing the amounts payable under the Act. If we could have such legislation here it would remove a good deal of the very serious effects of unemployment. I am glad to see in the Governor's Speech reference to a closer settlement Bill. Such a measure would serve to open up large tracts of country along our railways, at present lying idle. I hope Fate will be kinder to the closer settlement Bill this session than it was when last the Bill was before us. We are always advocating closer settlement and more population, and to that end we have our agents abroad sending people here. But when they get here there is not suitable land for them, nor indeed for our own people.

Mr. Marshall: Generally those from abroad are given preference.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Even so, there is not much suitable land for either our own people or those from abroad. We have to put men 40 miles and 50 miles away from exist-

ing railways, whereas this Bill, if it passes, will be the means of making land available within a reasonable distance of a railway line. I hope something will be done this session in the way of bringing down a fair rents Bill. A couple of sessions ago we had such a Bill, but it was unfortunate and did not succeed in getting on to the statute-book. The time has arrived when we should make another attempt to put through a fair rents Bill. It is badly needed, not only in respect of private houses, but also in respect of business houses; for our business people are being fleeced by the landlords, whose extortionate demands of course are passed on to the consumer. Under a fair rents Bill, the rents, not only of private houses, but also of business premises, would be all reduced. Also I hope that something will be done to increase the fees payable to jurymen who are taken from their work and made to sit on juries day after day at the miserable rate of ten shillings per day. If it is not possible to get an amendment of the Jury Act, it should be possible for the Minister for Justice to devise a means of increasing the fees paid to jurymen. It is disgraceful that men should be paid such a miserable pittance when sitting on juries. Ten shillings per day is not by any means adequate, for it is no good to a man taken from his work. Regarding outdoor relief, I may say in passing that we have been on the 9s. per week mark for a very long time. In 1919 a Royal Commission, of which the present Minister for Health was a member, recommended that the amount should be raised. We should not ask destitute people, widows and orphans, to live on 9s. per week.

Mr. Marshall: We were promised an increase last year.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But that promise has not been fulfilled. If a widow, finding 9s. per week insufficient, is conscientious and tries to augment the sum by getting half a day's work here and there, the department wants to cut it off. It is not possible for a woman to rear a family on 9s. per head per week. Last year we were told that the total cost of maintaining prisoners in our gaols was 11s. 1d. per head per week. And the prison authorities purchase their commodities at less than wholesale rates. Tenders are called, contracts are let, and the food is supplied at less than wholesale rates.

Mr. Marshall: Less than retail rates.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No, at less than wholesale rates. And in the gaol many other

steps are taken to keep down costs. Certainly two of the daily meals of the prisoners are not what one would term flash. I have heard it said that the prisoners are better fed than are some people outside. Personally I would not mind having dinner with them, but I have no desire to share with them either their breakfast or their tea. If we are going to pay for our children, the foundation of the nation, less than it costs to keep a prisoner, we are on the wrong track.

Mr. Mann: Does the 11s. 1d. include rations only, or does it cover administration costs as well?

The Minister for Lands: How did our grandfathers get on?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Would the Minister have us go back to the old days? It is a miserable argument to say that because in the days of our grandfathers only 9s. a week was paid for children, no more should be paid to-day. The Royal Commission appointed in 1919 recommended that more than 9s. per week should be provided; and, as I have said, the present Minister for Health was a member of that Commission. Moreover, we were promised last year that the amount would be raised, but despite that promise the same old rate has to suffice. I should like to say a word about the shipping of wheat from this State. I hope members from the agricultural electorates will listen to this. During last season wheat was sent away from this State in a most disgraceful condition. It is very necessary that we should have legislation to deal with this scandal. If we are to allow wheat to leave our shores in as bad a condition as some of it was last season, we shall destroy the credit of our State and of the port of Fremantle from which it was shipped.

Hon. G. Taylor: Who were responsible for it?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The buyers who bought it and sent it away. I do not wish to single out any one buyer.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: What about the pool?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The pool was equally responsible. If the Minister wishes for further information, he can easily get it.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, we know that wheat has gone away in a shocking condition.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Legislation should be brought down if nothing else can be done to put an end to that condition of affairs. Years ago Western Australia got a bad name

in South Africa over a certain flour deal. I understand that most of the shipments going to South Africa these days are certificated cargoes, South Africa having declined to take any further risks.

Mr. Marshall: What was wrong with the wheat you speak of?

Mr. SLEEMAN: It was sent away in a disgraceful condition, mouldy and half rotten. It was placed in holds in which men could scarcely work. Trucks were taken to the ship three times before the wheat was eventually put on board, the captain having twice declined the wheat. In the end the wheat was got on board in the darkness of night. It is time we legislated to save the name of the State. If last season's experience is to be repeated, we do not know where it will land us. People should not be allowed to sell rotten wheat. If it were done in respect of any other commodity we would prosecute the responsible persons, but in the case of wheat being shipped abroad in a condition that prejudicially affects the name of the State, we have no power to deal with it. We should have legislation to prevent it. The Government have an officer in Fremantle to deal with all certificated cargoes. He is very strict and nothing ever gets past him. I understand he is not popular with some of the shippers who try to get bad stuff away.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: You are making a general charge against all shippers?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes. We should have legislation to prevent one and all of them from shipping wheat in the condition in which it was shipped last season.

The Minister for Railways: It would require Federal legislation.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Then it is time we approached the Federal authorities and made a move federally to see that our State is not ruined.

The Minister for Railways: It would be necessary to have all our cargoes certificated. Many of them are not certificated.

The Minister for Lands: Certificates are given only when asked for. Some of the buyers will buy only on a Government certificate.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is time we did something to save the good name of the State and of the port. Buyers abroad will say, "This is wheat that came from Fremantle," and so Fremantle will get a bad name, just as the State will.

The Minister for Lands: Some say the wheat was all right when it reached Fremantle.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That is not so, and the Minister ought to know it.

The Minister for Lands: We shall have to send the wheat to Geraldton and Bunbury.

Mr. SLEEMAN: All right, do so with the bad wheat. The other night I listened attentively to the remarks of the member for Moore (Mr. Ferguson) regarding the influx of southern Europeans. The hon. member said—

The southern Europeans will not do the work of clearing any better than will the Australians but they will do it. There are many hundreds of southern Europeans in the Midland districts, but not one of them is working at a lower rate than an Australian would receive for the same work.

On Friday morning a deputation of Italians waited on me at Fremantle and complained that they had been working in the hon. member's district and had been taken down for their money.

Hon. G. Taylor: Not by the hon. member?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No, but in his district. The deputation explained to me that 13 Italians left the metropolitan area to carry out a contract for clearing 1,300 acres. The leader of the party, who took the contract, was to receive £2 from each of the other workers for getting the job. In other words, before they started work the other 12 were indebted to the leader of the party to the extent of £2 per man.

Hon. G. Taylor: That has been the custom for years.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is not right.

Hon. G. Taylor: I know it is not right, but it is a recognised custom.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Those men not only had to chop down the trees but all large timber had to be grubbed out 4in. below the surface of the ground, while the small timber and brush had to be cut level with the ground. After doing 400 acres the men woke up to the fact that they were not earning a living. They approached the man and explained that they were doing the work for much less than it was worth, and when they demanded more money, they were paid off. For chopping down and grubbing the 400 acres, which represented 2½ months' work, the 13 men were paid a cheque of £13, or £1 per man. They complained to me that there

was no way in which to recover the money due to them. Hardly any of them can speak English. The man who explained the position to me said he was practically the only one, apart from the leader, who could speak English.

Member: What about the glorious holiday?

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the hon. member thinks it a glorious holiday to grub out 400 acres, I do not agree with him.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: The interpretation of grubbing is not as you have explained it.

Mr. Ferguson: No one will grub out big trees.

Mr. SLEEMAN: My informant told me they had to do it. He said 67 per cent. was to be allowed for chopping and grubbing. It is not usual to allow 67 per cent. for chopping and grubbing, but on account of the extra work, I can understand that high percentage being allowed in this instance.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: How much per acre was stipulated?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The men were to receive £2 per acre.

Mr. Ferguson: I could give you a little more information about that.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Then they were getting a very good price for it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I should not like to undertake the work of grubbing at £2 per acre, though to burn down the timber would be a different proposition. If the farmers offered reasonable rates for this class of work, they would be able to get Australians to do it. After an Italian has been in the State for a little while he becomes a good citizen. He gets to understand the conditions, and he is a good trade unionist. When new chums arrive, however, people take advantage of them and they are not given a fair deal.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: You have to get up early in the morning to take advantage of them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: When an Italian wakes up to the conditions, he is not a bad citizen. Too many of these southern Europeans are being brought here under an organised attempt for a specific object. The object is not that they shall go on the land, but that they shall flood the labour market.

Mr. Lindsay: If there is an organised attempt, who is bringing them here?

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is hard to find out.

Mr. Lindsay: You spoke of an organised attempt to flood the labour market. That is a definite statement; prove it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not know who is organising the attempt, but I am satisfied that is the object.

Mr. Lindsay: Why make such a ridiculous statement?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Is it ridiculous?

Mr. Lindsay: Of course it is.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Just as ridiculous as to say that they are not being employed at low wages.

Mr. Ferguson: Their own countrymen are bringing them here.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes, and taking advantage of them, too. Some of them will even get the newcomers to work for a few weeks for nothing, until they are broken in. That sort of thing should be stopped. The men who waited on me were paid off with £1 each for 2½ months' work and now they are at Fremantle without a bite to eat.

Mr. Lindsay: Two pounds per acre is not a bad price.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It depends upon the conditions. Would the hon. member like to go to the South-West and undertake clearing at £20 per acre? The conditions of this contract were not the ordinary conditions. One of them was to grub the trees to a depth of 4in. below the surface.

Mr. Ferguson: That is absurd on the face of it.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: I do not think any farmer would have them grubbed 4in.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No farmer would pay £2 an acre unless it was grubbed.

Mr. Sampson: There is no proof of any organised attempt as you suggested.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The men are taken to the railway station and given their tickets. They do not know their destination except that the name is on the ticket, and the guard puts them off when they arrive at the place.

Mr. Sampson: Have you never been taken to a railway station, given a ticket and sent off somewhere?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No. I hope we shall not hear more complaints about farmers employing Italians at a cheaper rate than Australians would demand. The only reason for employing them is that they are a little cheaper than Australians. If the farmers paid a few shillings extra for the work, it would be done by Australians, and the work itself would be done as well as it is being done by the Italians. Let me mention im-

portations of another kind. We are importing men for every little job. We wanted an Engineer-in-chief and we imported one. We wanted an engineer for the Water Supply Department, and we imported one. We wanted an engineer for the Harbour Trust, and we imported one. If we want one for the Main Roads Board, we import him. If we do not wake up we shall reach a stage when the people will be crying out for the importation of Ministers and members of Parliament.

Mr. Withers: Then there will be an outcry.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes. If we want a few surveyors, we import them.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Your party are importing them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Do not talk about party! I am not sticking up for my party in this matter. There is no party bias on this side of the House such as there is on the other side. We at least are allowed to speak our minds.

Mr. Sampson: Yes, but you have to see that your minds are properly trained.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If we want a superintendent for the training college we import one, though a local man was given the assistant's job. Then we import also inspectors of weights and measures. The time has arrived when we should wake up and look after our own young men.

The Minister for Justice: We are going to train them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: They have been trained long since. We have men who can go away and hold their own in any part of the world. There are Australian engineers holding good positions abroad. If my information is correct, there are to be a few more importations in the near future. If so, I am going to move in this House with a view to stopping that sort of thing. I want to see our young fellows given a chance. What is the good of training them if they cannot get these billets when they are offering? For positions from Engineer-in-chief to inspector of weights and measures we are importing men.

The Minister for Justice: The inspectors you speak of are mechanics with experience that is very necessary.

Mr. SLEEMAN: And we have mechanics in this State and in the very department of which the Minister has control. The Minister has in his own department men who have been testing scales and dealing with weights and measures for years past. They have been dealing with everything from the assay

balance to the heavy weighbridges in the coal mines and in the various goods sheds. Those men should have been given some consideration.

The Minister for Justice: They were given every consideration.

Mr. SLEEMAN: They did not get far because they are in their old jobs and men from the Eastern States are in the new jobs.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Shame!

The Minister for Justice: There is no shame about it. They get as good pay in the Railway Department.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But they did not get a chance; otherwise they would have been in the new positions. It was a game, not of chance, but of no chance. Referring to the railway yards at Fremantle, since the removal of the C. Y. O'Connor memorial quite a lot of unnecessary trouble has been caused over the handling of wheat sacks. Last year there was room for 150 trucks to be made available and 30,000 bales were handled. This year there is room for only 50 trucks and it will be necessary to handle 60,000 bales.

The Minister for Justice: Do not worry about that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is time that was remedied. The Harbour Trust authorities refuse to part with a piece of land which they rightly say will be required by them in future. Unless something is done, therefore, our farmer friends may have to wait a considerable time for their wheat sacks, and may even have to adopt some form of bulk handling until the sacks arrive.

The Minister for Justice: You can rest assured it will not be so.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Now let me refer to the Fremantle railway bridge.

Mr. Panton: The same old bridge?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No, there is a lot of new work on it. It now looks like a patchwork quilt.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Patchworks are very comfortable and lasting.

Mr. Panton: It all depends whether they are imported or not.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Engineer-in-chief, in the course of a paper read to the Institute of Engineers, said—

Extension of the Victoria Quay cannot be contemplated until the railway bridge across the harbour is either removed or reconstructed, and greater use of the North Quay must therefore be first obtained.

There is no doubt that these two things go hand in hand. If we were to begin removing the bridge now, it would be five years before any new berth was available in the harbour. The Engineer-in-Chief also said—

The last dredging programme for the Suez Canal provides for a draught of 35 feet; at Fremantle a depth throughout the harbour of 36 feet exists, and in reconstructing the wharfs provision for deepening to 40 feet is being made.

