

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 17th August, 1922.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, REWARDS FOR SUGGESTIONS.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Railways: What is the total amount paid to employees of the Railway Department during the past two years as rewards for suggestions relating to economics or efficiency in railway administration?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: £888 7s. for period 1st July, 1920, to 30th June, 1922.

QUESTION—GEOLOGIST'S REPORT, TO CIRCULATE.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Minister for Mines: Referring to the annual report for 1921 of the Government Geologist (Mr. A. Gibb Maitland), does he not think it would be to the advantage of the State to have the report printed in pamphlet form for distribution in Great Britain and the Eastern States, and elsewhere?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: In addition to being included in the annual report of the Mines Department, the report of the Government Geologist is published separately, and copies of this, and also the report of the Department of Mines, are distributed throughout the world.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [4.36]: I shall restrict my remarks on the Address-in-reply to a few brief references to the subject of immigration. First of all I wish to place on record my warm appreciation of the Premier's efforts to advance the interests of the State, and I desire to congratulate him on the success of his mission to London. Members are aware of the very helpful feeling existing in the State to-day towards the Premier's immigration scheme. In view of that fact I consider members should co-operate with the Government by encouraging this feeling everywhere. Hon. members will recognise that in the absence of a favourable atmosphere the scheme, instead of progressing, may col-

lapse, which above all things we should endeavour to avoid. I suggest to the Government that they undertake a vigorous campaign to rouse and stimulate public interest in obtaining an immensely greater population in this State by immigration. Reference has been made to the number of ex-service men coming to the State, and it has been said that these men are coming to Western Australia neither at the expense of the Commonwealth nor at that of this State. I understand they are being brought here at the expense of the Imperial Government. If we desired to put anything in the way of these men coming to Western Australia, we could not prevent it, seeing that the Imperial Government are paying their passages. In any case, what is wrong with the fact of Imperial service men settling here? They are desirable men, and should be encouraged. The member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson), I think, said—I do not know exactly what he meant—that these ex-service men were without intellect. Men who could go through the ordeals faced by the Imperial men during the great war have given evidence of possessing a character which should ensure them a hearty reception here, and every assistance in the making of new homes. It is true that Britain has to-day a surplus population, but I do not believe that the immigrants coming here are the surplus unemployed of Britain. That country to-day has one and a half million of unemployed who find it impossible to get work there, or to get sufficient work to maintain themselves. Seeing the happy position of Australia, we should offer the right hand of fellowship to the men and women who are coming over a distance of 10,000 miles for the purpose of making their homes here. When the Premier was due to return to Western Australia, the people were on tiptoe of expectation as to the results of his mission. Immediately on his return the hon. gentleman was feted by the public and eulogised by the Press. Some remarks possibly not complimentary have been made on the fact that the Premier was welcomed by a brass band, and by other outward marks of enthusiasm. For my part I consider that all the feting and all the eulogy bestowed have been well deserved by this son of Western Australia. I make that statement bearing in mind that when the Premier accepted the honourable position which he holds to-day, I was one of the members who said in this Chamber that he did not get the Premiership by any vote of mine. However, I have no hesitation in stating that to-day I as a member of Parliament would be prepared to go to any part of Western Australia and proclaim my whole-hearted support of the Premier's scheme to increase the population of Western Australia by encouraging immigration. I regret that the original hopeful feeling with regard to that scheme is dying down somewhat. Possibly that is owing to the fact that we have had, as some hon. members have expressed it, a surfeit of the scheme in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Teesdale: Stop the social functions. They are hampering everything.

Mr. DAVIES: The social functions may cease so far as I am concerned. What is needed is that we should get on with the work, and the way to get on with it is for members of Parliament to go right through the country and preach the gospel that is being preached by the Premier, that it is essential we should avail ourselves of every opportunity to increase the number of people in Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: You are doing your part.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, in a small way. If there is one thing more than another that the public of Western Australia desire to-day, it is the details of the Premier's scheme of immigration.

Hon. T. Walker: He said he had published them.

Mr. DAVIES: The Premier said that the scheme was published last January.

Hon. T. Walker: We all read that.

Mr. DAVIES: Undoubtedly a bold outline of the scheme was published, but that was all. The scheme was published to the people in outline, but further details are needed.

Hon. T. Walker: That is what I complained about.

Mr. DAVIES: I daresay every member of Parliament is in the position of having dozens of his electors coming to him wanting to know the particulars of the scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It occupied a big area in the Press.

Mr. DAVIES: I admit that. That notwithstanding, I think it should be preached every day and every week for the next few months so that every man and every woman, or at least the majority of them, will become thoroughly acquainted with the scheme of immigration. It has been said by the Premier that he gave a bold outline of the scheme. In giving this outline, the Premier has shown himself to be a man who is capable of presenting to us what I might term the conception of the scheme. I am anxious to know, however, if we have the officers in Western Australia who are capable of dealing with the details of the scheme.

Mr. A. Thomson: Of course we have.

Mr. DAVIES: I hope that is so. We all know full well that the success or failure of the scheme will be greatly influenced by the work of our officers. If we have such officers, I would advise the Premier to place implicit confidence in them and see that they carry out the scheme in the direction he desires. In these days the public have enough to do to look after their own business. At the same time, the people would be prepared to attend public meetings and other functions at which the scheme could be put before them, so that they could get a thorough grasp of all the details. As to a stalemate setting in, that would be the worst possible thing that could happen.

Mr. Teesdale: If there is £6,000,000 to get things going, it will be all right.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. DAVIES: Apathy and indifference will kill an immigration scheme just as surely as will direct antagonism. I urge the Premier and his Ministers to undertake a campaign throughout the country, such as was entrusted to the Minister for Agriculture when he toured through various centres on his "more production" campaign. The Minister for Agriculture spoke in a number of country towns and undoubtedly created enthusiasm among the farmers regarding the necessity for increased production. Such a campaign should be undertaken in connection with the immigration scheme. It is true that Ministers have a lot to do in these days, more so to-day perhaps than for many years past. But if they could find some time to go about the country individually, and members of Parliament could do likewise, it would assist this work of settling people on the land.

Mr. Lutey: What about our own people?

Mr. DAVIES: I am with the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) on that point and I think our own people have had the opportunity all along. I think our own people should have the same, if not even better opportunities than the newcomers, to settle on the land. We should go throughout the country and educate our own people to a realisation of the fact that they should not concentrate in cities but settle in the country.

Mr. A. Thomson: If you can do that, you will do good work.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so. There is one portion of the Premier's statement which concerns me vitally as it affects my electorate. The Premier stated that he intended to settle 10,000 acres along the Swan Valley.

Mr. Piesse: Not all in the Swan Valley.

Mr. DAVIES: I understand Toodyay comes within the area referred to by the Premier, so that the hon. member need not be concerned. In the last annual report of the Department for Agriculture, I notice that Mr. G. W. Wickens, the officer in charge of fruit industries, says—

Fifteen acres of vineyard for dried fruit purposes constitute a suitable area for one man with a family, and I consider the best way to apportion this out is to plant six acres with sultanas, six acres with muscats, and three with Zante currants.

Mr. Harrison: He would have his work cut out too.

Mr. Piesse: That is not enough.

Mr. DAVIES: I am inclined to agree with the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse). The expert, however, states that 15 acres constitute a suitable area for one man.

Mr. Harrison: No area is provided for poultry or a cow.

Mr. DAVIES: No, nor is there any reference to a house.

Mr. Teesdale: The settler can live in a hollow log.

Mr. DAVIES: There should at least be some provision for a house. It will be interesting to know the average holding worked by returned soldiers in the Swan Valley. The average runs from 12 to 15 acres.

Mr. Denton: And they have a hard row to hoe.

Mr. DAVIES: While the expert states that a fair holding would be 15 acres, that would be for land under cultivation. With provision for a house and a cow, I think he should get at least 18 or 20 acres.

Mr. Piesse: And that would not be enough.

Mr. DAVIES: I think the Premier said, in the course of a speech—or was it in a leading article in the "West Australian"—

Member: Probably in the leading article.

Mr. DAVIES: I think it was said that the area of the holdings should be reviewed. That is so, if the expert states that 15 acres should be the average holding but does not allow for a house or paddocks for the settlers.

Mr. Wilson: Some experts have not enough knowledge.

The Minister for Agriculture: That report only deals with the vines; the settler can do other things as well.

Mr. DAVIES: But the report sets it out clearly how the 15 acres should be dealt with.

The Minister for Mines: The report does not say that the 15 acres constitute the whole holding.

Mr. DAVIES: The expert suggests that this acreage should be taken up and planted as he indicates. There are men in close proximity to Perth making a living off $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and they reside within the boundaries of the Leederville electorate. In last Monday's "West Australian," it was stated that there are six families there with 80 children.

Mr. Carter: They do not only grow currants in our district.

Mr. DAVIES: They must be electric currants in that part of the State.

The Minister for Works: Eighty children?

Mr. DAVIES: I assure hon. members that I do not think that is quite true because I made myself busy out there and the largest family I found, as the result of my personal investigation, was one of seven children. If some have seven children, others must have 17, but I failed to find them when I was there. The aspect I want to deal with particularly is the statement the Premier made when he indicated he intended to put 10,000 additional acres under vine. That will mean 500 new settlers. It is intended to introduce 25,000 settlers a year for the next three years, and the Premier allots only 500 to the vine lands of the Swan Valley.

Mr. Piesse: That number should be increased. We will have to do it.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so.

Mr. Harrison: It will be a good proposition.

Mr. DAVIES: It will, and I suggest to the Premier that he should review his decision and increase the number of settlers to be placed on our vine lands. I am convinced that if the Premier would induce more settlers to go in for the dried fruit industries, and promote the settlement of land close to the city, it would pay the State far better than to send out settlers 200 or 300 miles from Perth.

Mr. Denton: If he did so, the settlers would have a market at their back doors.

Mr. DAVIES: I am convinced, after travelling through the Swan Valley, and over the country within a radius of from 50 to 60 miles of Perth, that the land there is capable of settling the whole population of Western Australia. I think the Premier, while endeavouring to settle other parts of the State, should do more in connection with the settlement of the vine lands.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are planting 200,000 additional sultana slips this year.

Mr. Piesse: Where?

The Minister for Agriculture: In different localities.

Mr. DAVIES: According to the annual report of the Department of Agriculture for the year ended 30th June, 1919, the exports of dried fruits from Western Australia totalled 1,245 cwt.; three years later, that is to the 30th June, 1922, the exports had increased tenfold, or to 12,147 cwt. If that increase has taken place in three years, we may expect a 20-fold increase within the next three years. In this departmental report reference is made to the Murray lands, in the Eastern States. We are told that the average in Western Australia is equal to the average of the Murray lands, where they have between 25 and 30 cwt. to the acre. One great advantage which the vine lands in Western Australia enjoy is that there is no call for irrigation, and no payment to be made for grading or for channelling. On the Murray River settlements £3 per acre per annum has to be paid for water, while channelling and grading each cost another £5 per acre.

The Minister for Agriculture: But channelling and grading cannot be annual charges.

Mr. DAVIES: I did not say they were. Only the water is an annual charge. However, for the first year the vine grower in the Murray settlement has to pay £13 per acre over and above the bare cost of the land. I am glad to notice that while the Minister for Education is in the Eastern States a conference is being held respecting the marketing of fruit, including dried fruit. It is regrettable that the price of dried fruit on the London market has fallen about 25 per cent., a serious position for the returned soldiers who have gone in for vine growing and whose orchards are just coming into bearing.

The Minister for Agriculture: The market may have touched bottom.

Mr. DAVIES: I hope it is so. The Premier has forecasted a Closer Settlement Bill. Coincidentally, he should bring down a proposal to tax undeveloped lands in proximity to railways. Of course, in some quarters it would be regarded as confiscatory legislation. However, last session, when dealing with the Closer Settlement Bill, the Premier himself suggested that very tax. It was one of the three schemes he had for bringing those lands into effective use.

Mr. Carter: But will it not affect the legitimate farmer?

Mr. DAVIES: No; because it will be imposed only on undeveloped land. I was sorry to hear the Premier say the other night that he could not see how we could get on without party Government. I differ from the Premier on that point. To-day he is the leader of three parties.

Mr. Lutey: They are all one.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, all one in the idea of fostering the interests of the country. Nevertheless, the Premier is leader of three parties who, for the time being, have sunk all party differences.

Mr. Wilson: The National Labour Party ought to have a Minister.

Mr. DAVIES: That is not for me to say. Probably I agree with the hon. member that the National Labour Party ought to have some consideration. Still I think it was impolitic of the Premier, of all men, to say that we cannot do without party Government. Times out of number has the "West Australian" declared that the Premier is no party man, that if there is anybody in the House who is a non-party man it is Sir James Mitchell. It ought to be pointed out to the Premier that there is on this side of the House at least one party, the National Labour Party, who have sunk party interests in favour of the interests of the State. In justice to that party, the Premier ought to qualify his opinions that we cannot do without party Government.

Mr. Wilson: He ought to give you a Minister, at any rate.

Mr. DAVIES: I appeal to all sections of the House to follow the example set by the Leader of the Opposition in his excellent speech on the Address-in-reply. Notwithstanding any personal differences which we may have, let us consider the interests of the State as against those of party.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.10]: I believe this session will be largely occupied in dealing with immigration. I am sorry the Standing Orders did not permit the Premier to continue giving us some information about the immigration policy last night. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat said that if there is anything the people want to know about the immigration scheme, it is some of the details. I heartily agree with that. I have endeavoured to take an intelligent interest in the scheme, but up to date I do not know anything at all of the details; and, what is more, I do not think the Premier does,

either. I am sorry he is not here just now. During the Premier's speech I, by interjection, asked was he permitted under the scheme to expend any part of the six millions in providing employment for our own people. To that the Premier responded, "Yes, I can use this money to any extent for the purpose of providing work for our own people." He outlined works, and the Governor's Speech also outlined works. I do not know whether they are to come out of the six millions. If they are, then the statement made by Mr. Colbatch at the function in the new theatre was about right, namely, that it will take at least three of the six millions to complete these works, which will leave three millions for the new immigrants. The reference in the Governor's Speech is as follows:—

The moneys so raised will be employed in the following directions:—1. To strengthen the funds of the Agricultural Bank in order that improvements, chiefly in the direction of clearing, fencing and dam sinking, may be put in hand by existing holders to enable them to double the present production of wheat, and to largely increase the stock-carrying capacity of their farms.

The Minister for Agriculture: That money will all go back.

Mr. MUNSIE: But is it to come out of the six millions?

The Minister for Agriculture: In the first place, yes.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is all right. The reference in the Governor's Speech continues—

2. To provide for the housing of people in country towns and districts. 3. To settle 6,000 additional settlers on the land, chiefly in the South-West portion of the State, to bring their holdings to a productive stage by clearing, drainage, fencing and housing, and to provide railways, roads and other facilities to enable them to market their products.

According to the Premier, it is not only a Western Australian scheme, but an Australian scheme, since it is backed by the Commonwealth Government; not only an Australian scheme, but an Imperial scheme, since it is backed by the Imperial Government also. Recently we had a visit from the Prime Minister, who travelled down to the South-West for the purpose of seeing for himself the lands on which the Premier intends to settle the immigrants. In the course of the tour the following proposition was put up to the Prime Minister:—"Seeing that the Premier is going to England for the purpose of trying to induce 25,000 immigrants per annum to come to Western Australia, chiefly to settle on the land, some provision should be made for those people before they come here." And the direct question put to the Prime Minister was this: "Are you prepared to give the same conditions, and allow the Premier to use that money for the purpose of providing work for people already in Western Australia, preparing the farms for the immigrants against their arrival?" The reply received was unfortunately a point

blank refusal. Mr. Hughes said he was not prepared to assist our finances or pay interest on loan moneys to provide work for people in Western Australia; it was not a reasonable proposition.

The Minister for Works: He is finding plenty of work for us in the way of paying taxation.

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit that. From a business standpoint there was a lot of logic in the Prime Minister's argument. He said that if people in Western Australia were out of work it was the duty of the Government, if they desired to spend loan moneys to provide work, to raise those loan moneys, but he would not consent to the Commonwealth bearing a proportion of the interest. I want some definite information on the point whether the Premier can spend any of the money in this way. If he is going to expend portion of the money and carry out the work indicated in the Speech, three millions of it will be absorbed, leaving three millions for settling 6,000 people in the South-West. I do not wish to be pessimistic. I want to see people settled on the land, but the Government are taking on an impossible task if they think they can settle 6,000 people in the South-West for three millions of money. It is impossible to settle a man in the South-West for £500. That is what it works out at.

Mr. Davies: The average man would be glad to get £500. I would.

Mr. MUNSIE: Regarding settlement in the South-West to date, if we can believe the reports, even the departmental reports, it has cost considerably over £500 for each settler. Take soldier settlement in the South-West: The average cost of settling the men has been considerably over £500. These men were not placed on virgin land, but on repurchased estates, and a large proportion of the money was probably absorbed in the purchasing of the land. If they had been settled on virgin land, however, they would have been in a worse position. Our experience is that £500 per settler is not sufficient.

Mr. Teesdale: It is not necessary to give them a complete farm. The old settlers did not have a farthing. They settled the country without help from anybody.

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit that. Without in any way reflecting upon immigrants or their ability, the men out of work in this State, particularly the timber workers and those accustomed to bush and axe work, would do over 50 per cent. more work during the first six or seven months than the best of the men who are coming here. No one will dispute that statement. The money could have been expended on preparing the holdings and there would then have been a better chance of success. The Premier when questioned by interjection—it is the only way we can get any of the details of this scheme—stated that the agreement was in writing, but that he had not yet got it from the Prime Minister. My advice to the Premier is that the sooner he gets that agreement in writing, the better it will be for all concerned if he in-

tends to spend three of the six millions of money to provide work for people in Western Australia. If the Prime Minister finds out that he intends to do this, the agreement may not be signed. I am a strong believer in a policy of getting more people to come to Western Australia. Our chief difficulty arises from dearth of population. The greatest drain on our finances is our railways. If we had the most capable manager in the world in charge of our railway system, he could not make ends meet, owing to the mileage of railway being so disproportionate to the population of this State.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is right.

Mr. MUNSIE: The only way out of the difficulty is to bring more people here that a greater volume of traffic might be provided for the railways. If the Premier does not take serious steps to provide for the wants of those people in Western Australia, though he may get immigrants to come here, he will lose a considerable number of the people already in the State. It is useless for the Premier to say there is land for everyone who wants it.

Mr. Heron: There is not.

Mr. MUNSIE: There are a dozen people in this city who are prepared to go almost anywhere in the State if they can get land. I know of one family of five—four of them boys—eager to go on the land. They have made no fewer than five applications for land. I admit they have to take their chance by going before the Land Board.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have put more people on the land this year than were put on in the best year the State ever had, except one.

Mr. MUNSIE: A good deal of that is accounted for by the group settlement. There are plenty of people in Western Australia who want land but who do not want it under the group settlement system.

The Minister for Agriculture: They want town hall sites.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, they do not. If I wanted land ever so badly, I would not take up a block 50 miles from a railway. If a man cannot get land nearer to a railway than 50 miles, it is no test of the sincerity of his desire to take up land that he refuses a block so remote from communication. Applications have already been called for blocks in the Newdegate area. Those people who settle there will be much too far from a railway and the question of building a railway to Newdegate has not yet been considered by Parliament. Still, applications are being called for 47 blocks at Newdegate, and I believe an enormous number of applications have been received. Probably when those blocks have been settled, another 47 blocks will be made available, for which there will be another set of applicants. So presently we shall find 100 or 150 settlers at Newdegate with no possible chance of producing one pound of stuff which they will be able to market. This will be a very serious state of affairs. The Premier realises

that the State has been losing population during the last nine years or we would not have had our attention directed to this fact by the Speech. It is a most deplorable state of affairs that in the 13 years from 1909 to 1921 though 45,409 people were brought into the State, at the end of that period we had an excess of only 9,468 people.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are bringing them here now and putting them on the land and, once a man settles on the land, it is a difficult matter to leave.

Mr. MUNSIE: But the great majority of the people brought here previously came here for that very purpose.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Mr. MUNSIE: Evidently a lot have left the land. The Premier admits that over 3,000 soldiers have been settled on farms purchased from individual farmers. This has not had the effect of increasing land settlement in the State. I am not saying anything against that policy; probably the soldier deserved the best that could be given him, but in buying out established farmers in order to settle the soldiers, the Government were not adding to the production of the State. In many instances experienced farmers were bought out and inexperienced men were put in their places. I hope this will not be done with the immigrants who are coming here now. If no provision is made for the people already in Western Australia, they will leave the country to the immigrant. I want Australians to remain in Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: So do we all.

Mr. MUNSIE: And I want to see provision made for the Australians already in this State. I urge on the Government the necessity for speeding up land settlement that people already in the State and wanting land may be able to get it. There is great need for this. I believe there are at present more applications for land by people belonging to Western Australia than ever there have been in the history of the department. Of course a considerable number will shortly be absorbed in the group settlements. This will relieve the position to some extent, but it seems strange that the Government should be so confident of their ability to absorb the number of immigrants mentioned and also provide land for our own people, in view of the evidence tendered before the Royal Commission on Forests. Application was made for 10,000 acres of cut-over karri country and the officer in charge of the Agricultural Bank and of group settlement, Mr. McLarty, in the course of evidence on oath, said the department must have that 10,000 acres of karri country. According to the report in the "West Australian" he said, "If we do not get it, we have no other land."

The Minister for Works: Where is that 10,000 acres?

Mr. MUNSIE: At Pemberton.

Hon. P. Collier: Two of the departmental officers said that.

The Minister for Works: I do not think you are quoting the evidence correctly.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have not had an opportunity to read the evidence, but I have quoted it as reported in the "West Australian."

The Minister for Works: I think it is wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: He did say it.

Mr. MUNSIE: Two of the departmental officers stated that they must have that land, that there was no other land suitable for group settlement at the time. There was other land but it was not served by railway.

The Minister for Mines: I think they said "similarly situated at the moment."

Mr. MUNSIE: I wish to direct the Premier's attention to a book published in 1919 entitled "Western Australia for the Settler." This book is freely distributed from the Agent-General's office in London. It gives to the intending emigrant information regarding the conditions of settlement in Western Australia. I do not blame the department for giving a fairly glowing account of Western Australia. I have not travelled outside the Commonwealth, but I have visited all the States in the Commonwealth and I am satisfied there is no State which offers facilities for land settlement equal to those offered by Western Australia.

Mr. A. Thomson: Nor any other part of the world.

Mr. MUNSIE: I cannot speak of any other part of the world, but I do know most of the cities in Australia. They have drawn the long bow as far as many of their statements are concerned. It is not a good thing to mislead the people before they leave England. If they are to be satisfied when they get here, they should be told the truth at the other end and not at this end. This book will lead some immigrants to believe that things are different in Western Australia from what they will actually find when they get here. The first time I saw this book was when an immigrant showed it to me. He had brought it out from England. In the book the immigrant had there were three insets bringing it up to date, namely the 21st September, 1921. The information contained in that book was, therefore, supposed to be reliable. The information I shall quote from the book I have here, is the same as is contained in the book the immigrant had. There is a price list published here of commodities sold in Western Australia, but the prices are absolutely erroneous. It shows in the cost of living list that certain goods can be purchased in Western Australia at a price far below what they would actually cost.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is there anything wrong in the information given about the land?

Mr. MUNSIE: I have not gone thoroughly through it yet. We have heard the expression "boom and bust." There is a

considerable amount of boom about this book, and I hope it will not lead to "bust" so far as the immigrant is concerned. Sugar is quoted here at 3½d. per lb.

The Minister for Mines: That is in the cane.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, probably. But the immigrant thinks he can get it from the storekeeper at that price. Milk is quoted at 8d. per tin.

The Minister for Mines: That is in the cow.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, that is quoted as in the tin and the cow does not happen to have swallowed the tin. I have here this month's list of Carter's groceries. There is no cheaper grocery establishment in Western Australia than Carter's.

Mr. Teesdale: That is worth a £50 advertisement in the "West Australian."