When the Engineer-in-Chief was reading that paper, there was not a depth of 36 feet throughout the harbour. A little over 12 months ago the Fremantle bridge was washed away. If I am not allowed to say the bridge was washed away, I may say that the embankment was washed away, with the result that a portion of the harbour was silted up. A considerable part of the shipping space, after 12 months, therefore became 33 feet in depth and not 36 feet. For over 12 months the silt has remained there, and hardly anything has been done to remove it. There is no doubt the silting up of the harbour to a depth of only 33 feet affects the berthing of vessels in parts of the harbour. The railway people should have been responsible for repairing the damage that took place, but we now find the responsibility has been placed upon the Harbour Works Department. That department has gone very slowly in the matter of removing the silt. For five years they have been engaged in constructing a dredge to carry out this work, but the vessel is far from completed to-day. Immediately the trouble arose, dredges should have been put on, and worked throughout the year three shifts a day. Dredging has been very quiet in Fremantle during the past 12 months. The authorities have tinkered with the business instead of getting on with it. They should also push on with the new bridge and have it put in hand at once. With regard to the new bridge, if it were started at once there would be no chance of getting a new berth for a vessel within five years. During the last year, berthing room has been very scarce in Fremantle, and at times it has not been possible to accommodate the vessels that required to come in. The Harbour Board are anxious that the harbour should be extended. There is no chance of extending it without making an outer harbour, or shifting the bridge, but if the authorities are going to do the former, it will take nearly as long as to move the bridge and



extend the harbour up the river. Something must be done quickly, otherwise the principal port of the State will be crowded out. It will not be possible to provide proper facilities for the handling of the increasingly big harvests, or for the vessels to come in as they should do in the case of the chief harbour of the State. I hope within the next six or eight weeks we shall have some pronouncement with regard to the bridge. The Premier has promised that we shall get the bridge, but the work has been postponed on account of the Engineer-in-Chief's report. Twelve months ago the Premier said, in reply to a deputation—

The question of a new bridge was an old, old story, but he was going to vary it and tell them something new. The Government believed that a new bridge ought to be built, and that it ought to be commenced as soon as possible, and the Government were going to do it. "I will make provision on the Estimates," he added, "which will be under revision in a few weeks' time, for the money to be available, and the bridge will be started as soon as the responsible officers make their recommendation to the Government as to the most suitable site. Beyond that, there will be no delay."

That is the definite promise of the Premier. I hope the report of the Engineer-in-Chief will not be further delayed, and that the work will soon be gone on with. I have here a cutting from an interview with a visitor who had been touring the world, and who gave his impressions of Perth and Fremantle. He said—

The top of the harbour where the blue Swan River narrows suddenly to a pretty country stream is still spanned by a bridge of poles and planks.

This is the way that visitors view the Fremantle bridge. I hope there will not be much more delay before the bridge is removed and the harbour is extended.

Mr. Withers: Have a new bridge built of imported steel.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If we could produce the material within the State, it ought to be produced here. I stand for the use of local material, but if we cannot produce those things here, let us get them outside.

Mr. Maley: Would it not be better to build the line on the other side of the river?

Mr. SLEEMAN: It will still be necessary to cross the river and to have railways on the other side.

Mr. Maley: Wheat is coming down from the Midland line.

Mr. SLEEMAN: How is the wheat to be shipped when it gets to Fremantle unless the accommodation is increased? All the wheat is sent away from the North Wharf. There must ultimately be a south river railway, but the river must be crossed when it is reached, unless everything is going to be turned upside down, and the wheat shipped from the south side.

Mr. Maley: I was thinking of the ports of Bunbury and Geraldton.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There is also the matter of the overhead bridge at Fremantle which is where the O'Connor memorial has been placed. I do not know whether one of the imported engineers is responsible for the ramp that has been erected there. If so, he ought to be sent back to the place whence he came. There is bound to be a serious accident there one of these days. I believe one man broke his leg, but I am afraid someone will break his neck yet at that place. The ramp is so steep that it is difficult for elderly people and invalids to get up or down. I should like the Minister for Railways to have a look at the ramp and the bridge, and see whether that is the right sort of thing to have down there. Some years ago a jetty was promised at Rottne Island, the most western portion of the Fremantle electorate. About four years ago, £5,000 was spent in dredging the approach towards the proposed new jetty. After the money was spent, dredging operations ceased, I understand with a view to finding out what silting up there would be. Since then nothing has been done in the way of making provision for a jetty. The people at Rottne consider that the parties responsible have broken faith with them in that they promised the jetty but did not build it. The present jetty is dangerous. It is on the swing some of the time, and an accident is bound to happen unless something is done with it. It should either be pulled down and made secure again, or a new jetty built, as was promised. I sincerely hope that something will be done at this western portion of my electorate.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.23]: I do not know whether it will ever be possible for a member to deliver a speech in Parliament with feelings approaching equanimity. However kindly natured may be the speaker, a feeling of nervousness always remains. It is customary to regard speeches

delivered on the Address-in-reply as a subject for popular derision. Not infrequently newspapers have been known to criticise what has been described as a waste of time. It must be admitted that speeches delivered at this stage of the session are long, and frequently of an exhaustive if not an exhausting nature. This year, strange to say, little objection has been raised by the Press to the continuance of the usual procedure, namely, that of prolonging the debate for some days. The method, while frequently condemned, is, I submit, of utility. I believe in the debate on the Address, and realise that it is of great educational value. In a sense it provides for a stocktaking of Parliamentary activities. It compels members to look up various matters of State-wide interest in connection with which it becomes their duty to speak. Already during the session we have heard some fine speeches. They afford an indication of research and reflection, the effect of which must be of advantage not only to those who have had the privilege of listening to them, but to others who, through the newspapers, have been able to read them. The opportunity of discussion afforded by the debate on the Address-in-reply has no parallel in any other phase of Parliamentary work. Here we may explore the whole landscape of political activities, and look into matters of Parliamentary and State interest without being brought to order, no matter how closely in touch the objector may be with the Standing Orders. It is the right of every member to discuss any subject, and in connection with that right, so far as I am aware, no objection has been raised. Those who are competent to do so may discuss the financial position. The Premier has dealt with that to some extent, and the exposition was of great interest to members. We had an opportunity of listening to the remarks of the Premier, who attempted to answer the various objections raised by the Leader of the Opposition. The reduced interest expenditure was referred to at some length, as well as the Loan expenditure sanctioned during the previous year. All this was of great interest, but more interesting than this was the criticism by the Leader of the Opposition which, if I may be permitted to say so, gave the Premier reason to concentrate very closely upon his reply. If that reply was not wholly convincing, at all events it provided a very earnest endeavour on his part towards that end. The Premier in his balance naturally included

all possible sources of revenue, the funds provided by the Disabilities Commission, the Federal Road Grant, the advantage arising from the differential rate of interest charges, and the money resulting from the goldfields water supply sinking fund. I was reminded of a visit I recently paid to Carnarvon, when I had an opportunity to inspect the works dealing with various marine products. Dugong, turtle, swordfish, sharks, and all kinds of fish are netted and treated. All fish or anything that comes to the net is fish in connection with that industry. If I may draw an analogy, I will point out that all moneys arising from disabilities, from the goldfields water supply sinking fund, and so on are evidently "fish" coming to the net of the Treasurer. The debate on the Address-in-reply provides the opportunity to examine various subjects and to refer to matters that have occurred in past Parliaments. One may very properly deprecate the frequent orgy of law-making that sometimes takes place in different Parliaments. Every new law limits the freedom of someone. During the last Parliament we had various measures all of which represented additional charges levied upon the public. It is not my intention to deal with those matters, but it is interesting to note that with the wide range of subjects I have referred to, there can be no objection raised to any references to them in the course of this debate. It may interest members to know that the Address-in-reply debate comes down to us from very ancient times. It was evolved in the mother of Parliaments and the common sense of the nation realises the practical utility of the principle. Through the reports in the newspapers, thousands of people have followed the discussions and indeed members may feel that the general public have an advantage, in that they may read their newspapers in comfort and miss such portions of the debate as they may desire, perusing only those references that are of special interest to themselves. Referring to marketing matters, I would again draw the attention of the House to the steadily decreasing area under orchards or fruit-trees generally. Strange as it may appear, the figures appearing in the Commonwealth Year Book indicate a steady decrease. The latest statistics available are those included in the Commonwealth Year Book for 1924-1925. Those figures show that for that year there were in Western

Australia 18,520 acres under fruit-trees, whereas in 1915 there were 21,805 acres.

Mr. Mann: Were not a number of orchards resumed for the purposes of the Water Supply Department?

Mr. SAMPSON: I admit that. There may reasonably be, and very frequently are, complaints on that score. In other countries the need for resuming orchards has not been acknowledged and the orchardists have been allowed to continue. The water coursing through those properties has remained thoroughly pure and in such instances where it is found to be impure, filtration beds have been established and the public thereby have secured a proper water supply. The difference between 18,520 acres and 21,805 acres would not be made up by the area resumed by the Water Supply Department.

Mr. Mann: A big proportion of it would.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know that the Water Supply Department looks with covetous eyes on any orchard if, within the vicinity of the property, there is spring water or a running brook.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The department looks at the matter from the pollution point of view.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wonder whether it would not be better to allow the orchardists to continue and to permit the cultivation of the land to go on instead of as at present, to pull the trees up and allow nature to quickly reassert itself. In the undergrowth it would be easy for a kangaroo, a horse, or for other stock to be lost or caught in the brook and so pollute the water. The danger from that aspect is, in my opinion, much greater than would result from allowing the orchardists to continue.

Mr. Lutey: What if the orchardists had a few pigs running about the places?

Mr. SAMPSON: There are some places where orchardists are allowed to continue their operations, but the keeping of pigs on their properties has been made illegal. In the Federal political arena I am pleased that the Bruce-Page Government have shown themselves firm friends of the producers. We know something of the beneficial legislation that has been enacted regarding our primary products. We know that in other countries progress has been made in that direction. New Zealand has its Export Butter Act. Denmark has an Act to control the export of eggs, and South Africa, I believe, has an Act to control the export of fruit. So it is, too, with most of the primary pro-

ducing countries of the world. There is no lack of effort in order to ensure that fruit, or other products, leave the country of origin in a proper condition. A precautionary measure of that description gives rise in the minds of those receiving the fruit in other countries a respect, and liking, for products from countries that afford that protection. The Federal Minister for Markets and Migration (Hon. T. Paterson), is at present visiting Western Australia. Mr. Paterson is advocating the adoption by the apple growers of the Commonwealth of the Fresh Fruit Export Act. I realise that notwithstanding the splendid prices that our apples secured during the recent season, there is great need for organisation. Representatives of the apple growers and pear growers recently met in Melbourne and I learn that, with one exception, there was unanimity in respect of the necessity for enacting legislation to control the export of apples and pears. Many people have an objection to control where fruit for local consumption or local marketing is concerned. On the other hand, it is most unusual to find anyone objecting to control over exports. We have read in the newspapers from time to time of the difficulties that arise overseas because of fruit being opened up in bad condition. If anything is likely to prevent a recurrence of complaints of that description, it will be the establishment of a board of control. Under the Act passed by the Federal Government, the board of control will be elected by the growers themselves, and in a board of seven, all with one exception will be appointed by the growers. It is claimed that the establishment of such a board would mean Government control. At all times there appears to be a desire on the part of some people to misrepresent matters. There can be no justification for the claim that I have referred to. The board, when established, would be elected by the growers themselves and surely the growers are the best people to determine who shall represent them.

Mr. Lutey: Is there no inspection of the fruit conducted now?

Mr. SAMPSON: I know that something is done now, but the inspection does not go nearly as far as it should. I believe the inspection is fairly thorough until the fruit has been passed. After that stage is reached, however, fruit may be left on the wharf for some time, during which it may be knocked about and may suffer injury. There is no full supervision that enables the authorities

to see that the fruit will reach its destination in the best condition possible.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You would not suggest loading up the fruitgrowers any more?

Mr. SAMPSON: I submit that the fruit-growers would not be loaded up at all. I understand the hon. member refers to the cost of establishing such a board as I have referred to. There is a limit provided in the Act, dealing with expenditure, which must not in any circumstances amount to more than 1d. per case. The money so derived would be used to enable the board to function and to pay for the necessary advertising in the Old Country. Hon. members will learn with interest that last year by the expenditure of about £40,000 in England, on the "Eat More Fruit" campaign, the directors were able to secure the consumption of an added quantity of fruit representing in value not less than £2,000,000.