Mr. MUNSIE: It is true, nevertheless. I have compared Carter's prices with the prices named in the book. Sugar at 3½d. in the book is quoted by Carter at 6d.; milk at 8d. in the book is quoted by Carter at 1s. 2½d. for Nestle's, and 1s. 1d. for Ideal; potatoes are quoted in the book at 1s. a stone, and by Carter at 1s. 7d.

Mr. Mann: Potatoes were at 1s. for a long time.

Mr. MUNSIE: Only for a little while. Most of the items quoted in this cost of living list are proportionately below the actual prices.

Mr. Chesson: And only in Perth.

Mr. Teesdale: That price list was not an inset in 1921, was it?

Mr. MUNSIE: No. The book was given to the immigrant as containing the actual prices he would have to pay. The insets in the book were correcting some of the statements over which they had been placed. The book also states that board and lodging can be obtained in Perth and Fremantle at £1 per week and upwards. Where can you get board and lodging for that price?

Hon. P. Collier: What department is responsible for telling such deliberate lies in England? It is scandalous.

Mr. Teesdale: The information is given in a lump. These errors creep in. It is not intended that the information should be misleading.

Mr. Corboy: It is very serious for the immigrant.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the statements I am making will not injure the immigration scheme. Even if they do so I must tell the truth when I believe the immigrant has been misled in England.

Mr. Teesdale: It is rank carelessness on the part of Savoy House to adopt a price list like this *en bloc* instead of correcting it.

Mr. MUNSIE: The book goes on to say there are facilities for getting about in the shape of trams, trains, motor-cars, steamers, etc., all requirements in this direction being provided. That is quite right. I believe we have these conveniences even more so since the Como tram was constructed.

The Minister for Mines: You will certainly make it pay by advertising it so much.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope it does pay. I am now a shareholder in these Government trams.

The Minister for Works: That is the proper spirit to show.

Mr. MUNSIE: Here is another paragraph that should be of interest to the farmers. I have heard a lot about the hardship that the farmers contend with in the pioneering stages; they have to put up with a great deal; they have to work. This book is supplied to immigrants who are advised to come out here and go on the land. Dealing with recreation and amusement it says—

The larger towns of the State provide amusement in the shape of theatres, picture shows, races, agricultural shows; while on the coast there are the advantages of boating, swimming, fishing, etc.

The Minister for Works: And Parliament House!

Mr. MUNSIE: The book continues—

It is the general practice of the farmers before or after harvest to spend a few weeks at the coast and thus provide a change for themselves, their wives and families.

Hon. P. Collier: That is true of the Terrace farmer; or rather he takes a change by spending a few weeks on his farm.

The Minister for Works: All the old Western Australian farmers do that every year.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not say that all the information contained in this book is either untrue or misleading. To a great extent that is not so.

Mr. Teesdale: The price lists are misleading.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is so. The Premier has said that under the group settlement scheme the men have to work in the group in which they will ultimately obtain a block. Men who come to Western Australia to take up blocks under the group settlement scheme will expect, while doing the work of clearing, etc., to be entitled to workers' compensation. That is not so. Why, therefore, say so in this book? Every immigrant who comes here, even if he is not going on the land, is sent to a farmer for experience in clearing and general farming operations. Immediately such a man takes on clearing he is no longer entitled to worker's compensation. I urge the Government to introduce a Bill this session to over-ride the judgment which has been delivered in respect to workers' compensation. For years we tried to get the Government to realise the necessity for extending the principle of workers' compensation. The Labour Government extended it somewhat, but I would like to see it applied to the clearer on the land.

Mr. A. Thomson: To which case do you refer?

Mr. MUNSIE: To the judgment which held that the piece worker in the timber industry was not entitled to compensation. We tried for many years to have the tributer brought in under the Workers' Compensation Act. On

two occasions the Labour Government passed a Bill through this House giving the tributer the right to compensation, but each time it was rejected in another place. The present Government amended the Workers' Compensation Act to include tributers, and these are now entitled to compensation, not more so, however, than is the man engaged in clearing. Take the men who have been sent to Newdegate recently. Of the 119 men who were sent there, about 70 are married, and a big majority of these have left their wives and families within the metropolitan area. The men have started work there, and are so badly off under present conditions that they find it hard to send a few shillings a week to their wives. How much worse would their position be if they were injured and could not send anything? That is why I want them to be brought under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act.

The Minister for Mines: Did not the Government bear the cost of the action?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, but the judgment has gone against us. I hope the Government will amend the Act along these lines. A good deal has been said about the drift to the city. One cannot blame people for coming to the city, if they can do so, for the reason that they are not treated fairly in many of the country districts. I am not referring so much to their treatment by other people in the country districts, as I am to their treatment by the merchants in Perth. The earning capacity of the man in the country is very little above that of the man in the city. If the country worker has to pay 20 per cent. more for his goods he is not as well off as the city man, and will naturally want to come to the city.

The Minister for Works: He gets some things cheaper, such as house rent, firewood, etc.

Mr. MUNSIE: There are many things he has to pay more for. There are merchants in Perth who, if a man opens a business in the country and attempts to undersell the principal business in the place, will refuse to supply him with goods.

Mr. A. Thomson: Can you prove that statement?

Mr. MUNSIE: I will do so before I sit down.

Mr. Teesdale: You mean in regard to special proprietary lines?

Mr. MUNSIE: No.

Mr. Teesdale: You are generally wrong.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not wrong this time. I am referring to general lines. I can prove what I say. I know the statement is a serious one, but it is absolutely true, and I have the authority of the man in question to use his name.

Mr. Teesdale: You mean in regard to Nestle's milk, and lines of that description?

Mr. MUNSIE: Perhaps the hon. member will wait a minute. A man opened a small store at Meckering, a mixed business in men's clothing, boots, etc. He was getting his sup-

plies from Messrs. D. & W. Murray, whose traveller called at Meckering. The traveller saw the storekeeper and told him that the samples would be open for inspection at one o'clock. At that hour the storekeeper called on the traveller, who said, "Unfortunately, in the meantime I have had a conversation with Mr. Rhodes, and that gentleman remarked that if I supplied you with goods, he would have to cut out his order." Mr. Rhodes is the big storekeeper of the town and happened to be the traveller's best customer. The outcome of this was that the small storekeeper, whose name is Miller, posted this notice on his shop window—

Public notice. February 1st, 1922. Mr. Johnson, the traveller for D. & W. Murray, wholesale warehousemen of Perth, called on me to-day and invited me to view his samples at 1.30 p.m. so that I might buy anything I required for this shop. I kept the appointment, but before seeing the samples Mr. Johnson told me that as Mr. Rhodes, storekeeper of this town, had met him in the meantime, and told him that if he supplied me, he (Mr. Rhodes) would turn them down, he had to do as Mr. Rhodes wished, seeing that Mr. Rhodes was the bigger buyer. The question now is—will the public stand for this kind of boycotting? If you want cheap goods you can still come over here to the cheap side.

I have the original of that notice. That was on the 1st February. Evidently people had been talking about what had happened and it got to the ears of Mr. Johnson, who rushed back to Mr. Miller on the 2nd February, and tried to persuade him to take the notice off the window, as it would likely do D. & W. Murray some harm. Miller replied that it would not do him any harm, and that if he could not get what he required from Murray's he would get it from another firm. Johnson replied, "It is all a misunderstanding; we are prepared to supply you." Miller then retorted, "But I am not prepared to take your word now unless you give it to me in writing." Then Johnson wrote as follows:—

Meckering, 2nd February, 1922. In reference to our conversation re the question of supplying you, we were labouring under a misunderstanding and are willing to supply you with any goods required.—Sgd. A. R. Johnson.

Mr. Sampson: What is wrong with that?

Mr. MUNSIE: Nothing whatever. But wait. Johnson then told Miller that he would be in Meckering on the following Tuesday. Tuesday came and Mr. Johnson did not put in an appearance. On Wednesday Johnson turned up at Meckering, called on the other storekeeper, and departed. Miller was not aware of Johnson's visit until after he had gone. Miller then wrote to D. & W. Murray in Perth and explained what had transpired. This is the reply which the manager of that firm sent to Mr. Miller—

Perth, 18th Feb., 1922. Mr. Phil Miller, Meckering. Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 16th inst., we have to advise

you that we are not prepared to open up any new accounts at Meckering at the present time. Yours faithfully, E. H. Fairey, Manager, D. & W. Murray, Ltd. That might mislead the public if they were not made aware of the full strength of the position. I have here an invoice from D. & W. Murray, Ltd., dated 1st November, 1921, for goods supplied to Mrs. F. Miller, Meckering. This shows that D. & W. Murray closed down on an old customer because that customer was under-selling one who was a bigger buyer. In the letter I have just read that firm told Miller that they were not opening new accounts.

Hon. P. Collier: And Miller was prepared to pay cash.

Mr. MUNSIE: Miller paid cash throughout.

Mr. Mann: Is that the Phil. Miller who was in Northam?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes.

Mr. Mann: He was always in trouble there with the other storekeepers.

Hon. P. Collier: A man will always get into trouble if he under-sells others.

Mr. MUNSIE: I may explain that Miller's wife is running the business in Northam, and she still gets her supplies from Murrays, with whom she has been dealing for 15 years. She decided to open a branch at Meckering, and D. & W. Murray supplied her with goods, but because she was under-selling Rhodes, the other storekeeper, they closed on her and gave as an excuse that they were not opening any new accounts.

Mr. Sampson: There may be another side to the story.

Mr. MUNSIE: Possibly, and the hon. member may make any inquiry he likes. Miller is an uncertificated bankrupt and is therefore only the manager of his wife's business in Meckering.

Mr. Richardson: Have you the letter he wrote to D. & W. Murray?

Mr. MUNSIE: No, but I have seen it.

Mr. Richardson: That would fix the whole question.

Mr. MUNSIE: I shall quote now another instance of a similar nature where the firm of Richard Holmes & Co., wholesale grocers, are concerned. Miller wrote to this firm on the 27th June last as follows:—

Dear Sirs,—I am running a mixed business here—boots, drapery, etc., and I am thinking of adding groceries. Are you prepared to supply me with any goods I may require? For references communicate with Goode, Durrant & Co.

He waited until the 12th July and, having received no reply, he wrote again to Richard Holmes & Co., repeating what he had previously written and explaining that he would pay cash, underlining the last two words. On the 17th July he received the following reply from Richard Holmes & Co.:—

We have to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 12th inst. We must apologise for delay in replying to your letter

of the 27th ult., but, owing to sickness in this office, apparently this letter, by some manner of means, was filed away and overlooked. We regret that, as we are already doing business with two or three other stores in your town, we cannot see our way clear to open up any new business at the present time. Thanking you for your offer, (sgd.) Richard Holmes & Co.

The Minister for Works: They are entitled to do that; the other case is different altogether.

Mr. MUNSIE: They may be entitled to refuse business, but it does seem remarkable that a man who is prepared to pay cash should be turned down merely because the people to whom he is applying for goods are trading with others in the same town. If the Minister for Works were running a store and had a number of customers in one town, and another came along and asked to be supplied, would he refuse to sell to that person?

The Minister for Works: If we had an agent in the town, the goods would go through him.

Mr. MUNSIE: The firms I have quoted have no agents at Meckering, and they are supplying the other stores there.

Mr. Pickering: Did he send the letter as manager for his wife?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. It is incidents of this kind which have a good deal to do with the drift to the city. If people cannot get goods at a reasonable price in the country, they become discontented and leave for the city. I am blaming the merchants, and I want the Government to introduce legislation such as that which exists in the other States. The Government would be acting wisely if they did this. In New South Wales special legislation was passed to deal with profiteering of this kind, and the authorities there have power to investigate and, if proof be forthcoming that profiteering exists, a fine or imprisonment, or both, may be imposed. There have been cases in that State where the judge has ordered merchants to supply customers irrespective of whether those merchants liked it or not. Just let me quote a case. In the "West Australian" of the 11th July there appeared the report of a case heard in the Anti-profiteering Court in Sydney against H. L. Bussell & Co. that, being wholesale traders in self-raising flour, they refused to supply to retail traders who sold at retail prices lower than those sought to be maintained by the company. Judge Beeby found that the practice was an unfair method of trade, and he issued an order requiring the company, within one month, to cease the practice it had adopted. If similar legislation existed in Western Australia, there would not be any complaints similar to those which I have quoted. The reason for the high retail price of many articles in Western Australia is mainly due to extortion on the part of the wholesale houses.

The Minister for Works: The brewers fine retailers 3s. a dozen if they sell under a certain price.

Mr. MUNSIE: There exists Federal legislation to deal with matters of this kind, but no one will take action. Cases have been brought under the notice of the Federal authorities and nothing has been done. Take the case of Charles Carter, who is handling our dried fruits. Carter was purchasing about two-thirds of the total output of Western Australia and selling it at 7½d. per lb. Without notifying Carter, somebody else came along, got possession of the whole of the output of this State, shipped it to the Eastern States, and then sent it back to Western Australia and demanded that Carter should charge 10d. a lb. We have that in black and white.

Mr. Davies: Did the growers get an increased price?

Mr. MUNSIE: No. They got exactly the same price as had been paid to them by Carter, who sold at 7½d., and was satisfied with that selling price. I have here another extract dealing with beer. A woman in France was retailing beer at a certain price per bottle. The brewery demanded that she should increase the price. She refused, saying she was satisfied with the profit she was making. The brewery cut off her supplies. She took action against the brewery company under the French law, with the result that the president of the brewery company was given 12 months and fined £100, and she was awarded £800 damages.

Mr. Pickering: Do you advocate that system here?

Mr. MUNSIE: Something on the same lines, though the instance I have given may be extreme.

The Minister for Mines: The City Council are doing the same thing with electric current.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is quite a different proposition. I suggest that the Government introduce during this session a Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, and also legislation empowering them to prevent people from compelling other people to charge high prices. There has been a good deal of talk concerning industrial unrest in Western Australia, and latterly there have been some rather serious rumours. I am not too sure that we are quite out of the wood yet. We cannot possibly expect to have industrial peace while the Government continually interfere with the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Pickering: In what way?

Mr. MUNSIE: By altering its constitution. I am referring to the Federal Arbitration Court. Unfortunately for us, most of our Western Australian craft unions are Federal unions, linked up with Federal unions registered under the Federal Arbitration Act. It is difficult to withdraw from Federal registration. I do not know of one Western Australian organisation registered federally that would not willingly get away from that registration. Two unions are trying to do so now. This is not surprising, in

view of the interference to which the unions are subjected. And then there is the matter of expense. It cost the engineers £20,000 to get their Federal award. They were very anxious to get before the Federal Arbitration Court before the constitution of the court was changed. They did get before the court, and to do so cost them £20,000. Within 12 months of their getting the award, what is known as the Industrial Peace Act was introduced into the Federal Parliament. I do not think that even the Prime Minister would contradict me when I say that that piece of legislation was introduced for the express purpose of getting rid of Mr. Justice Higgins. The day the measure was announced Mr. Justice Higgins, speaking from the bench of the Arbitration Court, said that if the Bill was passed by the Federal Parliament there would be no alternative for him but to resign.

Mr. Davies: The unions asked for the Industrial Peace Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Federal Government put the measure through, and thereby got Mr. Justice Higgins off the bench; and now they will not allow Mr. Justice Powers to make use of the Industrial Peace Act. The coal miners of Newcastle are the strongest industrial organisation in Australia; and they are pressing day after day for the application of the Industrial Peace Act, but they cannot obtain it. No industrial organisation in Australia is getting the benefit of the Act to-day. The Newcastle coal miners have been strong enough to maintain the position that they will not agree to alteration of conditions until either they come under the Industrial Peace Act or else a mutual agreement is arrived at.

Mr. Davies: That is not so. The Prime Minister purposely brought the coal miners under the Industrial Peace Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: They are not under it to-day.

Mr. Davies: They are.

Mr. MUNSIE: Hibble has been appointed chairman under the Industrial Peace Act.

Mr. Davies: That is so.

Mr. MUNSIE: A conference was recently held. Did Hibble give a decision?

Mr. Davies: Yes. He gave a decision in favour of the miners against the employers.

Mr. MUNSIE: The hon. member has information that I have not got. So far as I know, all that happened was that Hibble decided wages should remain as they were instead of the owners being permitted to reduce them by 33 per cent.

Mr. Davies: No. The coal proprietors cited the union before the Federal Arbitration Court, but there were several earlier cases pending.

Mr. MUNSIE: What is being done now?

Mr. Davies: The other cases are being heard.

Mr. MUNSIE: Mr. Justice Higgins has been replaced by Mr. Justice Powers, whom I do not know and whom I shall not criticise. I will, however, criticise a decision he gave recently from the Federal Arbitration

Court bench. I refer to the award providing for quarterly gradation of wages on the basis of Knibbs's figures. He introduced that innovation in spite of the opposition of every unionist in Australia.

Mr. Davies: With the exception of Mr. Charlton.

Mr. MUNSIE: The hon. member is wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: Where are all the newspaper clippings, and so on, of the member

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. MUNSIE: The Labour movement, including Mr. Charlton, tried for about three years to get an automatic variation of wages while prices were rising. As a reason for that request we put forward the fact that the Arbitration Courts, both State and Federal, were absolutely congested. In some cases it took us 18 months to get before the Federal court, and 15 months to get before our State court; and with what result? That with the exception of Government employees nobody got retrospective pay. Every possible obstacle was put in the way of our getting to the court while prices were going up and increase of wages was inevitable. But when prices begin to drop, the judge of his own initiative said, "We are going to have an automatic system of regulating wages, a system which will apply quarterly." The worker had stood out for his rights for four or five years, but immediately prices have got to the top the judge wants the worker to be the first sufferer from any reduction of prices. In view of such interference one cannot be surprised at industrial unrest. In the engineers' case the main issue was the hours to be worked. The judge himself admitted that the engineers' advocate had put up a remarkable case in the matter of hours. At all events, it was so good a case that the court found it necessary to grant the 44 hours' week. What was the result? There was an outcry by the employers' federations of Australia, and Mr. Hughes took upon himself, without consulting the Federal Parliament, which was not sitting, but presumably after consulting Cabinet, to decide that here again the law must be amended, that no judge should have the right to decide what hours should be worked, that that matter must be decided by three judges. He had got rid of Higgins, and had got Powers on the bench. That was one step the employers wanted.

Mr. Davies: Powers was on the bench before that.

Mr. MUNSIE: But only as a deputy. Immediately Higgins went out, Powers became President of the Federal Arbitration Court. It has taken Hughes about nine months to appoint the other two judges who, with Powers, are to decide questions of hours. Statistics show that the aggregate age of the three judges is fully 200 years. Powers is aged 72, and Quick 71, so that the third judge would not have to be old in order to make the aggregate two centuries.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MUNSIE: Before the tea adjournment I was dealing with the question of industrial unrest, and I gave some reasons for that state of affairs, including the alteration in the principle governing the Commonwealth Arbitration laws. There is no doubt in my mind that employees and the unions generally will not approach the Arbitration Court while the present system of automatic adjustment of wages continues. I do not intend to say anything further on that point at the present juncture. There is no indication in the Governor's Speech that an endeavour is to be made to revive the mining industry. I realise that the Government will find it very difficult to do anything that will tend to revive that industry. For years past I have urged that the industry cannot be rehabilitated to any great extent so long as the present mining legislation remains on our statute book. I am more convinced as time goes on that such is the position. The existing legislation should be amended. There was considerable trouble over a period of years regarding various phases of the mining industry, particularly in connection with tributing. That continued until such time as the Government passed an Act dealing with tributing. If the mine owners had treated that amending legislation reasonably and had given it a fair chance, possibly we would not have experienced the mining slump that exists to-day. I realise that the depression is due to the high cost of production and that feature has been attributed by the employers to high wages, to a large degree. I admit that the wages question represents one factor in the high cost of production, but the increased cost due to wages is infinitesimal compared with the increased cost in other directions.

The Premier: What about the high cost of explosives?

Mr. MUNSIE: That has something to do with it, and I think the Government could assist the mining industry in that connection. I believe that if the Government adopted a bold attitude regarding explosives they might decide to become the sole importers of that mining requisite.

The Premier: What about the tariff?

Mr. MUNSIE: The tariff has also something to do with it, and the Government too are concerned in that.

The Premier: How so?

Mr. MUNSIE: Within the last seven or eight months the Government have put an extra 15 per cent. on railway freights for explosives. The local governing bodies and representatives of the Chamber of Mines waited upon the Minister for Mines by way of a deputation. The Minister took the chair when that question was raised.

Mr. Boyland: The Government remitted those freights.

Mr. MUNSIE: Not for a considerable time. I believe they could remit a little more of the freights.

Mr. Boyland: Hear, hear!

The Minister for Mines: We could remit all charges, but if we are to make the services pay, we must get the money somewhere.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is so, but the Government are remitting charges to-day to boost other industries to an abnormal extent, while they will not do it for the mining industry.

Mr. Boyland: Hear, hear!

The Minister for Mines: That is an entirely different thing.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Government are actually hauling the farmers' wheat at a loss. They may just clear charges in that respect, but they are certainly hauling superphosphates at an exceptional loss. If it is right to encourage one industry, surely it is right to encourage the mining industry as well. Relief respecting the freight on explosives will assist mining generally. Regarding the Mining Act Amendment Act which was passed to deal with the tributing difficulty, I was a member of the Royal Commission appointed to consider the provisions of that measure. The effect following upon the passing of that legislation was the same as that which followed the passing of the earlier measure. The companies refused to take any notice of the amending legislation except to indicate that they would work in accordance with its provisions where they were compelled to do so, but that they would increase their charges accordingly. The companies have succeeded in doing that, with the result that they have held up large auriferous areas, which have not been let on tribute. There is one company on the Golden Mile that holds, including tailings areas, 623 acres.

The Minister for Mines: The tailings areas have nothing to do with it. That aspect has nothing to do with mining.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am including the tailings areas because I do not know the actual area covered. I know the company has over 500 acres of mining leases. Some of the leases have been let on tribute but many of them are practically idle. I want to impress upon the Minister for Mines that the Act must be altered. Take the question of tailings. There are heaps of tailings that are estimated to contain £200,000 worth of gold, according to the assays. There is no law—I admit the Government are powerless in the matter—that can compel the owner of the tailings to treat them. Two different parties have attempted to treat that particular heap of tailings, but have failed. Another man, however, is prepared to put in £10,000 of his own money to treat them. He believes he can extract at least £150,000 worth of gold from the tailings at a cost of £120,000. If that man is permitted to spend £120,000, that amount will be circulating in the country—

The Minister for Mines: That is, if the owner will give them to him.

Mr. MUNSIE: I will come to that point. There has been a lot of talk in this Chamber for many years about a tax on the unimproved value of land. Why should a man by the payment of 5s. a year be able to hold up tailings estimated to contain £200,000

worth of gold? That man will not treat the tailings. Why should there be any difference between tailings and unused land?

The Minister for Mines: The position is entirely different.

Mr. MUNSIE: Both produce capital, and if a man has something he will not use and will not permit anyone else to use, he should be compelled to allow it to be used.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is the view I take of it. Before concluding, I wish to refer to the State trading concerns. The Primary Producers' conference had a good deal to say about them, and of course they came to the same conclusion, namely, that the State trading concerns should be disposed of as, in the opinion of the conference, they represented unfair competition with private enterprise. For my part, I think the trading concerns are serving a very useful purpose, particularly the State Implement Works.

Mr. Mann: Apparently the farmers do not want them.

Mr. MUNSIE: If those works went out of existence to-morrow and the combine secured control, the farmers would be squealing to get the implements at the same price again.

Mr. Clydesdale: My word, they would.

Mr. MUNSIE: Regarding the State Implement Works, I wish to refer to a reply I got in connection with the manufacture and erection of cranes at Bunbury. Had the State Implement Works not been in existence, the money involved would have been lost to Western Australia.

Mr. Mann: Some private firm might have done the work.

Mr. MUNSIE: Tenders were called for and prices were obtained. The cranes formerly imported for this sort of work were made in Scotland.

The Minister for Works: By William Arrol & Co.

Mr. MUNSIE: The reply to my question shows that the cranes were manufactured at the State works and erected at Bunbury at a cost that represented a total saving on the estimated tender price of the imported articles of £11,223.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Private enterprise might have saved the State more.

The Minister for Works: While the State manufactures the machinery for itself?