The Minister for Justice: But that is only guess work.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know that it can be regarded as guess work, because the closest check is kept. For instance, the directors have full details regarding the progress of the London market and they watch with great exactitude all its movements. Establishment of control would mean more than an increased consumption in England. It would mean that the markets of the Continent would be more fully exploited than is possible to-day. That in itself would be a great consideration. Fruit growers of Western Australia are in a special position regarding the production of apples, the most popular fruit that is marketed. They may justly claim that their fruit, from the standpoint of shipping, is last on and first off. We have heard that expression previously. It is usual in referring to the advantage our growers may claim for Western Australia, to mention it, but in spite of that advantage, there is every justification for the fullest measure of assistance by way of control being rendered. It is important that our fruit shall be properly graded and packed and that it shall go away in such a condition that in the country where the fruit is disposed of, there will be a steadily increasing regard for the Western Australian product. A few months ago we were able to read reports which showed that Sir Hal Colebatch, until recently Agent General for Western Australia, had been able to accomplish much in

London in regard to the consumption of Western Australian fruit. We can go further and add to the splendid work carried out by Sir Hal. Concluding these remarks I can only say that I believe, having in view their own interests, the growers of Bridgetown and Manjimup, and the fertile country of Nelson, as well as Mt. Barker and surrounding districts, and the Darling Range which includes Illawarra and Rokewood, will realise the importance of improving existing conditions, and that they will vote in favour of the proclamation of the Act that has been passed by the Federal Parliament. I acknowledge that locally better prices have been secured in recent months but those who send the fruit to market and the agents who carry on operations at the markets, are very badly placed, inasmuch as neither has any definite knowledge as to when metropolitan markets are to be established. I hope that the Minister for Agriculture will before long be in a position to tell the House something about the location of the proposed markets, and also when a commencement with the work of construction is likely to be made. We should also like to know the personnel of the trust. Both agents and growers are very awkwardly placed at the present time, because of the increasing business. The desire is to give every consideration to the needs of the fruit growers, but in view of the intention of the Government to erect markets, there is hesitation to improve the premises at present occupied. For the reasons I have given I am prompted to urge the Government to announce their decision at the earliest moment. It is a remarkable thing that whilst secondary industries are well organised, fruit growers lack anything in the shape of organisation. They lack that protection which is so essential for the proper carrying on of their industries, and to-day, as it was a quarter of a century ago, and even before that, it remains nobody's business to develop fruit marketing. The position respecting manufacture is causing serious concern to every primary producer. It is realised that the heavy duties continually being imposed are increasingly difficult to carry and are a galling burden to those whose products have to face the competition of the world. The primary producers are left to work out their own salvation. The cost of marketing fruit has been specially referred to by the Federal Minister for Markets (Mr. Pater-

son), who has made some comparisons between the cost of marketing that particular commodity and other products. For instance, freight on dairy produce amounts to 5 per cent., and on wheat 20 per cent., but the cost of placing fruit on the overseas market amounts to 200 per cent. more than the cost of producing the fruit on the tree. It is pointed out that if the cost of producing the fruit unpicked is 3s. 6d. the added cost of delivering it to the consumer overseas is not less than an additional 7s. When speaking on the fruit industry something might be said in connection with the sugar industry and the burden Australians, except those engaged in the industry, have to carry in relation to it. I was in Queensland two or three years ago, and I became convinced that of all the primary producers I have met, the producers of sugar in Queensland are the most prosperous. The unimproved land suitable for the cultivation of cane has increased enormously in price, and I am inclined to believe that the assistance rendered to the industry by the Federal Government is in excess of what is actually required.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It all depends on the permit to sell the sugar.

Mr. SAMPSON: The market for sugar in Australia is limited, and it is about that market that the Queensland producers are mostly concerned. Already a considerable quantity of sugar has to be shipped out of Australia, and that, I understand, is made possible only by rebates secured from the protection afforded by the Federal Government. Throughout the whole range of secondary industries we find heavy protective duties. The wheat grower, however, does not get that support, and it is questionable how long he will be able to continue as he is doing. As a matter of fact, the uneconomic condition of Australia may properly cause anxiety amongst everyone. We are finding it possible to continue in most cases only with the aid of bounties, or by the protection afforded in the shape of heavy duties. I am not sufficiently skilled in matters respecting production, consumption and so on, to be able to forecast how much longer we can go on as we are doing. The fact remains that the position is unsound, and if it is not amended, as I have already said, we shall crash. The present position in respect of a few secondary industries may be regarded as satisfactory so far as a few thousand

workers in Melbourne and Sydney are concerned. The manufacturers themselves are being fattened at the expense of the rest of Australia. Regarding group settlement I desire to say that there is no occasion for alarm in connection with the re-arrangements that have been suggested. It is essential, as a large plan is being unfolded, that variations should be made in the methods and in the work. In some cases I have no doubt larger areas will be required, and possibly the addition of areas will get over the difficulty in many instances. Having been over a number of the groups, I am convinced that ultimately the scheme will be a success. As to the Peel Estate, it was never intended that it should be established for the purpose of supplying the fresh milk requirements of the metropolitan area. It is in this respect that there has been a good deal of criticism against the Peel Estate. The results achieved at Bunbury by the South-West Co-operative Dairy Products Ltd. are so satisfactory as to give everyone who has had the opportunity to peruse the balance sheet, the greatest possible satisfaction and pleasure. I have here a copy of the profit and loss statement for the year ended 30th April last. This shows that the company paid its seventh dividend of £382 and a bonus of £2,136. The amount against reserve, replacement and machinery, is £300, and the reserve for bad debts £100, the balance undistributed being £16,210. The profit for the year amounted to, at Bunbury £9,630, at Busselton £558 (for seven months), and at Perth distributing depot £198. The issued capital is £6,099 less amounts unpaid £99; so that actually the capital is £6,000. The reserves to date amount to £7,450. In the directors' report for the 12 months ended 30th April last it is stated that allowing for depreciation a net profit was shown from all sources of £10,387. That is a fine state of affairs, and if anything is calculated to give satisfaction to those who believe in Western Australia, and to remove any doubt about the ultimate success of group settlement, surely it is these figures.

Mr. Lindsay: But this is a butter factory, not a dairy farm.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am quoting these figures which, to me, are very pleasing. They should be pleasing also to every well-wisher of the State. The turnover for the 12 months, inclusive of the branch at Busselton, amounted to the large sum of £110,453.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Does that figure include importations?

Mr. SAMPSON: The turnover of the Bunbury factory—I am giving the facts—amounted to £97,369, showing an increase over the last year of some £25,000.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But can you tell us how much of that output of £97,000 was manufactured in this State, and how much was imported from the North Coast?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is all disclosed in the report and balance sheet, and I shall tell the hon. member if he will let me proceed. The balance sheet makes the matter very clear indeed. The State butter factory at Busselton was purchased in October last from the Government by the Bunbury board of directors, and for the first seven months made the highly satisfactory profit of £558. We have heard time after time of the bad results following upon the working of the Busselton butter factory. However, it was not Busselton that was to blame, evidently. The Busselton butter factory is now under such management as has ensured a profit for the first seven months of £558. That, again, shows a splendid state of affairs. The requirements of the Busselton butter factory are drawn largely from the group settlements. The quantity of cream received at the Bunbury butter factory for the 12 months was 914 tons 6 cwt., actually 2,048,085 lbs., for which the sum of £68,401 was paid; and 502 tons 13 cwt. of commercial butter was manufactured. The number of cans handled was 51,079.

Mr. Lutey: Is that Busselton or Bunbury?

Mr. SAMPSON: Bunbury.

Mr. Lutey: Group settlement started there 19 years ago.

Mr. SAMPSON: But the butter fat for the Bunbury factory comes from as far as Manjimup, where there are group settlements. Manjimup, however, has now established a butter factory of its own. If I may be allowed to prophesy, Manjimup will follow the example which the South-West Dairy Products Ltd. have set. At Manjimup—and this surely is proof of the fertility of the country—there is being produced one ton of butter per week. The first ton is always the most difficult, of course.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They have got up to 3 tons 15 cwt.

Mr. SAMPSON: They are averaging, so I understand, a ton of butter per week at present. In the very near future, of course,

that quantity will be largely increased. Just to revert to the Bunbury factory for a moment—

Mr. Withers: What about the Swan district? How about letting us deal with Swan?

Mr. SAMPSON: I can quite understand that the member for Bunbury would like to deal with this matter, and I trust he will do so.

Mr. Withers: But you have cut all the ground from under my feet.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the hon. member will not think I have trespassed on his preserve, but when I read this balance sheet I was so delighted to learn of the wonderful progress being made in butter production that I felt I would be justified in making some reference to it in my remarks. I say again, these figures provide a full answer to anyone who doubts. If there is still to be found a doubter as to the quality of south-western land, the figures contained in this balance sheet should permanently dispel his misgivings. The Hon. Edwin Rose, of the Legislative Council, who is chairman of directors of the company, in concluding his report refers to the directorate's intention to expend a portion of the profits in extensive alterations and additions to both buildings and machinery. He states—

This is necessary to enable the manager to cope with the growing business. The improvements will also be the means of reducing the manufacturing costs.

So much for the South-West Co-operative Dairy Products Ltd., a co-operative concern which is proving satisfactory not only to those who send their produce there but also, I believe, to those who formerly had doubts of the final results of dairying in the South-West. Lately we have heard a good deal concerning child endowment, and I had hoped to hear one or other hon. member on the opposite side of the House refer to that matter in his speech. I regard child endowment as a duty of the community, and I believe that when we have a fair system of child endowment it will be an added satisfaction to all sections of the people. The effect will be to relieve the mother of anxiety touching the care of the child, and to that extent all will agree with the principle. But it is contended that wages are to be called on to bear the expense. Now wages, as I understand, are based on the cost of living of the parents and of certain children. On the one hand we find that non-existent children are

paid for, and on the other hand that many children in existence are not paid for at all. The position is unfair, and I consider that the sooner it is altered the better it will be for the Commonwealth. We want an equitable arrangement. At a conference of unions held recently a desire, I understand, was expressed that the wages should be based on the needs of a man, his wife, and at least two dependent children. I fail to understand the reason that would express a definite number of children. Why not give the consideration to one or more children? That seems to be the fair and reasonable course to adopt.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Two children is the nearest to the average in Australia.

Mr. SAMPSON: But the trouble is that in many cases there are no children.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And in many cases there are more than two.

Mr. SAMPSON: Just so, and that is the unfair part of it. Parents may have seven, or eight, or nine children, but the weekly exchequer from the wages aspect is not affected by that circumstance. Again, there may be no children at all in the family. I realise that this country must look to its own people for increase of population, and any proper scheme of child endowment would assist towards that end. I cannot understand the argument which says, "Let us pay for two children and start child endowment thereafter." Why not look at the thing fairly and, as I claim, properly, and start paying with the first child and make the payment irrespective of the needs of the parents? The endowment should be a right, and not a charity.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How would you pay it?

Mr. SAMPSON: Undoubtedly there are in connection with the matter many details which will have to be thrashed out. However, I wish to register my support of a scheme which will provide for endowment of children. I wish to declare where I stand on the question.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The vital principle of the scheme is, where would you get the money to pay for it?

Mr. SAMPSON: It has been urged by the Labour Party for years past that we should have a child endowment scheme, and since there has been a real attempt on the part of the Federal Government to provide such a scheme, since something definite has been proposed, since the Federal Govern-

ment have started to look after their responsibilities in this matter, since they have now initiated discussion—

Mr. Panton: Oh!

Mr. SAMPSON: Since the Federal Government have initiated discussion in a practical way, there has been, I have noted, what seems a keen desire on the part of Labour to close the door on the possibility of bringing in child endowment.

The Minister for Lands: Close the door! Bruce promised child endowment at the Federal election, and then made an eloquent speech showing how it could not be done.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am endeavouring to be truthful, of course; and I say that if we want child endowment we must approach the matter in a helpful attitude, and the suggestions which we put forward must be helpful. When it is said that child endowment must not start until after the second child, it seems to me that I am justified in questioning the sincerity of such a declaration.

Mr. Sleeman: It is just as well to make a start somewhere.

Mr. SAMPSON: Any attitude of that nature seems to me to savour of closing the door on the initiation of a scheme which I personally, and thousands of others in the State, would be delighted to see brought in.

The Minister for Lands: Your chief promised child endowment at the last general election, and then absolutely evaded it?

Mr. SAMPSON: My chief?

The Minister for Lands: Bruce.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister for Lands, I am sure, knows as well as I do that there is no one in Australia to whom this State owes more at the present moment than Mr. Bruce.

The Minister for Lands: Oh!

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister knows, as I know, that his Government have benefited very much because of the statesmanlike view which the Prime Minister has taken of various matters affecting Western Australia.

Mr. Panton: Dr. Page is in charge of the Treasury.

The Minister for Mines: Take Bruce's attitude towards mining, for instance. He has not given us a shilling for it, and says he will not do it either.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister for Mines holds £165,000 provided by the Federal Government. Mr. Bruce did not specify that that amount was to be spent for the en-

couragement of mining, but the money was hypothecated by our Premier for that purpose, and very properly too. I applaud our Treasurer for having done it.

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

Mr. SAMPSON: Since referring to the operations of the South-West Dairy Products Company, I have looked up a matter concerning which there was some question. Only dairy farmers can take up shares, and the profits, of course, are the property of the shareholders. It is almost unnecessary to say that the dairy farmers themselves profit by the great success that has been attained. Shares are available also to Busseton dairymen, which means group settlers; they may take up shares and benefit in the wonderful success that has been achieved. Just here a word of recognition of the manager, Mr. J. R. Strong, should be expressed. Referring to the work of co-operation, it is anticipated that equal success will wait upon their efforts. When one realises the quality of the land around Manjimup, it is remarkable that the country should have remained so long unutilised. The progress being made at Manjimup is the direct result of the fertility of the soil, plus the opportunity for working that soil by the operation of the group settlement scheme, plus co-operative effort. Having said that, I may be permitted to return to the grant by the Federal Government as the result of the work of the Disabilities Commission. It will be remembered that the Minister for Mines said the Prime Minister had done nothing for mining. We know there was no specified allocation of the grant to the State. But the Government have determined that of the amount provided £165,000 shall be apportioned to mining. It is not necessary to have any special knowledge of mining to arrive at the conclusion that there is no obligation on the part of the Federal Government to take the initiative in respect of reorganising the mining industry in this State. The Prime Minister would have been wanting in good taste if, having arrived at Kalgoorlie and been approached by the townspeople of that municipality, he had taken the matter out of the hands of the State Parliament and expressed opinions not only as to what should be done with the £165,000 but what method of reorganisation should be adopted in order to restore the goldmining industry to its former prosperity.

The Minister for Railways: We only want to know whether or not he put in any money.

Mr. SAMPSON: As the Minister is aware, the £165,000 hypothecated for the purpose of assisting the mining industry has not yet been dealt with; the State Government have not expressed themselves as to the means by which the £165,000 should be utilised.

The Minister for Mines: The Premier offered the Chamber of Mines £134,000 towards the cost of amalgamation, and they heartily thanked him for his offer. Yet they have not done a thing about the amalgamation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Premier said the Government had not yet decided what to do with the money.

Mr. SAMPSON: Are we, in spite of the general understanding that nothing has been done about the disposition of the £165,000—are we to understand that the disposition has been decided upon?

The Minister for Mines: As I say, £134,000 was offered to the Chamber of Mines.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister said it was accepted by them.