Mr. MacCallum Smith: But you kill private enterprise.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not know of any private enterprise that has been killed by the State trading concerns.

Mr. Clydesdale: At any rate the "Sunday Times" is not killed yet.

Mr. Mann: Do the State Implement Works pay income tax?

Mr. MUNSIE: No, but the State Implement Works are operating under greater disadvantages than any private trading concern. The State Sawmills represent one branch and last year they showed a profit of about £50,000. That profit went into the Treasury and was not credited to the State Sawmills.

If those mills want to do any extra work this year and £5,000 extra working capital is required, 6 per cent. interest on the money has to be paid, despite the fact that last year the works handed over £50,000 to the Treasury. And so, too, with all other State trading concerns. I have protested against that provision in the Act from the very time the measure went through. I cannot understand why the Minister has not seen that, from the business standpoint, he is not getting a fair deal in respect of these trading concerns.

The Minister for Works: I will explain it all to you.

Mr. MUNSIE: I know, of course, the Minister tries to make a success of everything he takes in hand, and I congratulate him on the success he has made of some of the trading concerns. It is remarkable that while the Country Party at their conference carried resolutions asking the Government to dispose of the trading concerns, Mr. Monger asked that the Government should take over the Fremantle Freezing Works.

Mr. Angelo: Did he do that?

Mr. MUNSIE: According to the newspaper reports, he did; what he said was tantamount to asking the Government to take them over. I want to read a paragraph in the speech of the President of the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think we had enough of that last night. Still, the hon. member is in order.

Mr. MUNSIE: Had we last night the information we have to-night, I do not know where the Minister would have been with his reply. In this morning's paper we had a definite assurance from the head of the Primary Producers' Association that the Minister and every member of the Country Party were wrong.

Mr. Angelo: Was not that in the fiction column?

Mr. MUNSIE: No. It was in one of the news columns of the "West Australian." In his statement this morning Mr. Monger—

Mr. A. Thomson: Are you sure Mr. Monger made the statement?

Mr. MUNSIE: It is in the Press, which ought to be sufficient for the hon. member, for whenever the hon. member sees in the Press anything to the prejudice of the Labour movement, he immediately accepts it and is prepared to swear to its truth. We have Mr. Monger making the very definite statement that his interpretation of the resolution is that, as submitted by the secretary, it was correct, and that it was to come into operation instantly.

Mr. A. Thomson: How do you know Mr. Monger made that statement?

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not actually know it, but at all events I believe it.

Mr. A. Thomson: I know he did not.

Mr. MUNSIE: I can only quote what appears in the newspaper. Mr. Monger, towards the close of his famous speech, had something to say about unemployment. I

do not blame him for that, but I protest strongly against his uncalculated jibe at the Trades Hall. Mr. Monger went on to say this:

The question of unemployment is one which, I think, should be discussed by conference. This important matter has been prominently before the public during recent weeks, and has been the subject of a discussion by the Parliamentary members of this Association. I am sorry to say I cannot congratulate the party on the way in which they handled this matter, and I am of opinion that the question was one in which co-ordination with the executive would have proved beneficial and saved the party from considerable adverse criticism. I consider the Government have not displayed wisdom in the way in which this vexed question was handled. They have shown too ready a disposition to meet the frequent requests of the Trades Hall officials, who seized upon that occasion as one calculated to impress upon the public their extreme solicitude on behalf of the unemployed.

If the Trades Hall officials and Labour members had not gone to the assistance of the unemployed, who else would have done anything for them? Which metropolitan member outside the Trades Hall group ever raised a hand to do anything for the unemployed?

Mr. Mann: Plenty of them.

Mr. Richardson: All of them.

Mr. MUNSIE: Some may have done so, but only in their own little homes.

Mr. Richardson: And did it pretty effectively.

Mr. MUNSIE: Because of the agitation raised, the Government have picked up more men than were found employment through the Trades Hall.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You got the kudos for it, but I did a good deal in my own district.

Mr. MUNSIE: We have taken credit for only those registered at the Trades Hall. We have had nothing to do with the unemployed in the hon. member's electorate. At all events, where are the grounds for Mr. Monger's statement that we want to pose as showing our solicitude for the unemployed?

The Minister for Works: If you refer to him much more, it will make him of greater importance than ever.

Mr. MUNSIE: Since ever there has been a Labour movement, the Trades Hall has been the first place for men out of employment to go to. They realise that is where they will get assistance if assistance can be secured for them. The Trades Hall has endeavoured to do something to prevent private employers and the Government from taking advantage of the situation and employing men at unreasonable rates of pay.

Mr. Mann: Do you know any employers who have tried to do that?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, I do. Applications almost without number have been made for men to go to work for wages less than half the rates stipulated by the Arbitration Court.

The Minister for Works: I think you are wrong there.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, I am not,

Mr. Mann: It is easy to make an assertion.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the hon. member doubts my word he may come along to-morrow morning, and I will produce the proof, actually signed by an employer who was asking for a man to work at 25s. per week.

Mr. Harrison: Can he earn 25s.?

Mr. MUNSIE: If he cannot, he is not a man.

The Minister for Mines: Was that in the metropolitan area?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: If he is under an award of the court, he could not do it.

Mr. MUNSIE: He is not under an award of the court, but the same class of work is regulated in this district by one of the court's awards. As a matter of fact the Government subsidise the King's Park board, and the board employed men at 10s. per day, giving married men only three days work per week. The board said it was relief work, and was otherwise unnecessary. I admit that those men did a considerable amount of somewhat unnecessary work in King's Park, and that the board provided the money for them by way of practical sustenance. But can it be said that the painting of the seats and fences in King's Park and in the Government Gardens was unnecessary? Sooner or later the Government would have had to do the painting.

The Minister for Works: The Government are not responsible for any painting in King's Park.

Mr. MUNSIE: No, but they subsidise the board, and the board is responsible.

The Minister for Mines: The board did not use our money for that job.

Mr. MUNSIE: They got their fences and seats painted for 10s. a day, whereas the Arbitration Court award for this district is 17s. a day.

Mr. A. Thomson: Why didn't you deal with the men?

Mr. MUNSIE: Because they are not practical painters. The board took advantage of the unemployed. For so much of the work done in King's Park as was unnecessary, I give the board credit. They employed men who could not earn the ruling rate of wage.

Mr. A. Thomson: Would not the same thing apply to the men who were not practical painters?

The Minister for Works: Judging by the output, it would have paid the board better to employ practical painters, if they wanted the work done.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not agree with the doing of unnecessary work anyhow, since there is plenty of necessary work waiting to be done. Mr. Monger, at the conclusion of his speech, protested against day labour on the score that the Como tramway was built by day labour. I want to pay a tribute to

the men who worked on that tramway. Never in Australian history has a tramway been constructed half so fast as the Como tramway was constructed by day labour.

Mr. Richardson: They were running against time.

Mr. MUNSIE: Had the job been let by contract, it would have cost thousands of pounds more.

The Minister for Mines: And some of those men had been among the unemployed, and were said to be unemployable.

Mr. MUNSIE: Whenever we have unemployment it is always said that many of those out of work are unemployable. I want to protest against the meeting recently held in Perth.

The Minister for Mines: I thought you were going to draw a comparison between the day labour construction of the Como tramway and the erection of the Trades Hall extension.

Mr. MUNSIE: I know the Minister thinks he has me there. I, and every other official of the Trades Hall, still believe in day labour as against contract. But for the last 13 or 14 years we have waited for a hall of our own. We did everything possible to get the money. Several institutions were prepared to come to our rescue, and eventually the Commonwealth Bank, the best financial institution in Australia, offered to help us, but only conditionally on our letting a contract for the job. Rather than wait any longer, we decided to accept the offer and let a contract.

The Minister for Mines: Like the Leader of the Opposition and his sewerage contracts.

Mr. MUNSIE: Anyhow, we decided to have the hall without waiting any longer.

Mr. Mann: Why did the bank insist on a contract?

The Minister for Works: Hang the bank! Let us get on with the debate.

Mr. Sampson: It was a sacrifice of principle.

Mr. MUNSIE: Recently a conference was held in Perth of members of the New Settlers' League. There were representatives from all parts of the country, and the matter of fixing a wage for employees of the farmers was discussed. If we are to believe the published reports, the conference fixed the wage at 25s. a week and keep. I want to raise my voice in protest against any action of employers in this country—most of those present were farmers—having the right to fix the wages for their employees while we have an Arbitration Court.

Mr. Mann: You know it is not a wage.

Mr. Sampson: It is an honorarium.

Mr. MUNSIE: The farmer is getting his work done and so it must be a wage.

Mr. Mann: He is not getting his work done. You ought to remember that our own soldiers got only £1 a week while they were being trained and these men are getting 25s. a week while they are being trained.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the hon. member wishes me to believe that this is a scheme worked

out as a training scheme similar to that of the returned soldiers—

Mr. Mann: So it is.

Mr. MUNSIE: The hon. member will have to produce more evidence before I will accept that. I do not believe it is. Labour has representatives on the board and we know exactly what is going on. Our representatives raised their voices in protest, but they were two voices crying in the wilderness. If the farmers of Western Australia have the right to sit in conference and fix the wages of their employees, other employers have a right to do the same thing. The flour millers have a right to meet and decide what they will pay their employees.

Mr. Mann: There is no analogy.

Mr. MUNSIE: The hotelkeepers have a right to meet and decide what they will pay their employees.

Mr. Pickering: Who said the farmers met in conference and fixed the wages of their employees?

Hon. P. Collier: We had peace until the member for Sussex came in.

Mr. MUNSIE: Eighty-five to 90 per cent. of those at the conference were farmers, and they fixed the wages of their employees at 25s. a week and keep. The employees never had an opportunity to say whether they were satisfied or not. I have raised my objection to this sort of thing and I warn the Government to be careful where this is leading them. If other employers see that no exception is taken to this principle, are not they going to try to do the same thing? Then we shall be wondering why we do not have industrial peace. We shall not get industrial peace if we sit down tamely while a section of employers take it upon themselves to fix the wages of their employees. The only Bill foreshadowed in the Speech is the Closer Settlement Bill. Unfortunately the Premier states that it will be on all fours with the measure which was introduced last session.

Hon. P. Collier: Or as might be determined at the joint conference.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, the joint conference between the Country Party and the executive of the Primary Producers' Association. I said then, and I say now, that the measure of last year, so far from doing any good for closer settlement, would not be worth a snap of the fingers. The good land adjacent to existing railways held and not used will not be given up by owners for the sake of a tax of 1d. in the pound. That is all the Bill of last session meant. That measure did not go far enough. If the land were still in its virgin state and was declared suitable for closer settlement, a proposition was to be put to the owner and he had either to part with it at a valuation, as provided for in the Bill, or pay three times the present tax, an increase from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound. A tax of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on good land adjoining a railway will never force it into use if the owner wishes to hold it out of use.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is wrong. A man pays 1d. for land not improved within the meaning of the Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have to contradict the Minister. The Act provides for 1d. in the pound taxation on land within a municipality and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on land within a road board area.

The Minister for Agriculture: The owner gets a rebate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. if it is improved within the meaning of the Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister cannot sidetrack me like that. A man might have 3,000 acres and only 100 acres of it cultivated. Such a man would not pay anything more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound if his land were situated in a road board district.

Mr. Pickering: Because he has improved it within the meaning of the Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: Suppose the owner was taxed to the extent of 3d., would that bring such land into use?

Mr. Pickering: How much do you suggest?

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope the Premier will endeavour to make the Bill effective for closer settlement.

Mr. Pickering: How much do you suggest?

Mr. MUNSIE: When the Bill comes before us, I shall be prepared to say. I shall not suggest, as the hon. member's joss did, that owners should have the right to revalue their land and have it re-assessed before the measure operates. A man who has put in his taxation returns should be prepared, under the system laid down, to sell his land to the Government at the valuation stated with compensation for improvements.

Mr. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.7]: I desire to compliment the Premier on the success of his mission to London and his success in raising money for the purpose of developing the South-West. I must also applaud the immigration policy which he has proclaimed to the people, and support him in the group settlement scheme he has inaugurated. But I object to his group settlement scheme preventing men with plenty of money at their disposal, men who require no assistance from the Agricultural Bank, or from the group settlement scheme and men who require no sustenance allowance from taking up land. The Minister for Agriculture who, during the Premier's absence, was acting Minister for Lands, will not have forgotten a memorable day when I entered his office burning with indignation.

The Minister for Agriculture: After the races, too.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We know that the Minister for Agriculture is not in his office after the races; he is too lazy for that. I told him some truths for which I could vouch, and to my consternation and surprise he did not rise to the occasion. Two or three days afterwards I received a telegram from him regretting that land could not be made available to these men who required it. These men were desirous of

taking up land. They were men with £500 or £600 in their pockets, men who had been working on timber mills for years and would do more work in half a day than some of the group settlers would do in a fortnight. These men have been continuously refused land in the Pemberton district during the last six years. First of all it was tied up by the Forests Department; then it was tied up for returned soldiers; then it was pending the decision of the Lands Department, and finally it was held up for group settlement. These men refused to go into the group settlement. They had money of their own; they required neither sustenance nor assistance; but they cannot get land to-day. There are applications extending over years from married men with families and these men cannot get land. Yet the Government boast about their land policy. South and east of Bridgetown there are farmers' sons who for 12 months have been applying for land, and on every occasion it has been refused. The whole country from one end to the other is held up for group settlement and men cannot get land. If it is to be settled under the group settlement scheme, this will not be accomplished in the next 10 years. I am not condemning the Government's scheme, because I believe it will be the solution of the whole problem of land settlement in Western Australia. I am with the Premier hand and foot in this, and if he requires my assistance at any time, he is welcome to it.

The Minister for Mines: All the Opposition are with him as regards the foot.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If they had not been, the Minister would have received the boots long ago. It is a well known fact that soldier settlers are experiencing a very hard time. Owing to a motion of which notice has been given by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) and to information received, I do not intend to speak at length on this subject. In my opinion a local loan should be raised and the soldier settlers should receive the same privileges as group settlers are receiving, and should be exempted from the payment of interest for the first few years. It is impossible for these men to meet their interest bills. They are receiving a succession of pin pricks from the department. They are being told that if their interest is not paid within a certain period, they will be removed from their holdings. On top of this they are being debited with fines on the outstanding interest. It is a disgrace to the community that such treatment should be meted out to the returned soldiers. If we could raise loans to pay interest on money devoted to the destruction of life, surely we could raise a loan for the benefit of the men who returned from the war and exempt them from interest charges for the first five years. A matter which affects the Minister for Mines is the lack of sympathy which the mining industry in my district has re-

ceived from the Government. In the past we had a thriving township at Greenbushes. Many thousands of pounds were expended in building up that town. To-day it is languishing, and none of its mines are working. During the past 20 years 400 tons of tin has been raised annually at Greenbushes and exported from the State. This has meant a big thing to Western Australia and has provided employment for a large number of people. To-day there is not a mine working. We are receiving no sympathy from the Forests Department, but that is a matter on which I will touch later. What I am asking for is a very small thing. When 400 tons of stream tin can be raised in Greenbushes—there never has been a lode worked there yet—there must be some foundation for the assumption that lodes exist there. I ask the Minister for Mines to expend at least £2,000 in boring in order to find where the origin of this stream tin is. The Mines Department should be recompensed for the outlay out of the first proceeds obtained from the lodes that are known to exist. Whenever I have asked for this work to be done, I have been told that tin has slumped, that there is no lode in Greenbushes, and at any rate it is a matter for the local people to take up. They have prospected, but have no money to go on with. Already they have had a hard battle for existence. The position as regards forestry has improved since last I spoke on the Address-in-reply. I refer to the office of Conservator.

Hon. P. Collier: To what do you attribute that change?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Not to the Forestry Commission.

Hon. P. Collier: Come, be fair!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am fair on this matter, but I do say that that Commission is an absolute waste of public money. I am pleased with the Acting Conservator. He has a better grasp of forestry than the Czar of forestry displayed before he was dismissed from the Government service. But the Forests Department has many foolish regulations which cannot be broken down. A month or two ago the position in respect to unemployment was very acute. At Greenbushes it was so serious that a public meeting was called. At that meeting I met a number of timber workers. There had been a boom in the timber industry, and many men were engaged in cutting sleepers on private property. Then came the slump, and unemployment existed all over the State. There were 40 men in Greenbushes who were out of work, but I thought they could have obtained employment by cutting sleepers on Crown lands for the Railway Department. They were, however, prohibited from doing so by a regulation which said no hewer who had not a license before 1917 was entitled to a license on his return from the Front. There were dozens of returned soldiers who could not get work because of that regulation.

Mr. Pickering: That is not true.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is true.

The Minister for Mines: It is not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: These men were not hewing before they went away, and when they came back from the war could not get employment in that industry. I defy the Minister to contradict me.

The Minister for Mines: That is not what you said.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I said these men did not hold a license before they went away. The Minister should be ashamed to admit that these men, who had been away fighting for him, could not get employment upon their return. And yet he says he will not cut out that regulation for them or anyone else. Will he say these men are not entitled to work now they have returned?

The Minister for Mines: That is governed by the Act.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It cost me 5s. 6d. to send a telegram to the Minister, but I received no reply from him, although there were 40 men at Greenbushes waiting for work. From the Conservator, however, I received a reply four days later.

The Minister for Mines: It is not a matter of regulations; it comes under the Act.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Many things come under the Act; many things come under the lap. I am glad I have broken down that little bit of opposition. Truth will always come out, for subterfuge is no good. Thousands of pounds have been lost to the State by these foolish regulations.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Forestry Commissions.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have something in my drawer which I will put before the Forestry Commission so that I may find out what they know about timber.

Hon. P. Collier: They want something to do.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: These foolish regulations are still in force. There are married men with 10 children—

Hon. P. Collier: Good on them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Who have to be supported. Amongst the children are boys of 15 or 16 who cannot assist their father to saw off a log in order to earn a living for the other children. This is one of the regulations the Minister says cannot be altered unless by Act of Parliament.

The Minister for Mines: It is an Act that Parliament passed.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Who framed it? There must have been a lot of "duds" in Parliament at the time.

The Minister for Mines: You and I were not here.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister may say they should go into some profession or trade.

Hon. P. Collier: Or take up politics.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Arbitration Court prevents them from becoming apprentices to this or that trade. What is a man to do with his children?

Mr. Pickering: Go on the land.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I hope they will not go into the Sussex electorate.

Mr. Pickering: They would do well there.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: These regulations must be abolished.

The Minister for Mines: They are not regulations.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If necessary an Act of Parliament must be passed to alter them. I am not up in the laws of the country, and I suppose I break them as often as any other member. These regulations must be amended. The Government should throw open their Crown lands. Every practical man knows, if the Forestry Commission do not, that the regulations are a farce.

Mr. Pickering interjected.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Chairman of the Forestry Commission was in the Eastern States enjoying himself, and I am pleased to know that he did not enjoy himself at the expense of the country. The Acting Conservator knows that much of the timber on Crown lands is deteriorating. Trees reached the age of maturity years ago, but they have not reached the regulation size and forestry regulations prevent them from being utilised.

The Minister for Mines: You would not allow unrestricted hewing on Crown lands?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. There are enough men working in the forests to-day to mark all the timber. The hewers could then be sent into the forests. Even the Labour Government—

Hon. P. Collier interjected.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am not afraid of the Leader of the Opposition or anyone else. The Labour Government said, when Mr. Johnson was Minister for Lands, that the hewers must go. Slowly but surely they would close up the hewing industry in the State. I am speaking now on behalf of a large number of hewers. I have also friends in the sawmilling business. I say, despite all the evidence taken by the Forestry Commission, that if hewers and sawmillers are put into maiden bush, the hewers will get more timber than will the sawmillers. We all know about the test at Jarrahdale. It has been proved in the past that the hewers have never had a chance. The man who carries the tools on his back is not given the opportunity. The big men, the sawmillers with capital behind them, get the opportunity and the hewers have to follow them. We know why the Forestry Commission was appointed. I have here pieces of tingle, jarrah, and karri. I will put these pieces before the Commission to-morrow and ask them to tell me which is which. I challenge them to tell me. If they lose they must forfeit the whole of the money they have received as a result of sitting on the Commission. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) was the champion of the Conservator of Forests. Last session he spoke about the concessions to Millars', and asked if they should be exempt during the war period when their operations ceased, and also asked questions in regard to royalty and other matters. The Premier in his wisdom, or because of the methods of the member for Sussex, appointed the Royal

Commission. Before the Commission had inquired into the question of whether Millars' were entitled to exemption, Cabinet agreed to grant it to them. Is that true or not; is there any denial of this?

The Minister for Mines: It is quite misleading.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Is there any denial of the statement?

The Minister for Mines: Before the select committee was moved for Cabinet agreed that, subject to the terms of the Act, this should be allowed.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Commission was appointed to inquire into the rights and wrongs of the case.

The Minister for Mines: It was not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is all right. I believe in breaking things up. I sit here and play a lone hand, and I am going to speak as I think. I have something to say about the Como trams.

The Minister for Mines: We had enough trouble in getting them down without your breaking them up.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I protest against that extension.

Hon. P. Collier: Why?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I shall not say whether I think it was right or wrong.

Mr. Teesdale: It has whiskers on it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I entered Parliament with ideals. I thought it was above reproach: that one had to be true to all one's promises and pledges. My ideals have been rudely shattered. If I pledge my word it is as good as my bond. When a Minister of the Crown could stand up in this Assembly and tell members not to worry, that no tramway extension of any description would be gone on with without the approval of Parliament, I thought we were secure. To say the least of it, I was disgusted with politics when Cabinet announced its sanction to the extension. I know unemployment was acute at the time.

The Minister for Mines: That is why you asked the Government to break the law in the other matter.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Possibly there were extenuating circumstances, but after that bond had been given it was the duty of Cabinet and of Ministers generally to call Parliament together, and place the whole matter before it for sanction or otherwise.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Five minutes ago you said the Government should have broken an Act of Parliament.

The Minister for Mines: You admit that you have broken your word.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In regard to what?

The Minister for Mines: The hewers.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The regulations did that. The Minister for Forests did not even answer my wire. Railway construction I believe to be the only method of opening up and developing the country.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about tramway construction?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am not objecting to tramway construction. I merely object to the principle upon which the latest piece of tramway construction was done. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the question of future tramway construction, but that Commission never sat at all until after the Como tramway had been begun. It is absolutely necessary that railways should be built throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia. In his policy speech the Premier mentioned the Pemberton-Nornalup railway. That railway will be in my electorate, but I view it with a certain degree of suspicion, and I shall not ask the Premier to build a continuous through railway. I would merely ask for portions of various railways to be built, stretches of 15 or 20 miles. There is a good deal of inferior land along the proposed Pemberton-Nornalup railway. For the first 20 miles, however, there is beautiful timber and some of the best agricultural land to be found in Western Australia. Then there is the Bridgetown-Mt. Barker railway. A high official, whose name I can mention if challenged, said to me, "Why do you want to build that railway? The whole of the land along the proposed route is selected." We know it is selected, and 40 or 50 miles from a railway are many orchards 30 or 40 acres in extent producing tons of good fruit which rots on the ground. It is all cleared country, capable of being put under cultivation to-morrow if only railway communication is furnished. The reason given by the official I referred to is only an additional reason for the construction of the line, which I trust will be one of the first that this State will build. It would serve no less than 50 returned soldiers—a fact which shows the number of settlers there awaiting transport facilities. Another railway is that from Boyup Brook to Marrinup. A deputation brought the line under the Premier's notice some time ago. It is only 10 or 15 miles long, running through some of the very richest land in Western Australia. The third generation is on the land there. Originally the people were 120 miles distant from a railway. Now they are within 10 or 15 miles of it. The land will grow up to 40 bushels of oats to the acre and up to 30 bushels of wheat to the acre, the latter notwithstanding the Premier's belief that wheat cannot be grown in our districts. It is first class land for dairying, and will grow clover and other grasses to perfection. The men there are prevented from developing the district, merely because it takes them a day and half-a-night to get to the railway. Another line I shall ask for is from Jarnadup across the Warren River, a few miles south of Lake Muir. That railway will open up some of the finest country in Western Australia. The Premier was astonished when he learned from a deputation what the land there really is. Again we have settlers of the third generation, distant 60 or 70 miles from a railway. I hope the Premier will introduce Bills for the construction of all these railways. I do not ask for much,

only for 10 or 15 miles to open up the country. Irrespective of party, members should support the construction of these lines, because the development of the South-West is the solution of the whole of our financial difficulty. As regards public works and nationalisation of main roads, I am up against the Minister controlling that matter. If there is not something in his Bill which appeals to me strongly, I shall oppose it. During the unemployment difficulty, which is still acute in Greenbushes, I wired to the Minister for Works, but did not get a reply for a fortnight, and then only by letter. The Greenbushes Road Board, a small pill as far as Western Australia is concerned and as far as some Ministers are concerned, were prepared to spend £200 on metalling their main road.