The Minister for Mines: No, I did not.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister makes a statement, and the moment it is challenged he denies having made it. Of course, the Minister may have made a mistake. However, I am not to be blamed if, following the statement of the Minister, I attempt to reply to it.

The Minister for Mines: What I said was that the Chamber of Mines thanked the Premier for his offer.

Mr. SAMPSON: Then if I am to understand that they have not accepted it, we are just where we thought we were. I submit that the Prime Minister acted wisely and in accordance with the dictates of good taste when he refrained from answering the deputation at Kalgoorlie other than the way he did answer them.

The Minister for Mines: What was the Commission appointed for?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Prime Minister would have been wanting in respect to the State Government if he had taken any other stand. I should be surprised if the Minister for Mines were to suggest that the Prime Minister, on arriving here, should have gone into this proposition and told the State Government what they ought to do.

The Minister for Mines: He did not hesitate to write to the Premier setting forth how he thought we should spend the £165,000.



Mr. SAMPSON: That is very different from making a public utterance before a deputation; the positions are not on all fours. However, I hope the Minister will be successful in devising some scheme that will have the effect of restoring prosperity to the mining industry. I realise the difficult work he has in hand, and I am sure he will do his best in handling it. Still, I am not going to allow the statement that the Prime Minister has been guilty of any disrespect in this way to pass without protesting against it. I was referring to the special advantages this State had received from the Federal Government. This followed some discussion on child endowment. I am sure the Prime Minister is a very real, genuine and sincere friend of this State. If any statesman in Australia is qualified to assist the Commonwealth out of the difficult and uneconomic position in which it is to-day, it is the Prime Minister himself. There is a subject concerning which I have spoken on various occasions, namely, apprentices. There is an undue proportion of unskilled workers in this State, and their number is constantly being increased. At the same time Western Australia is starved for tradesmen. The unfairness manifests itself particularly in respect of the boys of the State. It may be said that in the building trade there are men available. That position, I submit, is largely brought about by the shortage of bricks, and the shortage of bricks is largely traceable to the intrusion of the State Government into brickmaking. This is the one commodity in the building trade of which there is a shortage. It will be readily understood that the shortage is brought about because of the justifiable fear of private enterprise of entering into an industry in which it may have to face competition provided by its own money. Moreover, State enterprise does not have to face the ordinary expenses of rates and taxes. It has no difficulty in that way, and in addition it sometimes has the advantage of preferential trade. The preferential trade it enjoys is provided by the specifying in Government contracts of State bricks. There is plenty of opportunity here for criticism. One might well condemn the lack of equity that makes such a condition possible. However, the State Brickworks are there, and there is a shortage of bricks.

Mr. Thomson: Why they should specify State bricks for work in the country I do not know, when local bricks are available.

Mr. SAMPSON: Of course, it is an entirely wrong policy. Bricks are more costly because of the added expense of transport. In addition, there is the discouragement for local brickmakers who might otherwise engage in this industry. The effect of this would be that the builders, out of work to-day, would be engaged in work. Then there is the objection that might be levelled at certain local authorities in the specifying of brick areas. In North Perth, in the Leederville electorate, there are streets as yet unmade, notwithstanding which they are in the area where the erection of wooden buildings is prohibited. That is entirely wrong. It provides a sad commentary on the manner in which Western Australians view their own excellent hardwoods.

Mr. Davy: The trouble is with the legislation, not with the local authorities.

Mr. SAMPSON: I thank the hon. member. I am inclined to think that, when an opportunity occurs in this Parliament, we should be wise if we gave consideration to the limiting of powers the exercise of which in this instance means the non-use of a recognised and thoroughly good Western Australian product. So much for the building industry. In other trades there are no unemployed tradesmen available. Further than that, the number of lads in certain trades is quite insufficient for the growing needs of the State. The position amounts to a conspiracy and a scandal. It is a scandalous state of affairs that the boys of Western Australia should be prevented from learning a trade, and in consequence should be thrown on to the list of unemployed at a comparatively early age.

The Minister for Railways: Why use such extravagant language—a conspiracy and a scandal?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is so. Members of successive Governments are faced with the unemployment problem. The unemployed problem is a difficult one and the Government rightly have the sympathy of members on this side of the House.

The Minister for Justice: How many have we put on in the State Implement Works, etc.?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not referring to that. If we definitely resolve to work towards the end I have indicated, many of the difficulties of government will disappear.

The Minister for Justice: Who is in this conspiracy?

Mr. Chesson: Employers will not take on apprentices.

Mr. Marshall: You forget that when you were a Minister there was a shortage of 116 apprentices in the workshops.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is a full answer to that. At the time there were no unemployed.

Mr. Corboy: Now you are becoming comical.

Mr. SAMPSON: In addition, it was impossible to provide workers for all the positions available. Let the member for Yilgarn search the records of the Labour Bureau and he will find that what I say is a fact.

Mr. Corboy: It is not. The Labour Bureau has had unemployed on its books for years.

Mr. SAMPSON: This State has never had a sufficient number of apprentices. I do not imply that the present Government are responsible for that state of affairs.

The Minister for Justice: You spoke about a conspiracy and a scandal.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, because of the vigour displayed in the court to limit the number of apprentices.

Mr. Marshall: Awful!

The Minister for Justice: Displayed by whom?

Mr. SAMPSON: By those who appear before the court. It amounted to a conspiracy to prevent the boys from learning a trade.

Mr. Panton: Then the President of the court is in the conspiracy?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not suggesting that.

Mr. Marshall: The court gives the decision.

Mr. SAMPSON: The court is guided by the evidence placed before it. Let every member resolve to do all in his power to secure a larger quota of apprentices, and the eternal difficulty of shortage of tradesmen and an increasingly large number of unskilled labourers will disappear.

Mr. Lutey: What would you say was a fair quota?

Mr. SAMPSON: I would go so far as to say that every boy should have an opportunity to learn a trade. It is unfair that one section or two sections of the community, by submitting evidence to the court, should be able to limit the number of apprentices to such an extent that the State is continually short of tradesmen and the number of

unskilled workers is increasing. It is distinctly unfair to those who are denied an opportunity to learn a trade. The Minister suggests that my language is extravagant. Would I were gifted with your eloquence, Mr. Speaker, to influence the Minister, for I would surely use it. Our lads are being treated unfairly. There are hundreds of unskilled workers in this State who, had they been given an opportunity to learn a trade, would now be living reasonably happy lives. They are not living reasonably happy lives because they are on the lowest wage rate when they are working, their work is intermittent, and there are considerably more workers than there is work to be done. When they are provided with work, it is not always essential work, but sometimes in the nature of charity. Is it right that an Australian should be forced into that position? No man should stand for a principle that means his brothers, fellows or comrades, whatever he might call them, are relegated to a state in which they cannot make a reasonable living for themselves, their wives and families.

Mr. Panton: Do you know any building contractor who will take on apprentices?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have already explained the difficulty in the building trade. There are plenty of employers who would gladly take more apprentices if the court could be induced to view the question more generously.

Mr. Panton: Do you know any?

Mr. Richardson: I know two who will take four apprentices each, but they are not allowed by law to do so.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know that the printing industry is chronically short of tradesmen. I regret that the enterprise of those engaged in the printing industry is so ruthlessly restricted by the limitations of apprenticeship regulations and awards. There is plenty of work for tradesmen in this country, but if one advertises for tradesmen, he cannot get them.

Mr. Marshall: You must have read that in the paper.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have explained that I recognise the difficulty in the building trade.

Mr. Clydesdale: I could get you 100 carpenters and painters to-morrow morning.

Mr. Richardson: You could not.

Mr. Clydesdale: I could.

Mr. Richardson: I will bet you could not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: I have explained why the building industry is in that state. It can easily be understood why building operations are so excessively costly. A bricklayer, when he starts on a job, frequently has to leave it two or three times because the bricks arrive in dribs and drabs, and he is unable to make a fair week's wages owing to the time lost in waiting.

Mr. Panton: Most of the bricklayers are on piecework.

Mr. SAMPSON: They are in a very fortunate position. Their only difficulty is to secure sufficient bricks. I blame the previous Labour Administration for having discouraged private enterprise by establishing brickworks, because the Government of that time entered into an industry that was then fully catered for by private enterprise.

Hon. J. Cunningham: There is ample opportunity now for private enterprise to enter the field.

Mr. SAMPSON: I acknowledge that, but people never know when the Government may decide to establish additional brickworks. Consequently, private enterprise naturally says, "I am not going to enter into this industry because I may be at once opposed by the Government."

Mr. Richardson: And the Government will not let a contract unless Government bricks are used.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is another difficulty—the preferential treatment given to the State industry.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Therefore they have evacuated the field to enable the Government to go on with the work.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How do you sell bricks?

The Minister for Mines: Cheaper than private firms.

Mr. Richardson: No, you don't.

The Minister for Mines: We do.

Mr. Richardson: I am building at present and I happen to know.

The Minister for Mines: You do not know everything.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: If it were possible to know to what extent State enterprise is to be developed, it would be easy for private enterprise to decide whether to extend its operations.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Why did not your Government dispose of the State brickworks?

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member knows as well as I do that it was not possible under the Act to effect such a sale.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You made no attempt whatsoever to remedy it.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister turns up the records he will find that I supported the motion moved by the member for Kataning, and gladly, too.

Hon. J. Cunningham: But as a Minister you did nothing.

Mr. SAMPSON: As a Minister I supported the motion, and members on this side of the House generally would support it, but as the hon. member knows, there were complications that rendered it impossible at the time to give effect to our desires. I certainly do not stand for State enterprise in brickmaking, and I repeat that the difficulty experienced by men in the building trade to secure employment is attributable to a previous Labour Administration in having established brickworks.

Hon. J. Cunningham: How are you going to remedy it? What do you suggest?

Mr. SAMPSON: I suggest that the Government indicate what it aims at doing and to what extent it intends to develop State enterprise. The matter of apprentices is one for individual members without reference, I hope, to party limitations or prejudices, if such exist. Members should make up their minds to break down the present wretched state of affairs, which is adding to the number of unskilled workers and thereby the number of unemployed.

Hon. H. Millington: What wretched state of affairs?

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member is not usually lacking in perception, and I hesitate to believe that he does not understand. Let me quote from a Sydney publication a paragraph that indicates that the people of New South Wales is faced with somewhat similar difficulties.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are facing the ballot box at present.

Mr. SAMPSON: This refers to the inadequate provision of apprentices. It reads—

Everywhere the story was the same. The printing trade was not found to be affected more than any other—or less. "We cannot do all the work that is offering because we have not the skilled labour," was the complaint on all sides. The trades generally have not the skilled labour for the reason that an insufficient number of lads have been trained to meet the natural growth of business. There are not enough skilled men, nor will there ever be until

a better system is agreed upon in regard to training for trades. In the skilled trades there are never any men out of work who are properly qualified and who will work. The apprenticeship question has to be faced. It has had some attention. The solution appears to be the simple one of training sufficient lads, not only to carry on existing business as older hands drop out, but to meet the demands of expansion. It is that or the direct importation of skilled hands from other countries, and surely it will not be contested that the best course is to train young Australians, who have birthrights in respect of all the industries of their country. Skilled labour is decreasing, unskilled labour is increasing; consequently it is possible to have all the trades calling for men, while there are parades of unemployed citizens who never learnt anything but physical jerks with pick and shovel.

Mr. Withers: Have you gone to the trouble to find out how many employers have their full number of apprentices? Not one in the State is employing the full number.

Mr. Thomson: That is owing to the restrictions imposed.

Mr. Corboy: Very few have their full number. None of them is employing his full quota of apprentices.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have made many inquiries into that question. In some instances employers fail to employ as many apprentices as the agreements and awards permit, but there is a big body of employers who are assisting in training the full number of apprentices allowed. The West Australian Chamber of Manufactures recently considered this matter, and carried a resolution urging upon employers the desirability of employing as many apprentices as the awards permitted.

Mr. Corboy: The fact that they carried such a resolution shows that there is a grave anomaly.

Mr. SAMPSON: It shows that in some cases employers are not engaging the apprentices they should.

Mr. Corboy: We claim that is so in the majority of cases.

Mr. Kenneally: I suppose you will give the name of the publication.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is the "Wimbles Reminder." The "Westralian Manufacturer," the official organ of the Chamber of Manufactures, recently referred to this question.

Mr. Corboy: What about the "Western Traders"?

Mr. SAMPSON: The writer of the article said—

It has been argued in some quarters that employment is not offering to more tradesmen, but

even so, a lad who is a trained carpenter and can't get a job at his trade is a handier man, and a better, than the unskilled labourer, and certainly likely to be of more use to an employer, even if not in his own line. Knowledge hurts no one. If it is true that a little knowledge is dangerous, let us see that our boys are brought up to a full acquaintance with things.

Mr. Corboy: In other words, you want cheap labour.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is no point in that interjection. Wages are fixed by the court. There is no virtue in observing an award.

Mr. Panton: It also fixes the ratio of apprentices.

Mr. SAMPSON: After argument has been submitted.

Mr. Panton: And so it is with wages.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the interjections are not to be taken as meaning that anyone is opposed to giving Western Australian boys an opportunity to earn a living.

Mr. Corboy: You do not suggest we are opposed to that.

Mr. SAMPSON: I should be sorry to think so.

Mr. Corboy: You do not think it?

Mr. SAMPSON: No. It is merely that the interjections seem to conflict with that opinion.

Mr. Panton: We were merely stating facts.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope members will assist to improve the position. It is our duty to do that when we know the enormous number of men who are out of employment at this time of the year. If we have any regard for the country and the welfare of our fellow beings we must take this matter in hand.

Mr. Corboy: It is your duty to make every manufacturer employ the full number of apprentices he is allowed to have.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is my desire, but I want the hon. member to see that the different secretaries who go to the court are not so vigorous in urging that there are already enough tradesmen.

Mr. Corboy: You would like them to be less vigorous in many other directions?

Mr. SAMPSON: I would like them to be no so prolific as to the arguments that really make for unskilled labourers. It is the unskilled labourer who mostly requires to be fitted for special work.

Mr. Corboy: You are shedding crocodile tears.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is there that the economic waste occurs. I hope members will assist in altering that position.

Mr. Richardson: So many men are out of work that they will take almost anything that is offering.

Mr. SAMPSON: In some classes of employment there is always sufficient work going on. For road making one could gather a thousand or two men in one or two hours and put them out in different parts of the State. One could also gather together a number of men who claim to be motor mechanics and to be able to effect running repairs.

Mr. Clydesdale: Many would claim to be printers.

Mr. SAMPSON: No printers are out of work. I would ask the co-operation of members in the direction of relieving the present very regrettable position. I am glad the Minister for Lands has given notice of his intention to bring down a Closer Settlement Bill. I hope this attempt will be successful in every way, and will have the effect of bringing into use unoccupied lands adjacent to railways, concerning which we have heard so much.

Mr. Corboy: And that it will be successful in passing your friends in another place.

Mr. SAMPSON: When Mr. Morrison was alive he never tired of pointing out the difficulties confronting the State because of the non-utilisation of such land. The position to-day is precisely the same. When the Premier went to Harvey he stated that if returned he would take it as a mandate that a measure should be brought down to force unutilised land into productivity. He also repeated the statement at Boulder. I have heard the story before but was none the less pleased to hear it again. I realise the difficulties attached to effecting the Premier's desire. I know the Premier would not do anything improperly, and I hope he will be able to bring these lands into use. I look forward hopefully to the time when it will not be possible to lock up huge areas of country. The Commissioner for Railways has his difficulties added to by reason of the fact that the railways pass by so much land that is never brought under the plough. If we are to carry into effect the motto of the ex-Premier "God speed the plough" we must have an effective Closer Settlement Bill. I hope that measure will force those who are holding up land to bring it into full use.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: What have you done with the Child Endowment Scheme you had?

Mr. SAMPSON: The difficulties created by modern transport, in common with other present day difficulties, have been recognised by the Federal Government. The State has received very generous treatment in the matter of the Federal road grant, which is being subsidised by the State. I wish to raise my voice against the reduction of State subsidies. When one realises how thoroughly the Federal Government appreciated the difficulties of the State in the matter of road construction it is hard to understand how the State Government fail to appreciate the difficulties of local authorities.

Mr. Withers: Are they not assisting local authorities?

Mr. SAMPSON: In the matter of constructing certain main and developmental roads.

Mr. Withers: Of course they are.

Mr. SAMPSON: The difficulties confronting local authorities are great, and are increasing so rapidly that the subsidy, far from being sufficient, has never been half enough. I am disappointed that the State Government should have reduced the small sums that have hitherto been made available to local authorities by effecting a reduction from a maximum of £300 to one of £140. During 1925-26 the State found £26,090 for this purpose. The reduced amount is now £15,902. That is not a big saving to effect. I submit that for every pound the local authorities have received they have secured 20s. worth of work.

Mr. Corboy: Do you think so?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am positive that the member for Yilgarn would agree, if he compared the work done by other authorities, that the road boards had done work worth more than 20s. in the pound. Perhaps we had better not pursue that argument further.

Mr. Corboy: You had better not. Ask the member for Murray-Wellington that question.

Mr. SAMPSON: No suggestion of that sort will have any effect upon me. If the hon. member can throw any light upon the question of bad road construction or bad administration, I should like him to do so, but I do not think he can.

Mr. Marshall: Is there a road board at Armadale?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: There are no roads there.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is one of the best administered road boards in the State.

Mr. Withers: It was bad before the Government took it in hand.

Mr. SAMPSON: I could enlighten the House upon the road which hardly connects Artnadale with Kelmscott to-day. As the matter is likely to be discussed by the road boards at a deputation at an early date, I do not propose to deal with it now.

Mr. Davy: That was the only decent part of the road.

Mr. SAMPSON: Previously it was a good piece of road, but unfortunately was never completed.

Mr. Richardson: The Main Roads Board are doing a lot of good work in the country.

Mr. Latham: During election time they did.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member will not be disappointed if I do not jump at the bait. I heard with great regret that no assurance was given to the road boards that the subsidy would not be further reduced. If the local authorities are to live up to their obligations they must be assisted by the Government to the utmost possible extent. I am certain that different members of the Government are anxious to do this, but would remind them that a reduction in subsidy must have rather a discouraging effect. When the road grant was provided by the Federal Government consideration was given to the enormous area of Western Australia. The Commonwealth authorities acknowledged that Western Australia required special consideration. I am sorry that that viewpoint has not apparently received full consideration by the State in respect of road board subsidies. The importance of country life cannot be over-stressed; particularly is this so in districts relying upon primary production. Their lack of roads constitutes a serious difficulty indeed. Many of the producers cannot get their products to market because of the absence of roads. The great need, as I see it, is not so much the depth of construction as a good surface. If the surface of a road is not in good order with, say, a tarred surface, then there is very little likelihood of the road lasting in good condition for any length of time.

Mr. Clydesdale: Do you not know that the Commonwealth specify that the roads must be constructed to a certain depth?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes.

Mr. Corboy: Do you suggest that you could tar-dress the roads outside the metropolitan area?

Mr. SAMPSON: Certainly.

Mr. Corboy: What, right throughout the State?

Mr. SAMPSON: Not necessarily, but wherever there is heavy traffic it could be done. Otherwise the roads will not stand up to the work.

Mr. Corboy: But they must have a decent foundation.

Mr. SAMPSON: The member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) will bear me out when I refer to a section of the Perth-Albany-road running through the Canning district. The secretary of the local road board, Mr. Jones, has made experiments with that portion of the Albany-road that runs past his office. Although the road is little more than a crust, it has been tar-dressed and has stood up to its work for some years.

Mr. Clydesdale: You do not suggest that that road compares with those constructed by the Main Roads Board?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not making any comparison at all, but I say that unless the surface of the road is kept in good order by means of tar dressing—or a bitumen blanket, of course—the gravel formation or macadam will very quickly go. The road will not stand up to traffic nor will it stand up to the effect of water or air.

Mr. Griffiths: There is a striking illustration on the Kelmscott-road.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is so.

Mr. Corboy: But you do not suggest that that is possible with all roads?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do, because there is no need for heavy construction. Heavy construction is not so essential as tar dressing.

Mr. Clydesdale: The Commonwealth Government will not agree with that contention.

Mr. SAMPSON: If that point has been submitted to them and been rejected by the Federal authorities, I am sorry to hear it.

Mr. Clydesdale: Well, that is a fact.

The Minister for Mines: The Federal authorities specify the standard to which the roads must be constructed, otherwise they will not be subsidised.

Mr. SAMPSON: I think the Federal Minister for Works will listen to reason and if he were shown the road I have referred to, I think he would agree that it is equal to requirements.

Mr. Clydesdale: The Commonwealth Government want roads that will stand up for 50 years.

Mr. SAMPSON: No road will stand up for 50 weeks that is not tar-dressed or covered with a bitumen blanket.

Mr. Corboy: How long would your piecrust road last with wagons of wheat going over it?

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member can examine that section of the Perth-Armadale road outside the Canning Road Board office, and I can assure him he will find that that road has stood up to its work without pot holes or corrugations.

Mr. Corboy: But I suppose they are nursing that part of the road like a baby!

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not think it is tar-dressed more than once a year and I fancy once every second year would be nearer the mark. The importance of roads is considerable, and I am hopeful that the Acting Minister for Works will persuade the Treasurer to review his decision and restore the subsidies to the road boards. Regarding health matters, we are fortunate that the Minister for Health is one of the Ministers sitting in this House. I wish to draw particular attention to matters in connection with infectious diseases such as diphtheria, tuberculosis and so forth. It is customary, when a room has been occupied by a person suffering from an infectious disease, to spray the room he has occupied, but, strange to say, there is no obligation imposed upon the authorities to treat the bedding in a similar way. Hon. members may contemplate with surprise, conditions that allow bed and bedding occupied by a patient to be used subsequently by another person occupying his room in a boarding house or a dwelling house, without any action being taken by the local authorities. In hospitals, of course, there are facilities for sterilising blankets and bedding used by patients. This is a subject that the Minister might look into. Precautionary measures are not taken at present, and it does not require much imagination to realise the danger arising from the use of bedding in the way I have indicated.

The Minister for Mines: Do you know of any case where that has happened?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do. I will let the Minister know of it privately.

The Minister for Mines: If it is due to laxity on the part of any officer of the department, he will go out of it to-morrow.

Mr. SAMPSON: I did not intend to bring forward this matter with the object of having any officer discharged. So far as I understand the position, it has not been obligatory on the health inspectors to deal with it. I do not know how such bedding could be treated unless by destroying it altogether.

Mr. Corboy: There is only one safe way and that is by burning.

Mr. SAMPSON: Of course there are other means available in the hospitals but it would be too expensive to provide those facilities throughout the smaller districts as well. The position, however, represents a grave danger. Regarding the Woorloo Sanatorium, the situation to-day is very difficult. I know it was the same when I was the Minister in charge of the Health Department. The sanatorium is now regarded as a place where patients go to die, but that is entirely wrong. The sanatorium was never established for that purpose. It was established as a sanatorium, and as such I hope it will be continued in the future. It should be conducted as a place to which a person suffering from tuberculosis would naturally desire to go. Because of the unfavourable regard in which the institution is held in most places, patients dislike going there at all. Regarding malignant growths and development of cancer, great interest is taken in this phase of disease throughout the world. While the known percentage of deaths from cancer is great, the actual percentage of those so afflicted is much in excess of that figure. Cancer does not usually attack the young, and when old persons die it very often is a blessing in disguise.

Mr. Marshall: Are you looking ahead?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is gratifying to know that the pathologist appointed at the Perth Hospital is doing good work and that the X-ray equipment has proved a blessing. I hope it will not be long before definite progress is made regarding the provision of a deep therapy plant.

The Minister for Mines: I will require more information before I agree to spend much money in that direction.

Mr. SAMPSON: Investigations made in different parts of the world regarding deep therapy indicate that it sometimes eliminates the necessity for an operation. We know that those operations are not by any means always successful. On the other hand, the use of the deep therapy treatment has a

withering effect on the disease germ, thus on occasions, avoiding the necessity for an operation.

Mr. Corboy: Your claims are not backed up by substantial results.

Mr. SAMPSON: Scientists are dealing with the problem in Guy's Hospital in London, and at other institutions the names of which I am not familiar with. Perhaps when the Minister is speaking later on he will give us some information regarding progress made in deep therapy investigations.

The Minister for Mines: All the information I have to-day, which comes through the Medical Department and the Health Department, is that the system is not too satisfactory. I do not mind telling you that there has not been one application for the deep therapy treatment that has been turned down by the Government in Western Australia. We are willing to pay for anyone who wants that treatment, but the results that have been disclosed so far are not very satisfactory.

Mr. SAMPSON: Where are they treated?

The Minister for Mines: In Perth, by Dr. Johnson or Dr. Donald Smith.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is gratifying to know that; it is a very important matter. At the same time, there is great need for the revision of our hospital laws, which have been on the statute-book since before most of us were born.

The Minister for Mines: I have given notice to introduce an amending Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope in that Bill the Minister will make provision for funds that will be required to carry on the hospitals. The time has arrived when the methods adopted at the present time for raising funds for hospital purposes should be ended. Hospital authorities should know that necessary funds are forthcoming. I have always been under the impression that hospital treatment was equal in importance to education. I would support the imposition of a tax for hospital purposes.

Mr. Corboy: The cost of hospitals falls unevenly to-day.

Mr. SAMPSON: In the interests of all we should endeavour to secure efficient hospital facilities. The method of collecting money in the streets is unworthy of the people of the State. We find that young women are given boxes into which people are invited to place coins, or they are given flowers to sell, or buttons to dispose of. I admire the young ladies who do

this kind of work knowing that it is for a good cause, but it reflects badly upon members of Parliament who permit that kind of thing to continue.

Mr. Panton: It is cut out now, and sweep tickets are being sold.

Mr. Chesson: What about a tax on newspapers?

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister will introduce a Bill to provide funds for hospitals, it will receive my cordial support.

The Minister for Mines: Finance will not be included in the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is important that the hospitals should have a legal standing which at the present time does not exist. I offer my congratulations to the Government for the work that has been done in connection with the erection of the reception house. I take some credit in connection with that work inasmuch as when the Leader of the Opposition was Treasurer of the State, it was made possible for us to acquire the site. I am pleased also that the prison farm is to be established and I hope that the work will be pushed on as rapidly as possible. The people in the locality will find that no great disability will arise from the establishment of the farm there. There is bound to be a sentimental objection, but apart from that there should be no difficulty. At all events, I congratulate the Government for going on with this work which should have been carried out long ago.

Mr. Chesson: While you were in office.

Mr. SAMPSON: Had I continued in office for another few months, it would have been my pleasure and privilege to establish the farm. However, I am not going to be denied the opportunity to congratulate the Government on what they have done. No speech on the Address-in-reply in the first session would be complete without a reference to the elections. As members are aware, Labour had what has been termed a flying start. From the standpoint of democracy, the fairness of the contest was open to question. The essence of democracy, so I have read, is that the will of the people shall prevail. There was a bunch of pocket boroughs and we had the spectacle of nine members being returned unopposed. It would have been futile to oppose any one of those nine, simply because they were standing for small and snug boroughs.

The Minister for Mines: All the same, one of them had 5,000 electors.



Mr. Marshall: You once had 11 candidates unopposed, and you bribed your supporters to oppose the very men you brought down.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not think we need take that remark too seriously, and you, Sir, I am sure will not look upon me with less regard if I do not ask you to call the hon. member to order. The figures of the pocket boroughs to which I have already referred have frequently been compared with those of other electorates. Menzies and Canning are two outstanding examples.

The Minister for Mines: And both the members are on this side of the House.

Mr. SAMPSON: Menzies has 265 electors, of whom 224 voted, and Canning has 17,347 voters, of whom 11,502 voted.