The Minister for Works: Where were they going to get the money from?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: From the bank on their personal guarantee. I said to the members of the road board, "You will have no difficulty; I know the Minister for Works would give you a subsidy." I wired to the Minister asking for pound for pound. But the men remained out of work, and the stores had to carry them over. A fortnight later I received a reply from the Minister to the effect that he would send an engineer down to report on the road, because he had been over it a little while previously and found it in good order. Yet the Government had men on sustenance. Now, a certain official told me, "If you get on the right side of the chief, and make the grant available, I will start you all right." I am afraid, however, that if I got on the right side of the chief, with the undue influence which I possess, the Minister might turn me down and spend the money at Herdsman's Lake. Any amount of money can be spent in the metropolitan area, but nothing must be done in the country districts.

The Minister for Works: You are not fair.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am with the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson). Had I been in the House the other night I would have seconded his amendment.

Mr. Corboy: You had sense enough to keep away.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What the member for Claremont said about men not being able to get land in this State is absolutely true. I would have seconded the amendment.

Mr. Teesdale: Thank God you were not here.

The Minister for Works: What about the £200?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was about to deal with the nationalisation of roads, and I may say that I have as long an experience of honorary work on public bodies as any man in the Chamber. I am afraid of the nationalisation of roads. I fear it would create another of those huge spending departments in which we are losing our money,

which are building up our deficits. We have too many civil servants. We have too many spending departments which Ministers do not control. The heads of departments control all the Ministers, and neither the Minister for Works nor the Minister for Agriculture can deny it. The utmost I can say about the Minister for Works is that his department is the least bad of the lot. From the other Ministers one cannot get any satisfaction at all, and the heads of their departments run the whole show.

Mr. A. Thomson: You must have had bad luck.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have had strenuous times since I have been in this Parliament. My ideals have been shattered. I thought a member could do something, but I find that he is powerless, and that a Minister cannot do much either. Now with regard to nationalisation of roads again. I look upon the proposal with a good deal of suspicion. The Minister for Works came to the road boards conference and said he was going to introduce a Bill for the nationalisation of roads. I remember the Traffic Bill which the Minister introduced, and also other measures of his; and they were none of them any good. Nationalisation of roads is not going to be done from revenue, but from taxation to be imposed upon the people of the road board areas. Thus we shall have taxation without representation, and shall find ourselves absolutely at the mercy of the Public Works Department. Therefore I for one will not agree to the nationalisation of roads. I will agree to it only if the Government will revert to pre-war standards, and give the local authorities the concessions which they received previously. In that case the Public Works Department could go hang. But at present I am against the project. The duty of the Government is to construct roads and bridges departmentally, because it is no use putting people on the land and telling them to produce, produce, produce, if what they produce cannot be brought to market. The Government should construct bridges and roads and then, having constructed them, hand them over to the local authorities who should maintain and repair them.

The Minister for Works: They have to maintain the bridges, but they do not do so.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We want to build them, but we cannot get a grant.

The Minister for Works: You do not build them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In my electorate—Mr. Speaker, I do not know what to say; I am almost inclined to swear.

Mr. SPEAKER: If I were the hon. member, I would not take any risks.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is heart-breaking for members to come here and plead the cause of the men in the bush. Those men may be practically starving on the land and when one goes to the Government departments and asks for a few paltry pounds for

a bridge or for some other convenience, he is turned down. A pledge to me regarding one bridge has been broken by the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister knows that a mistake occurred, but the bridge will now be built. I give him that in. The Blackwood River runs through my electorate and there are men isolated on either side of that stream. They have appealed to me to get bridges constructed. I have told them not to ask for bridges, but to confine themselves to stone crossings, costing from £200 to £250. I told them that if they asked for bridges, they would only have engineers coming down. First the request would be made for the bridge and an engineer would be sent down to report. He might regard the job as a big one and he would get another engineer down. So it would go on until six or eight engineers, in all probability, would report on the thing and, in the end, nothing would be done.

The Minister for Works: That is not true.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is true. In one instance, we had five visits from engineers, and I defy the Minister to say that is untrue.

The Minister for Works: That does not occur regarding every bridge that is asked for.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have given one instance; there is the proof. That was one case regarding a bridge, but we have no hope of getting it. I am not making an attack on the Minister for Works; I do not blame the Minister. It simply bears out my argument that Ministers do not control their departments but the heads of the departments control the Ministers, who do not know anything about their departments.

The Minister for Works: I know we have not sent five engineers—

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister knows nothing about it. Unfortunately, practically the whole of my dealings regarding matters in my electorate concern the Minister for Works. I do not condemn him, for he knows nothing about the position in many instances. Moreover, I have had an assurance that these things will be attended to. I have no desire to attack the Minister.

Mr. Clydesdale: It will be bad for him when you start.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: As to group settlement, the success or failure of these activities depends upon the treatment meted out to settlers. Heavy clearing costs have to be borne, and most of the areas have to be utilised for intense culture, primarily for dairying. I believe that too much land is being cleared; that is a mistake. It is advisable that a small area should be cleared and then the men can gradually feel their way and make good. The Government are not making any provision for markets and other facilities to enable the settlers to make a living. Butter factories will have

to be erected at Manjimup, at Bridgetown and Balingup.

Mr. Clydesdale: You want four railways and three butter factories.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It will be necessary to build up our dairy herds to an extent that will stop the present feeding of Western Australia with goods imported from the Eastern States. We must have dairy herds to help to pay the interest on the £6,000,000 loan by means of the export of our products to other parts of the world. Are any provisions being made to assist in that direction?

Mr. Munsie: No.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We must import pedigreed stock to help build up our herds. It is no good going to the Eastern States, as the Premier did some years ago when he earned the name of "Moo Cow Mitchell" by importing dairy cattle for the Denmark district. It is possible to build up our herds and we should get the pedigreed stock and place them under the control of the authorities in the South-West. They are anxious to assist in the development of the country and they will help the Government in that direction. We should build up milking strains from the cows we have there by this means. As to the Agricultural Bank, people clearing land in my electorate receive £8 an acre. The work costs from £30 to £40 an acre. The men have hearts like bullocks and while clearing their land, they live on possums and kangaroos and possibly a little flour from the stores. By the time the requisite five acres have been cleared, their £40 advance is exhausted. Those people are up against it. They cannot get credit from the storekeeper, and the Agricultural Bank will not give them any advance for fertilisers, so that they can put their land under pasture. Men have 60 or 70 acres cleared and yet cannot get a further advance from the Agricultural Bank. This has been going on for years.

Mr. Teesdale: If the land is so rich, do you require fertilisers?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course we do, although the land is the finest on earth. The land has to be broken up and sown so that the necessary pasture can be obtained. I have discussed this matter with the Premier and he knows the position. I trust he will do something to assist these people. I have a petition which I intended to present to the House, but unfortunately it is addressed to the Government and not the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has it anything to do with the Address-in-reply?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It affects group settlement problems and is signed by settlers on those areas. It affects some 2,000 souls and between 600 and 700 electors. Mr. Speaker informed me that although I could not present it, I might refer to the matter in the Chamber. It refers to the proclamation of a townsite at Pemberton and contains a request that the Government should take over

the railway from Jarnadup to Pemberton. I want to touch upon the fruit industry. From Bridgetown last year there were exported 100,000 cases of fruit.

Mr. Harrison: Was the quality all right?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Undoubtedly. Bridgetown fruit on the London market has brought the highest price in the world. Given shipping facilities, Bridgetown will export over 200,000 cases this year. Last year we asked the Railway Department to build us a fruit shed for the storing of anything from 5,000 to 10,000 cases. As the result of two deputations, we were promised the shed. To-day there is nearing completion at Bridgetown an elaborate fruit shed, built of 6in. x 6in. posts with rafters 4in. x 4in., and the dimensions of that shed are 20ft. x 10ft.! We are not going to sit down under an insult like that. I asked the president of the Fruitgrowers' Association to protest against the continuance of the work. He wired his protest, but the work was being done by contract, and therefore could not be stopped. It is expected to be finished to-morrow.

The Minister for Agriculture: What about the ordinary goods shed there?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They will not allow us to use it. They demand the payment of storage on anything placed in there. The Minister ought to know that.

The Minister for Agriculture: I know you had the use of it last season.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Only at the tail end of the season, for a few paltry cases. From Manjimup they send away 50,000 cases of fruit. I had thought to ask for an emergency shed there, but in view of what has happened at Bridgetown, I do not know whether it is worth while. Regarding the petition, I will present it to the Government, and if the Government refuse to proclaim a townsite, I will ask for the support of the House. Many people at Pemberton cannot get ordinary accommodation. Everything there is under the control of the State. Those in the group settlement have to go to the Government store for all their requirements. I have no complaints against that store, but I say there ought to be competition. We require private traders, private boarding houses, and other conveniences. We ask for competition. We want coffee palaces and drapers' shops down there. Surely the people there are entitled to those conveniences! The townsite should have been proclaimed long ago. The railway from Jarnadup to Pemberton is under the control of the State Sawmills. Men along that line had a lot of timber on their holdings and were offered big prices for it. The difficulty was to get it away. When a boat is loading in Bunbury, the railway is fully occupied with the lifting of timber from the State Sawmills, and so the privately owned sleepers cannot be despatched to Bunbury, although the selling of the private timber would mean the salvation of many of the settlers.

The Minister for Works: But the railway could not pick up the sleepers anywhere along the line.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Of course it could. Sleepers are picked up anywhere along the Government railway.

The Minister for Works: On a Sunday, yes.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: On any day on which the train is running.

The Minister for Works: They refused us, not three days ago.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I want to enter an emphatic protest against the existing system of Government. Party politics are the curse of the country. The whole of yesterday was taken up with the question of whether the Country Party should be controlled by an outside junta. In my opinion every member of Parliament should control his own actions, should be loyal first of all to his State, secondly to his electors, and finally to himself, irrespective of any party. There are 16 or 17 members of the Country party. Suppose seven of them think the affairs of the country are not going on as they should go. Why should not those seven members be entitled to say the country is drifting to financial disaster? If a majority of the party decided to support a certain Administration, why should not the minority be entitled with other members of the House to insist upon an alteration? This is the curse of party politics. When I belonged to an organisation I suppose I was a bit of a fanatic, but this ideal was always in my mind. I take a lone stand in this House and I am proud of it.

Mr. Teesdale: You have plenty of room, anyhow.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But while I am here I shall have the courage of my convictions; I shall put the case for my electors and shall take whatever action I think will be in the best interests of Western Australia.