Mr. Latham: They sit together and split the difference.

Mr. SAMPSON: If we make a comparison between those two electorates, we might say that if Menzies justifies the return of one member, then Canning justifies the return of 65.

Mr. Panton: Your party sent two candidates after it.

Mr. SAMPSON: Even the comparatively small Swan electorate, with 5,474 electors should, on the same basis, have 20 members. I have no personal complaint to advance regarding the Swan electorate, or the alleged roll stuffing. I do say, however, that the electoral boundaries should be amended. It may be urged that a previous Parliament did not amend those boundaries, but that is no justification for allowing what is a great evil to continue. Something could be said, indeed something has been said, with regard to the number of road workers who, by a most remarkable coincidence, found themselves in certain districts on the last, or nearly last day, on which it was possible for them to secure enrolment. So much has been said about it, that I do not intend to comment on it further, except to say that so far as the Swan electorate is concerned, I have no complaint to make.

Mr. Corboy: You would have liked the Government to build more roads there for you.

The Minister for Mines: You did complain about the few who were sent there.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have no recollection of complaining about men having been sent to do road work. The results show that the men who went there voted "Sampson for

Swan," and it would have ill become me to raise any objection to their presence in the electorate.

Mr. Corboy: Your leader said they were all supporters of ours and you said they were not.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Leader of the Opposition may have been right in regard to the electorate to which he referred. I hope the present Government will apply its collective mind to the propriety of bringing down a Redistribution of Seats Bill, a Bill that will have the effect of ending the anomalies that at present exist. There is one other matter to which I desire to refer and then I will conclude. It relates to the election for one of the North-West seats. Members will know that the North-West elections took place a fortnight after the others had been determined. Amongst others, the member for York (Mr. Latham) and I had the pleasure of visiting Carnarvon. We went there on the "Minderoo" and on that boat there were other members and some Ministers of the Crown, including the Premier, the Minister for Agriculture and yourself, Mr. Speaker. It was gratifying when we reached Carnarvon to have the opportunity of listening to election addresses delivered by members now on the other side of the House. When I learnt that representatives of the Labour Party were to speak at Carnarvon, I decided that I would not be wanting in good taste if I went along and listened to what was to be said.

Mr. Corboy: So you found out what it was all about after your own election was over.

Mr. SAMPSON: I went along, in company with the member for York (Mr. Latham), to the meeting, and we heard the usual well-balanced and closely-reasoned speech which the Premier gives, and we also heard an excellent speech from the then Minister for Agriculture. Those addresses were followed by a speech from the member for Kanowna. I realised that afternoon, Mr. Walker, as I have realised many times since, that the wide range of vocabulary with which you are blessed and the mastery of words in which you are so proficient stand you in great stead. It seemed to me that afternoon as if you were to some extent obsessed by the fact that you had been Speaker of this House and consequently felt it would not, perhaps, be quite fitting on your part to deliver a strong party address.

So, having voiced some excellent sentiments, you referred to the influx of Parliamentarians at Carnarvon. You may have said that the coming election would be a day of transcendent importance, and that it would be of outstanding value and significance not only to Carnarvon, but to the State itself; that there had been brought about such a combination of circumstances that as the days went by the excitement among the people would increase, and that with the arrival of this body of Parliamentarians there would be an enthusiasm worked up among the electors which, as the days went by, would develop into a frenzy, and that when election day came they would, hugging themselves, rush to the polls crying aloud, "Angelo, Angelo, Angelo!"

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [8.49]: Previous speeches on the Address-in-reply have left me very little to say concerning South-Western matters, and after the eloquent finale of the last speaker one might feel almost nonplussed. Let me congratulate the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally), as a new member, on the manner in which he moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply. For my part I am not prepared to go over the election campaign again. A great deal has been heard of that during the little time the debate has been proceeding. As the Premier remarked last week, members fresh from the hustings have practically been reiterating what took place during the election. Certain matters in the Governor's Speech appeal to me, and I intend to deal with two or three of them. We are all proud of the achievements of the last 12 months. I shall not enter into figures, because the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier, and also the hon. member who may be termed the deputy Deputy Leader of the Country Party, have already dealt with that aspect. Even were I to juggle the figures, members would hardly be more enlightened than they are to-day. It is nice to know that at last we have, as the Premier assures us we have despite the assertions of other members, a surplus in hard cash.

Mr. Latham: Not too hard.

Mr. WITHERS: It is very pleasant indeed to have a surplus of £28,000, whether it be obtained by a Labour Government or a Government of any other political complexion. I applaud members of the Opposition who in their speeches have given the present Government credit for what has been

achieved. Formerly, when adverse conditions obtained in Western Australia, we had to stand up to them. Droughts, for instance were put down to mal-administration of the Labour Party. That being so, surely the Labour Party should be given credit when Western Australia has good seasons. Speaking last year on the Address-in-reply, I said at the conclusion of my remarks that I hoped I would be able to say during this Address-in-reply debate—I was so confident of being returned, having done such excellent work for my electorate—that I could compliment the Government on what they had done for Bunbury during my membership. Certain things that have been done in my constituency are proving a benefit to the South-West, though I have not secured all I wished. I may add that what I have got I did not obtain by making a great noise on the floor of the House. There are times when it is not wise to criticise Ministers too freely, lest one offend them. That may be my position to-night. On the other hand, I may be a little more open during the remainder of my term. The question of land settlement troubles the mind of our whole community, and I am indeed pleased to find that the legislation promised by the Governor's Speech includes a closer settlement Bill. Members and the public are conversant with the fate of previous closer settlement Bills introduced by the Mitchell Government and the Collier Government. I have no doubt whatever that this House is absolutely sympathetic towards closer settlement, and I hope that when the measure reaches another place it will obtain more consideration than former measures of the kind received.

Mr. Pantou: Now you are getting optimistic.

Mr. WITHERS: I am sorry the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) has not remained in the Chamber, seeing that he took more than three parts of my speech in order to make his own. Doubtless the reason is that the Swan district cannot compare with the South-West. However, the position which has been outlined by the member for Swan is an indication of what closer settlement has achieved and is achieving in the South-West. A continuance of that policy will mean for the South-West very great advancement indeed. It is hardly necessary for me to go into the question of group settlement, since the Minister for Lands has

signified his intention of considerably altering the conditions in that respect. However, the member for Swan has given us indications of what the South-West can do in the way of dairying. I was rather alarmed—when I came back to the Chamber after chasing around to look for a balance sheet of the South-West Dairy Products Ltd.—to discover that the member for Swan was dealing elaborately with the matter I was looking for. I do not say he had my balance sheet, but he showed a greater grasp of it than I possess. Moreover, my copy of the balance sheet was missing. During last year's Address-in-reply debate I mentioned the destruction of the State farm at Bunbury. The cutting-up of that State farm into small sections has resulted in many soldier settlers there making a good living off 80 acres of land. Not many people could do that on the wheat areas. Let me point out that there are many other South-Western locations where the same process could be continued—especially between Pinjarra and Capel. Moreover, railways are already running through the properties. I hope the Minister for Lands will give his serious consideration to the question of settling lands which have been served by railways for many years. One does not like repetition, but a good evergreen like the South-West can with advantage be brought up time and again. In dealing with the question of closer settlement last year, Mr. Angwin said he had not lost sight of the development of the lands in the area to which I refer. I hope that aspect will be given full consideration when closer settlement legislation is going through the House. I am not so much concerned with profits from South-Western butter factories, because I realise that a proportion of those profits has accrued not from local production of butter but from the importation of butter into Western Australia. During the slack season of the year butter has to be imported. That butter is not sold as Bunbury butter, its price being about one penny per lb. dearer than that of the Bunbury article. Traders could not afford to buy overseas butter and retail it as Bunbury butter. There is, however, so much demand for Dunbury butter to-day that the market cannot be supplied. Boans and other firms cannot secure the quantities of Bunbury butter that they need. The Bunbury factory during last year produced 502 tons of

butter, as compared with 306 tons for the previous year.

Mr. Davy: How much butter did they import themselves?

Mr. WITHERS: I am not much concerned as to that. However, one point specially appeals to me. The quantity of cream received at the Bunbury butter factory during the 12 months was 914 tons, for which £68,401 was paid. Then there were 502 tons of commercial butter manufactured. Whether the £97,000 profit is due to that, or to the extra importation, I am not concerned. What does interest me is the fact that we have increased the turnover from 306 tons to 502 tons, an increase which, I think, is enormous for one year's operations.

Mr. Davy: Do they import any considerable quantity of butter?

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, I think so, but I am not concerned with that. What impresses me is the increased production.

Mr. Griffiths: They have to import to maintain continuity.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, that is so. The quantity of ice manufactured is also a consideration. During the 12 months 524 tons of ice was produced at the Bunbury butter factory, and was supplied to all the South-West districts. We could not have ice manufactured in Bunbury had we not a butter factory. Then fuel and water cost £626, stamps £149, and railage and cartage £1,723. One little factory producing that amount of revenue to the State is worth considering. Lighting and telephone cost £249, while £554 was paid in rates and taxes. So the State is benefiting in many ways from this little concern. During last year's debate I said the Government would be wise to sell the Busselton butter factory to the South-West Co-operative Co. It seemed to me that better progress could then be made. This has proved to be correct. The factory was purchased, and the first seven months' operations have shown a profit of £558 at the Busselton butter factory. In addition to that, they have secured ten acres of the land at the Margaret River for the purpose of extending their operations as may be required. In the near future, I hope, that will be the centre of the butter production, for the Margaret River district, if properly developed, could supply a great quantity of butter. I am very proud of the position of the South-West to-day, and I hope the eyes of the Government will be on the South-

West during the coming years with the object of proving that by closer settlement we can advance not only the South-West, but the whole of the State. When, recently, I accompanied the Minister for Works to Albany, a port to port conversation with allusions to jealousies cropped up. I told an Albany man frankly that I was not jealous of Albany's surroundings or of anything else that it had, but only of its port. I said that if we had that port in Bunbury, we would not care for all the Albanys in the world. I would not then be afraid of the great South-West being affected by any of the other ports. The member for Fremantle to-night said that certain extensions were required in the Fremantle harbour. I hope they are. But if there is congestion there, since the alternative mileage from many of our agricultural districts to Fremantle or to Bunbury is so similar, I say why not spend a little more money on the established port at Bunbury and a little less on the port within the metropolitan area?

Mr. Latham: A true decentralisation policy, that.

Mr. WITHERS: I appreciate the fact that the Minister for Railways has taken the stand that each port shall get the produce from its natural zone. At Bunbury last year we had a great falling-off in wheat export, but this year we have established a record. On the Address-in-reply last year, I said we must to a certain extent regard the timber industry as a diminishing industry, but that we had other industries to take its place. We have to look to the future, and if we can get the wheat to which Bunbury is entitled there is no reason why the Government should not give us a more up-to-date harbour than we have to-day. I hate repetition, but this is the fourth time in the House that I have urged the Government to do something in this connection. Having got this report of the Bunbury Harbour Board, I should not be doing my duty to my electorate if I did not let the House know that we had a record in wheat to make up for what we have lost in timber. And that loss has not been sustained by the whole of the South-West, for as the result of the operations of the Margaret River railway certain timber has been railed to Busselton to be shipped away from that port. That, I think, is perfectly justifiable. This year we have sent away 58,971 tons of wheat from Bunbury.

The Minister for Railways. You have had over a million bags.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so; I have the figures here. This report shows that we have shipped 1,032,336 bags of wheat, which constitutes a record.

The Minister for Railways: You have had more than that.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, since this report was made out there has been shipped another 24,387 tons. That is the position to-day. That position has another effect on the South-West and the State, in that our bunkering trade has considerably increased. Last year our coal export was 10,110 tons, whereas this year it has increased to 23,183 tons. It shows that if you can get more ships to call at your port you have a better chance of increasing the bunkering trade. Although we have so much of that trade to-day, we shall get a bigger trade yet if we can secure improved harbour facilities.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The Navigation Act will hit you there.

Mr. WITHERS: The report states, "coal bunkering trade shows a satisfactory increase as against the previous year." There has been a falling-off in our fruit exports, due principally to the fact that we have no cool storage facilities at Bunbury.

Mr. Sampson: Then you are on the same basis as is Fremantle.

Mr. WITHERS: Growers have complimented the shippers and the Harbour Board on the way they have handled their fruit shipped through Bunbury. The only trouble is that the facilities are not as good as they are at Fremantle.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But it costs 4d. or 5d. per case more.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so. Most certainly when there is a lack of proper facilities, the Government ought to provide them. The imports to Bunbury last year were over 6,000 tons, principally naphtha and kerosene, as in the past. Of course the whole of the petrol and kerosene for the South-West comes to Bunbury, and is there stored in sheds. A movement is now afoot to have bulk stores established for petrol. It is unnecessary for me to enlarge upon this, but when one makes comments in the House he should be sure that his figures justify his remarks. I should have been lacking in my duty had I not spoken on the Address-in-reply and taken the opportunity to once more place before the Government the position of the Bun-

bury harbour. It is true that I have been told by the Engineer-in-Chief personally that he has not yet got out his report. However, that is no reason why I should not remind the Government of the importance of that report, and the necessity for getting it as early as possible. I saw in the newspaper this morning—I do not know why I was not notified of it—that the New South Wales commissioners are going to Bunbury to make certain investigations. I hope the figures I have quoted will be presented to them in Bunbury, and that they will see for themselves how necessary it is that something should be done. Having dealt with the dairy products and the necessity for improved harbour facilities, I have dealt with the most important requirements of my district generally. Then there are the public hospitals. I wish to congratulate the Government on what they have done in this respect. As the result of some remarks I made here in the discussion on the Estimates on one occasion, inquiries were made, and although we did not get all I had asked for, we got wonderful improvements in the Bunbury Hospital. That hospital at present is more up to date than ever before. This is due largely to the sympathy of the Minister for Health. We have been informed that Parliament will be asked once more to give consideration to a measure dealing with State insurance. I realise that there will be opportunities to discuss the Bill fully when it is presented to the House. Still, I should like to say that I realise the necessity for such a measure and that the Government are fully justified in re-introducing it. Last year legislation was passed making it compulsory for taxi-drivers carrying passengers to effect insurance to the extent of £100 per passenger, or a minimum of £1,000. When such a provision has been made compulsory, it seems hard that the bus owners should be left to the mercy of the insurance companies. I mention this fact because the insurance companies are charging a premium of £14 for cover of £1,000. At the same time the companies are advertising as follows:—

Have you a motorist accident policy? All for £1. Death, £500; permanent total disablement, £500; permanent partial disablement, £250; temporary total disablement, per week, £7; temporary partial disablement, per week, £2. Premium, £1 only.

Yet, when a bus owner asks for cover of £1,000, the rate is jumped up from £1 to £14.

Member: That is not compulsory insurance.

Mr. WITHERS: No, that is the exorbitant rate the companies are charging.

Mr. Sampson: Of course the conditions are different.

Mr. WITHERS: I hope the conditions will be different when the State Government undertake the control of such business.

Mr. Sampson: There is too much State interference.

Mr. WITHERS: This is one class of business that should be controlled by the State. I am pleased that the Speech fore-shadows the introduction of a local government Bill. Drastic changes in local government legislation are necessary. Municipalities have not the power that should be theirs. This applies to the question of town planning, a matter that should receive the approbation of members on both sides of the House. At present a municipal council have no power to interfere in the design of a building on the corner of a street. In Bunbury buildings have been constructed square on the corner, thus increasing the danger to vehicular traffic. If the council could order a corner to be rounded off in order to give a wider view, it would make greatly for safety. That is one question which should receive consideration when matters of local government are under consideration. An amendment of the Constitution Act is another necessary measure. The Government intend to bring down an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. Some of the provisions are not what we thought they were when the Act was passed, and one or two sections are due for amendment. One matter to which the Government should give serious consideration is that of extending assistance to secondary industries dealing with the raw materials of the State. In Bunbury there is an enterprising young man who has established a clothes peg factory. It is the only factory of its kind in Western Australia and there are not many in Australia. The man had to import machinery for his factory and what he could not obtain, he made. His factory is a credit to him. I took the Chief Secretary on a visit to it and he was amazed at the work being

performed. Clothes pegs are being manufactured from red gum, which is regarded as practically valueless timber. On account of the gum veins there is considerable waste. When the timber is milled for clothes pegs the waste is probably 50 per cent. As soon as an individual applies to the Government for such timber, however, the price is raised, while the railway freight imposed is almost as heavy as that on sawn timber. The Government have encouraged the wheat industry by reducing freights on superphosphate and abolishing wharfage charges on wheat for export; they have encouraged the Collie coal industry also by abolishing wharfage, but when a man starts an industry such as the one at Bunbury, he is penalised by high charges. Clothes pegs manufactured at Bunbury are being sent to the Eastern States, where the second grade at unreserved auction is realising within a fraction of the price of the first grade article in Perth.

Mr. Mann: Is it good policy to send second grade stuff to another market?

Mr. WITHERS: I raised that question and the reply was that if the second grade could successfully compete with the first grade in Melbourne, the first grade would more than hold its own in the local market. The first grade of peg manufactured in the Eastern States is dumped on our market and sold at a lower rate than in Melbourne.

Mr. Mann: Was it always cheaper or has it been reduced only since he put his goods on the market?

Mr. WITHERS: It has been reduced since the Bunbury goods were put on the market. This industry is paying wharfage; yet there is no wharfage on wheat or coal. Surely some consideration should be given to goods manufactured from a product of our own soil. It costs as much to send the pegs by rail to Perth and Fremantle as to land them in Melbourne by boat. There is no comparison between clothes pegs manufactured in the State and empty kerosene tins being returned from the country, and yet the manufactured article has to pay a higher rate. The owner of the factory is paying considerably more for electric current at Bunbury than he would pay if he were in Perth, the power costing him between 3d. and 4d. per unit. An industry thus established in the country is deserving of the most sympathetic consideration from the Govern-

ment. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) referred to the work of the Main Road Board. I have no wish to enter into an argument with the hon. member, but I do not agree with him. I have been informed that the board aim at providing bitumen top-dressing for all main roads. Twelve months ago, when I spoke on the Address-in-reply, had I been offered a motor car as a gift if I drove it to Bunbury, I would not have accepted it. I would not have risked my life.

The Minister for Justice: You tried it once and would not repeat the experience.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so. Now, however, even a second grade car like mine can do the journey in comfort. I have done it three times this winter. Thanks to the Main Roads Board we have a road that vehicles can negotiate.

Mr. Sampson: Twelve months ago the road between Kelmscott and Armadale was much better than it is to-day.

Mr. WITHERS: Three years ago it took a party of us three hours to travel from Perth to Armadale, whereas now the distance can be covered comfortably in three-quarters of an hour. Wonderful benefits have already resulted from the work of the Main Roads Board, and in three years' time road travelling will be revolutionised. The time is not far distant when we shall have good roads leading from the capital to Bunbury, Busselton and Albany. Three weeks ago I was in Albany and it was a pleasure to make a 12-mile run into the country. I was informed then that when the section of road in hand was completed, there would be a good drive of 175 miles from Albany to Williams. Is not this something to be proud of? The money is being well spent.

Mr. Mann: That depends upon what the roads are costing.

Mr. WITHERS: All the money that has been collected by way of taxation has been spent on our roads and we have never had roads worthy of the name.

Mr. Sampson: The Perth-Guildford road has stood up to the work.

Mr. WITHERS: Of course, there are roads in the Blackwood district over which one may travel 30 miles an hour in safety, but they have been provided by nature and not by the road boards.

Mr. Lindsay: I could show you some good roads that have been provided by the road boards.

Mr. WITHERS: Let the hon. member show me such a road; then I will believe it.

Mr. Brown: I will take you to Pingelly and you can see for yourself.

Mr. WITHERS: Under the present system of transport no road board has made a road in Western Australia yet. Harvey has one of the finest road boards and is dealing with bad roads, and in that instance there are one or two little patches that are very creditable. Other than those there is nothing to show for what has been spent.

Mr. Griffiths: They have not had the money.

Mr. WITHERS: Unless roads are put down with a good foundation, they will never last.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am glad to hear that there are roads somewhere. I have not seen any yet.

Mr. WITHERS: A good deal has been done in the way of railway extensions and re-grading. I hope this will continue to be the policy of the Government. Although we may not be receiving quite as much surplus from the railways as the Leader of the Opposition said he had received in 1923, about £143,000, I think the profits we have received have been distributed in the right way. The railway people who are responsible for the earning of that money have received more consideration at the hands of this Government than from any other.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What have they received?

Mr. WITHERS: They have received more than the promises that were given to them many years ago. Those promises did not materialise. To-day they are enjoying better conditions than they did throughout the 25 years that I was a railway employee. I am sure the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) did not enjoy the conditions and privileges that the men are getting to-day. Nothing is too good for the men who earn the money.

Mr. Sampson: Have all the promises been fulfilled?

Mr. WITHERS: I know that every promise the Government have made will be fulfilled.

Mr. Kenneally: They are enjoying better conditions than they did when the member for Northam was in office.

Mr. WITHERS: There was recently an outcry for land in the dry areas. The Government are adopting a wise policy in

establishing further experimental farms in order to test the land before they ask people to work it.

Mr. Lindsay: Where are these dry areas?

Mr. WITHERS: Ghooli used to be dry; I do not know whether it is wet yet. The Government are to be commended for their action in this direction. Experimental farms might well be extended to other parts of the State. The Agricultural Department have been doing wonderfully good work. Closer settlement in the South-West is due to the fact that we are learning more and more about the capabilities of this great State of ours, and we are reaping the benefits of the experiments that have been made. It is by experiment that we prosper. I hope the Muresk College will be the means of turning out men who are thoroughly acquainted with our local conditions, and who, working on scientific lines, will certainly be the most valuable settlers the State could have. When these young fellows launch out and are able to advise other people, I am sure they will do the State a great deal of good. Experimental farms might be established in many other centres. Perhaps the day will come when we shall have other agricultural colleges. I am pleased to have the opportunity to make these few remarks, and to support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply so ably moved by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally).

**MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH** (Beverley) [9.35]: Some previous speakers have given me much food for thought. The Premier claimed that he had achieved a surplus. He also said that by means of the Federal grant he had been able to relieve taxation. That may be so in general terms, but there is no truth in the statement so far as relieving the farming community is concerned. That community is labouring under a burden of taxation that is heavier than ever it was before. The Premier also said he had granted the farming community a freight concession which meant a loss to the State of £50,000. In the case of the primary producers, the concession was so small that we do not feel the benefit of it. We know, too, that land holders are labouring under a heavy burden of taxation, more particularly as the result of the vermin tax. I learned

to-day, in reply to a question asked of the Honorary Minister, that the vermin tax has returned about £22,000. That is very nearly the amount of the surplus. The Premier collected the vermin tax during 1926, but did not spend a penny of the money until July of this year. We can, therefore, account for the surplus by putting our finger on the vermin tax, which has been paid by only one section of the community, while the State has not contributed one penny by way of relief. This was not the understanding arrived at by the conference which dealt with the application of the vermin rate last year, and which led up to the introduction of the Bill by the Minister for Agriculture. It was agreed by the conference that the State should contribute a moiety of the tax. It was never expected that the tax would be imposed on the present inequitable basis, and that one section of the community should pay three times as much as another section. The pastoralists, for whom the Bill was primarily introduced, are contributing about £10,000 in coping with the dingo pest. Had the rate been about a quarter of what it is, under present valuations it would not have been unfair. The definition of a vermin-proof fence is a very drastic one, and causes the land holder to be heavily hit. The arrangement is not in keeping with that which was arrived at by the conference. The Minister should give us some proper idea as to what is meant by "dog-proof fence." In the old days a dog-proof fence was looked upon as one that could keep out dingoes. We managed our own affairs in those days, and also considerably enhanced our land values as a result of what was done. To-day apparently a dog-proof fence is something that must be high enough to prevent an object from flying over the top. It will take more than an ordinary fence to keep the domestic dog out. I have even known dogs to worry their way through a wire-netting fence. One man in the Kellerberrin district will vouch for the truth of that statement.

Mr. Lindsay: Why have any exemptions at all?

The Minister for Lands: That simplifies the whole business.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: It is necessary to bring rabbits under the same Act. In actual fact the rabbits are the chief

pest. Why should a rabbit-proof fence be recognised on the one hand and not on the other? Exemption is recognised by the local authorities in the case of rabbit-proof fences, but is not recognised under the new Act. No one who puts up an expensive rabbit-proof fence receives any exemption except at the hands of the local board. It is a fair thing that a man should be exempt when he puts up an expensive fence of this nature. The principle should apply all round. The rabbits are the principal menace and pest. The Bill was designed to protect one section of the community which can well look after itself.

Mr. Mann: Are there no rabbits in the North?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Yes, but they are not causing the damage they are causing down south.

Mr. Chesson: They do no damage there at all.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: They only appear there in waves.

Mr. J. H. Smith: And where does the dingo pest exist?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I admit that dingoes are a menace in the South-West. They were bad in my district but we have got rid of them without any assistance. We fought our troubles alone, and in the process put up our land values. We are also able to deal with the eaglehawk. It was rather a trivial thing to embody in an Act of Parliament. Most people who shot them, until recently never went to the trouble to collect the bonus. We already have the fox. Only last Sunday week a fox was secured within a short distance of Beverley. Where there is one, there are others. During the night time foxes have been heard in various parts of the district, but this was the first one seen. The vermin tax is burdensome on only one section of the community, and that section derives no benefit under the Act.

The Minister for Lands: Who gets the benefit?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am dubious whether anyone benefits. From my experience of the administration of boards in matters of this kind, the money is spent while the people whom the measure is designed to protect become the chief sufferers. The dog menace of to-day is caused more by the domestic dog than by the dingo.

Mr. Angelo: Who asked for the measure?



Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The pastoralists in the first instance.

The Minister for Lands: You chaps never know your own minds.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: We do know our own minds, but are never given fair treatment by Ministers. Now I come to another hardy annual of mine—group settlement. It is indeed disquieting to know that in the progress of the scheme so many settlers have had to be wiped off, or else have their holdings amalgamated to the total extent of 500 blocks. It is also highly regrettable to learn that out of the total number settled on blocks, 52 per cent. are gone, while the 48 per cent. remaining are most dissatisfied, and that these 48 per cent. will need to have the whole of the expenditure on their blocks wiped off in order that they may be given a chance of success.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Who said that?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: That is what people say. I am in the unfortunate position of having said rightly, at the beginning, that the scheme did not carry in it the seeds of success. Thus I am bound to say now, "I told you so." My statements during the past six years are justified by the legislation which is now proposed. The Leader of the Opposition administered to me some fairly caustic criticism when I spoke on this subject three years ago. While admiring the persistency with which he adheres to the scheme, I cannot agree with him, more especially when by way of justifying his action in connection with group settlement he refers back to the settlement of the wheat belt. There is no analogy between the two. In the former instance the germ of success was patent to the man who stuck. Had it not been for the patience and perseverance of the wheat settler and the aid of his good wife in 1914, the wheat position would not be what it is to-day. Behind the group settlement scheme was the establishing of the dairying industry and allied pursuits. That goal has not been achieved, and the expenditure is now nearly five millions. Where are we to-day?

Mr. J. H. Smith: Have you been through the groups lately?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: No. However, I saw in its original state the land on which it was proposed to settle the groups, and I then expressed the opinion that the land was not suitable. Dairying cannot be carried on upon gravel lamps and blackboy tops. As regards the industry in Vie-

toria, poverty was the means of calling it into existence. Indeed, were it not for the butter bounty, the Victorian dairy farmers could not live to-day.

Mr. Mann: There is a revenue of over 11 millions sterling from the Victorian dairying industry.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: Quite so, but the producer is not getting the benefit. The position is as I state. It is worth while to continue with the group settlements? In certain parts of the South-West, more particularly in the southern areas, there is a chance of people making good on small holdings; but the scheme has not behind it the necessary factor of efficient land. Further, the people selected for the groups have not been able to give the scheme that chance which it would have had if seasoned Australians had been settled on the groups. Englishmen without the slightest knowledge of local conditions did not settle our wheat belt, or our wheat industry would not be in its present position. Further, as regards the wheat belt, for every pound expended in clearing the land, there was the assurance of a threefold return in the first year. Success in the dairying industry requires a lion's heart and the will to stick. The question is now, shall the scheme be continued? I agree with the Minister for Lands that it is essential to put the scheme on a proper footing, but as regards a great deal of the land the settlers have no chance of succeeding. I speak as a practical man.

Mr. J. H. Smith: As a practical man! You have not seen the land. You are condemning the whole scheme without having seen it.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I know the land. In the very pick of the South-West, in the Bridgetown district, an average man standing on the banks of the Blackwood River can throw a cricket ball into the poor land. There is good land in the South-West, but it does not extend far enough. The country was taken up by pioneers 60 or 70 years ago, and their descendants are still struggling. However, enough of that subject. I have the courage of my convictions, and I say still that despite the expenditure of enormous sums of money on the group settlements we have not gone any considerable way towards the achievement of the main object. Now as regards the excellent advice given by the Premier at the close of his speech with regard to financial arrangements between the Commonwealth

and the States. It is a pity the hon. gentleman did not give that advice 12 months ago, or rather that our State Government did not treat the Federal Government's proposals a little more favourably at the time.

The Minister for Mines: If we had done so, we would not have got the present offer.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I believe that even with the original suggestions from the Federal Government much better results would have been achieved earlier if the same admirable spirit had existed then as the Premier is displaying to-day. There is nothing like sleeping on a proposition for a day or two. At that time, again, I made no error in my attitude. I look at the question from the aspect of per capita payments. I am convinced that a good deal of the expenditure connected with group settlement and the introduction of migrants has been wasted, inasmuch as large numbers of the migrants brought here at considerable expense have gone on to the Eastern States, thus benefiting the per capita position there at our expense. Population here has not increased to the same extent as population in the Eastern States.

The Minister for Railways: We did not pay for bringing those people here.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: However, we shall benefit by the Premier's advice. Another hardy annual of mine is the Dale River railway proposition. Mr. Stileman's comprehensive railway scheme, which the Minister for Works submitted to this Chamber, appeals to me in toto. The Government ought to bring down a comprehensive railway policy for Western Australia. There are so many lines to be built. A matter which the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) has brought prominently before the House is the position of the Yarramony settlers and the promises made to them years ago—promises that are still unfulfilled. As regards the Dale river railway I know there is a difficulty as to the grades, and I am anxious to know the real position, but up to the present have not been able to ascertain it. I trust, however, that the first section of the line will be constructed in the near future, as promised by the Premier, and that the carrying-out of the other part of the promise, as to the serving of the Kondinin eastward country, will follow.

The Minister for Railways: We do not want to build the first section of the line without knowing what the position is.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Let the Government tell the people what is going to be done.

The Minister for Railways: We have had survey after survey.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I do not know that a peg has been put in east of the Great Southern line.

The Minister for Railways: We are speaking of west of the Great Southern.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am now referring to the through proposition. The Government should build the first section to the Dale River settlers, a distance of 28 miles, which must be built on the trunk line scale, so as to become eventually a portion of the main system. I am indeed pleased that the Honorary Minister in charge of water supply has made available the services of the Chief Engineer for Water Supply, Mr. O'Brien, in connection with the question of the salinity of the Avon River water from the aspect of irrigation. I understand the present position to be that a survey has been completed and a report made. These facts show the earnest desire of the Minister to keep his promise of last session. I hope this year's Estimates will contain an item in this connection. Now we come to the question of the Main Roads Board. We have already heard some rather startling statements regarding the operations of that body, more particularly through the columns of the Press. There have been meetings of local governing authorities and conferences at which the discussions indicated that the authorities did not consider they had been getting a fair deal. From my experience I can say that I have had a fair deal, but I have not limited my transactions with them to writing letters. I have personally interviewed members of the board and I state emphatically that I have been very favourably treated indeed. I know, however, that is not always the position when it comes to matters dealt with by correspondence. I believe the complaints of the local boards are justified and that closer co-ordination between the local authorities and the Main Roads Board is necessary either by means of conferences or interviews. Confusion exists between the two sets of bodies, more particularly regarding the meaning of some of the terms contained in the Act. There is confusion regarding the interpretation of "main roads," "trunk roads," and "arterial roads." Half the boards do not

know what their liabilities are in connection with the roads. If members of the Main Roads Board, or the officers, could be sent round the country districts to confer with the local authorities, nothing but good would result. Like the member for Moore (Mr. Ferguson), I am desirous of assisting the Government, as I would assist any Government in charge of the Treasury bench. I have not quite so many bouquets to throw about as he had, but he is a new member. When he has had some more experience he will not be inclined to throw so many bouquets, because they may prove embarrassing when he wishes to say something that is not quite so complimentary. Personally, I will give support to the Government if I think their actions are right, and will oppose and criticise them if I consider they are wrong. The best thing the Government can do at present to prove their bone fides and their desire to assist one particular section of the community is to abolish the Vermin Act Amendment Act or, at any rate, to amend it still further in a most drastic manner. I wish to refer to the charges made this evening by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) regarding the condition of wheat shipped overseas and the handling conditions on the Fremantle wharf during the present season. That hon. member said that considerable quantities of wheat had been shipped overseas in a very bad condition. At the time I interjected and asked him if that included wheat from the pool, and he replied that it did. In plain language, I repudiate that statement. Out of a total of 60 shipments sent from Western Australia, only one query was received regarding the condition of portion of one shipment, and then only 10 tons was allowed as wheat in a damaged condition overseas.

Mr. Sleeman: Up to date.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Yes.

Mr. Sleeman: That proves nothing! I reiterate what I said before. Call for an inquiry, if you do not believe me, and see what you get!

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am not speaking as a member of Parliament only, but as a member of the advisory committee in connection with the wheat pool. I have first hand information. The hon. member can refer as much as he likes to the wheat handled by other firms, but when he refers to the wheat handled by the pool, I give his statements an emphatic denial.

Mr. Sleeman: Don't try to push it on to the other firms!

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am not doing so; I am merely absolutely repudiating your statements so far as they apply to the wheat pool.

Mr. Sleeman: Then call for an inquiry.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Instead of tackling the pool and other people handling wheat in the way he did, it would have been better had the member for Fremantle exercised his ability and influence with the Minister for Railways regarding the provision of sheets for trucks, and had he done so, there might not have been any necessity to bring this matter before the House.

The Minister for Railways: In what way?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: On the 27th April, 1926, an influential deputation, arranged by the trustees of the Co-operative Wheat Pool and comprising representatives of the Flour Millers' Association, the Primary Producers' Association, the wheat shippers, the produce and timber merchants, as well as the fertiliser distributors, waited upon the Minister for Railways. A report of that deputation appeared in the "West Australian" of the 28th April, 1926, and I wish to read it, because it demonstrates conclusively, in my opinion, that if there was any difficulty regarding damaged wheat the Government had the opportunity to remedy it, as their attention had been drawn to the difficulty.

Mr. Sleeman: Now you say there may have been some damaged wheat sent away.

Mr. Griffiths: And it amounted to 10 tons.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: That is so. The report in the "West Australian"—

The Minister for Railways: Before you read the report, do you know what has transpired since?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Yes, there were not sufficient sheets.

The Minister for Railways: The supply of sheets has been increased by 33-1/3 per cent.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I want to read the report to show the position taken up by the wheat handling agents regarding the transport of wheat to Fremantle.

The Minister for Railways: Do you know that we have put more sheets into the possession of the Railway Department during the last two years, than was done for a

long time before that. We have put in ten times as many as the Government you supported.

**Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH:** That is questionable. The report in the "West Australian" was as follows:—

In the course of his remarks Mr. T. H. Bath, a trustee of the Co-operative Wheat Pool, stated that at present there was an appalling shortage of truck tarpaulins, but that he looked upon the provision of sheets as a remunerative investment for the Railway Department as they were hired out at 2s. 6d. each. Therefore the Minister would be justified in making liberal provision for sufficient sheets to cover produce in transit—

The Minister for Lands: A lot of the wheat was stacked in the country and uncovered.

**Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH:** Mr. Bath further stated—

There should be, he thought, a provision in the regulations against chaff being railed without proper coverings in bad weather. He asked the Minister to make some immediate provision to secure additional sheets and also to prepare for the increased production of next season, so preventing loss to wheat handlers, millers and produce merchants—

The Minister for Railways: At that time 1,500 sheets had been provided, twice as many as before.

**Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH:** Mr. Bath went on to say—

Trucks of which the tare was proportionately less than that of the present. "Ge" trucks should be provided, as they would enable wheat to be handled more expeditiously. Wheat handlers found that "Q" and "Qa" trucks were satisfactory. The position was one that called for foresight and statesmanlike policy, and required immediate attention.

Mr. W. Padbury of the Flour Millers' Association said that the members of the deputation had striven for increased rolling stock and an adequacy of tarpaulins year after year. The wheatgrowers and flour millers were suffering heavy losses which had to be passed on to the consumers—

The Minister for Railways: All that has been attended to since.

**Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH:** The report continued—

Waterlogged wheat was arriving at the mills and decaying, and in many cases becoming unfit for human consumption. The millers did not want wheat containing such a high percentage of water. He wished to urge the dire necessity for this provision of rolling stock and sheets being made irrespective of cost in order that

millers might receive wheat in dry condition and mill it creditably. Thus they would be able to maintain their reputation for producing some of the best flour, and by building up that reputation, gain a larger share of the world's markets.

Mr. Jackson, representing Messrs. F. & C. Piesse, said that the expenditure for additional coverings would be small—about 2,000 sheets would be sufficient—and that the inability of the Railway Department to deliver wheat during the wet months of the year in the condition in which it was received at the sidings, caused all the trouble.

Mr. A. C. McCallum, representing the fertiliser distributors, stressed the necessity for a comprehensive and progressive railway policy. He congratulated the department on the work done with the equipment at its disposal. He considered no other Railway Commissioner in the Empire was handicapped by such inadequate rolling stock.

Mr. Willecock stated he did not agree with that.

In the course of the Minister's reply to the deputation, he expressed pleasure at their optimistic view concerning cereal products in the future. He said that on the programme for the next 12 months provision had been made for 820 sheets.

The Minister for Railways: That has been doubled since.

**Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH:** Yes. The report of the Minister's remarks continued—

He had discussed the matter with the Treasurer about a fortnight ago, and Mr. Collier had agreed that that provision must be made at once.

Mr. Willecock also mentioned that some trucks were to be made, and that 10 new locomotives similar to those imported in 1925 would be built locally. He stated that sheets would be increased by 25 per cent. during the next two years, and that their manufacture would be expedited so that 500 would be completed within the next few months.

Mr. H. E. Braine, of the Westralian Farmers, said that the provision of 820 sheets would not help much, and Mr. Padbury said that the mills had refused to accept wheat unless sheets were provided.

The Minister for Railways: Tell us what has happened since then.

Mr. Sleeman: Tell us what you got extra for the wet wheat.

**Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH:** I know that we had enormous losses and the shipping companies had great losses too, for the pool had to bear considerable expense in reconditioning some of the wheat before it could be handled.

The Minister for Railways: But you want to tell the House what has happened regarding the deputation.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: This is what happened regarding the wheat pool. The Westralian Farmers Ltd., the agents for the Co-operative Wheat Pool, this year purchased 360 tons of iron and the necessary timber to protect 2½ million bags of wheat in the country areas. It was anticipated that, with this quantity protected in the country, the railways would transport the balance either to ports or mills before the wet season set in. Excessive rains fell throughout the whole State during the month of March, as much as 7in. being registered east of Merredin, which is in the heart of the wheat belt. Consequently, every bag of wheat that was uncovered in trucks at that time was damaged by the excessive rains.

The Minister for Lands: And also many of the bags that were uncovered in the stacks.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Undoubtedly they were damaged, too, but the pool authorities and the handling agents did their part as far as the protection of the wheat in the country was concerned, and had the Minister for Railways lived up to his promise and delivered the 820 sheets, it would have made a big difference.

The Minister for Railways: But we doubted that number.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Not then, but later on.

Mr. Sleeman: Then you are blaming the Government for the wet wheat.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Sufficient new sheets could not be obtained from the Railway Department because they were wanted to cover the fertiliser consignments at the time.

The Minister for Railways: That wheat was stacked in the open air. That was not the reason.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: That was the explanation given by the Commissioner of Railways.

The Minister for Railways: Why, the wheat was stacked in the open!

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Very few sheets were available for the covering of the wheat and it was impossible to give quick despatch to the various vessels loading grain in consequence of that fact.

Mr. Sleeman: Much of the loss was caused through the wheat being wet when it was put into the trucks.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: If that were so, I could quite understand it happening. The fact remains that we did not have a sufficient supply of covering for the trucks, notwithstanding that the matter had been brought prominently before the Minister for Railways, who had promised to assist us.

Mr. Sleeman: There is such a thing as reconditioning.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The pool had to go to great expense in reconditioning the wheat and that caused unnecessary delay to the ships. As to the statement of the member for Fremantle that pool wheat was loaded into trucks for Fremantle in a damaged condition, I give that a most emphatic denial.

The Minister for Railways: He was talking about the wheat six weeks ago.

Mr. Griffiths: What was the quantity reconditioned?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I cannot say exactly but out of a total of 60 shiploads sent away by the pool only 10 tons had to be allowed off as losses.

Mr. Sleeman: Three weeks ago wheat was being sent away in bad condition.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Well, I have made my reply to the hon. member's statement. I am sorry he did not devote his energy towards giving better advice to the Government and thus help to obviate the position.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.*