Mr. BOYLAND (Kalgoorlie) [9.17]: Twelve months ago, in making my maiden speech in this House, I congratulated the Government on being returned in great strength, and I remarked that there was no reason why, with such strength, they should not be able to carry any legislation they desired. I claim that administration is one of the main things to which the country must look at the present time. Although the question of immigration may be predominant in our minds, if we wish to carry that policy to a successful conclusion, we must stop the drift and see that our overhead charges are not permitted to increase. I wish to pay a tribute to the youngest Minister, the Minister for Agriculture. I was in Kalgoorlie when he was coming through from the Eastern States. At that time the two burning questions were those of unem-

ployment and the Como tramway. Ministers who were in Perth could do nothing to relieve the unemployed situation except to put in hand the construction of the Como tramway. When the Minister for Agriculture returned he devised ways and means of absorbing the unemployed in a proper manner, namely, by putting them in the country on reproductive works. We should consider whether it is not time the Government took counsel with the Public Service and pointed out that the State cannot continue to pile up deficits. If better administration cannot be shown, the time has come when men capable of effecting an improvement should be found. I agree with the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) that the country is being run by the departments. There is no question about that. Anyone who has business with the Government departments must realise that pretty well right through—I make an exception of the Minister for Agriculture who is looking after his department well—the heads of departments are running Ministers instead of Ministers running the departments. Public servants claim that they are being treated unfairly by the Government in the matter of salary increases and classification. If this is so, those in the service should justify their claim by endeavouring to lessen the cost of administration, because they cannot expect increases in the present state of the finances. All in this State are practically workers and is it fair or just that the people should be asked to contribute more than they can afford to the government of the country? We must endeavour to lessen the cost of administration, and this can only be done by consultation with the officers and by the Government getting them to help in every way to restore the State to a sound financial position. We are drifting day by day; our position is getting worse and worse and it is time a protest was raised. One way of assisting the finances of the country is by insisting upon the utilisation of land adjacent to existing railways. Last year the whole House proclaimed that these lands should be put to use. Yet all these months have passed and we hear of nothing being done to utilise these lands. The Government should seriously consider this question. They intend to bring down another Closer Settlement Bill. Whether it will fulfil the wishes of this House, we do not know, but we should be able to shape it according to our desires, and we can only hope that another place will pass it. The Education Department is spending money in every direction. I believe in free education, but I do not believe in wasting the money as it is being wasted to-day. In this respect we had an admission from the Director of Education a week or two back in a statement regarding what was being done with our boys. I cannot see anything in that statement but an admission that the system has broken down. The following is the statement:—

It is now proposed as the result of arrangements made between the Education and Colonial Secretary's Departments to

extend the scheme to the metropolitan district. There are numbers of boys in the central and junior technical schools who have taken what is known as the industrial course. They have had a good training in wood working and building construction, blacksmithing, tin smithing, etc., as well as in elementary science and mechanical drawing. What they want is an active out-of-door life. Great numbers have set their hearts upon engineering, but the openings are too few to absorb more than a very small fraction of them. The consequence is that, much against their will, they become clerks or go behind the counter, or enter blind-alley employment. The number of boys taking the industrial course in these schools is nearly double the number taking the commercial course. Their training would make them thoroughly useful on a farm, and many of them would welcome the chance of an open-air life. It is a great pity that such excellent material for assisting in the necessary development of our lands should be retained in the city. Arrangements are now being made to receive applications from city boys who wish for employment on farms, and from farmers who are willing to employ them. If the scheme succeeds the probability is that the preference for the industrial course will become still greater, and the candidates for shorthand and typewriting still fewer. The numbers in the former course have increased in the last three years by nearly 50 per cent., while the numbers of the boys in the latter have diminished by 20 per cent. The main difficulty in the past has been that parents have not been able to see that the industrial course will lead to any certainty of employment in a skilled trade. Employment on farms should fill the gap, and should provide a much more suitable career for a strong and active Australian boy than can be furnished by the office or shop. As the boys grow up they will be well equipped for taking advantage of any settlement schemes that the Government may have in hand. Applications should be made to the Education Department through the head-master of the school at which the boys attend.

There is an admission by the department that what is really wanted are agricultural schools and an agricultural college. When the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) last year spoke on the education question and urged the cutting out of frills, there is no doubt he was right, though some people tried to ridicule him. This useless expenditure on education must be cut out, and something useful to the future generation must be substituted.

Mr. Davies: You must not overlook the fact that these boys ask for an industrial course. They are not forced into it.

Mr. BOYLAND: I have children of my own, and I can say that they are forced into it by reason of the fact that they have to take the best that is offering. They have to take either the professional, commercial or industrial course; there is no other outlet.

Here we have an admission by the department that the boys should be provided for in the country. Last session I referred to the burden of supporting two electoral departments. I referred to the Federal roll for the Kalgoorlie district, which was quite up to date. In answer to a question the other day the Premier said that the State rolls were improving, and that 9,000 more people had been enrolled since the introduction of compulsory enrolment. Recently I received a copy of the supplementary roll for my district and even from Perth I could clean it considerably. Dozens of electors shown on the roll have left the district, which indicates that the State department is not up to date. Why it is not up to date is that it is starved and cannot maintain the best system as the Federal department can do. Why should the people of Western Australia, who are also people of the Commonwealth, be required to pay for two services? The Premier admitted when I spoke on the Estimates last year that I was right and something should be done. I hope the Government will do something to save the money which is now being expended uselessly. At present we are paying for a department and cannot get an adequate service because the department is starved. I will quote another instance of where money has been wasted, in the creation of the new position of supervisor over prospecting. We all know that our mining industry has fallen off. We still have most of our mining inspectors, many of whom are capable men, and one of whom could have been appointed to that position without a new post being created. It will probably cost the State another £400 a year, at a time when we need economy in our administration. I am not bringing these matters forward from a critical point of view, but out of a desire to assist the Government in conserving their funds. The report of the Royal Commission on the railways will shortly come before the House, and we shall be given an opportunity to discuss it. If greater loyalty were shown to the head of the Railway Department there would not be such a waste of money as has been disclosed by this Royal Commission. I know of specific instances of such waste. The Railway Commissioner cannot be expected to know of every penny that is spent. These things go on unknown to him. When some carriages were being shunted into a shed in Kalgoorlie the buffers on the line were wrenched off. Many complaints were made and many reports written before the damage in the yard was rectified. If the engineer in charge had known his work the matter would have been put right in the first instance. Last year there was an economy campaign. Three officers were sent to Kalgoorlie in a special car, and it cost £42 for the wages of the steward to look after those men who were supposed to be engaged on an economy campaign. The use of this special car is one of the curses of the railway, as it means a lot of extra expense to the country. It was the laughing stock of the Kalgoorlie railways that those men should have

been sent up to retrench people when they were wasting so much money themselves. I do not blame the Commissioner or the Minister, but I do blame the officers of the department for their want of loyalty to the Commissioner. Another man used to go up to Kalgoorlie every week to collect scrap brass and old iron, and he spent every week end in Perth. The matter could well have been attended to by a Kalgoorlie officer. If all these overhead charges are to be added to our interest bill, the upshot will be that the whole of the six millions to be spent on immigration will be eaten up by the deficit. When the "West Australian," the organ that is behind the Government, can write as it does, I think I am justified in my criticism of the Government. On the 3rd April last that paper said an officer of the Lands and Surveys Department complained that the department was virtually at a standstill because little or no land was available for settlement. And yet the high cost of administration goes on. The last speaker said that land could not be obtained for settlement, and I say the same.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. Angelo: The public office of the Lands Department is a very busy one now.

Mr. BOYLAND: It should be busy, seeing that the Premier has returned and has all this money for immigration purposes. In addition there is to be a constant stream of immigrants coming out from now on until Christmas. If something is not being done the immigration scheme will prove a failure. There must be busy moments in the Lands Department.

Mr. Angelo: They must have land available for selection.

Mr. BOYLAND: I know of men who could not get land. The "West Australian" said—

The Education Department erudite in everything but finance are still like a much advertised whisky, "going strong." . . . It is—we know not why unless it be as a smoke screen to incompetents—carefully suggested that it is treason against the oncoming generation to raise a critical voice against expenditure upon education . . . Citizens who give the matter serious thought must despair of reform. Ministers themselves seem to be the most unconcerned. The stern critics of other days are now leaders of the financial dances which the State trips unheeding to insolvency. On the 22nd May the "West Australian" said—

All the borrowing under Sir James Mitchell's scheme, and all the workers who may be brought to the State, will be unavailing to improve our conditions unless competent energy directs affairs in the department. This comes from the newspaper which has built up the Government, and yet can point out these errors. We as representatives of the people should voice our views concerning these matters, and endeavour to force the Government to do those things which

are necessary to curb administrative costs which are now rushing us on to financial ruin. Everywhere pessimism exists concerning the mining industry. The Government are not doing what they should to assist it. If there were a drought people would be looking for the gold that was sought for years ago, and which made such a name for this State.

Mr. Harrison: We want it now more than ever.

Mr. BOYLAND: I will tell you what happens when one goes to the departments concerning the matter. On the 3rd April, 1922, I received the following letter from the office of the Commissioner of Railways:—

Dear Sir. Adverting to your letter of the 23rd January last, addressed to the Minister for Railways, respecting freight charges on firewood, explosives and gold bullion, I have to advise that the question has been very carefully considered by Cabinet, which can see no good reason for any reduction in existing rates.

Last session the Minister for Railways made one of the finest speeches I have ever listened to. He spent 3½ hours in telling us what the railways were for, how they were assisting industries such as butter factories, farming, and this, that and the other, and that there could be no squaring of the ledger so far as the railways were concerned. The Government also admit that the mining industry is declining. In Kalgoorlie and Boulder there is a population of from 23,000 to 24,000 people, and yet they place this imposition on the heart of the industry at the point of production. It took me a month to get an answer to my question. I had put up an application from the Chamber of Mines, and on the 5th July I received this letter from the secretary of that Chamber:—

Dear Sir. I thank you for your letter of the 4th inst., and trust that the further representations you have made to the Minister will have the desired effect, as the high cost of production which the companies are now compelled to bear is virtually strangling the mining industry. I received this letter from the Railway Department—

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 4th inst. relating to increase in railway freights, covering a communication from the General Secretary of the Chamber of Mines, Kalgoorlie, and to inform you that the matter is receiving attention.

The matter is still receiving attention, for I have heard nothing further. The Government have had an unemployment trouble, but have allowed it to drift. They have done nothing for the goldfields which have produced 147 million pounds worth of gold. Even to-day Western Australia is producing 61 per cent. of the gold output of the whole of Australia. If any other State had this wonderful asset which we possess in our mining industry, everything would be

done to help the asset along. An industry should not be taxed at its source. All the goldfields people depend on the mines. We have to keep those people working, and as member for Kalgoorlie I deem it my duty to see that work is provided for them and that business is kept going on the fields. When recently I asked a question here as to whether the unemployed problem on the goldfields was being allowed to drift, the Premier replied in the negative. This morning we read a report made by Mr. Wilson, of the Mines Department, concerning the Ives goldfield. What is going to be done by the Government I know not, but I trust that if the field is to be helped the money will be judiciously spent in ascertaining whether the lodes go down. The Minister proposed this when he was on the fields. But I am satisfied that the Minister is not much concerned about the mining industry of this State; otherwise he would have taken a keener interest in the subject and seen that the industry got a better deal than it is receiving to-day. The last report of the Mines Department states on page 3—

On the East Coolgardie goldfield the number of men engaged in mining was 2,776, and in 1920 3,374, a decrease of 598. This goldfield gave employment to over 46 per cent. of the men engaged in gold mining, and the reported production during the year was 378,435 ounces, over 72 per cent. of the total reported yield. The tonnage treated was 635,816 tons, being less than in 1920 by 88,752 tons. The yield showed a decrease on the preceding year of 23,066 fine ounces. The report states on page 4, under the heading "Mining generally"—

The Western Australian production was 63.01 per cent. of the total of Australia, and in the previous year 58.99 per cent. The alarming decrease in the output is almost wholly attributable to the increased cost of production. Although some mines have come to the end of their resources, there is little doubt that many others have been compelled to suspend operations until some relief from the high cost of production is afforded them, in order to enable their ores to be treated at a profit.

The Lake View and Star, which has the Chaffers under its control as well, has closed down. The excuse given is that a sulphide mill has to be built. The building of that sulphide mill is to take place on a site adjoining the Horseshoe boundary. To mining men the work proves that in the Chaffers mine it is hoped to get the extension of the Boulder and Horseshoe lodes in future years. What a possibility that is for the Lake View and Star! The Lake View and Star sank a shaft and cross-cutted 500 feet to get the lode. It was the gold bonus that helped the company to do this good work. However, they found they could get no relief, and so they shut down the mine. I blame the Government for the want of assistance to these people, who did

so much to help the country along. The South Kalgurli mine has wonderful development, approximately 300 feet in length and 12 feet wide, and containing specimen ore. The Lake View South has never looked better than to-day. These facts show what is happening. But the report of the Mines Department says there is nothing new to report; I do not know where the departmental inspectors are. As regards the Horse-shoe mine, it was officially reported that the company put off a good many men. As a fact, they put off only 25, and they are trying to absorb them again, thus helping over the unemployed difficulty to that extent. The Ivanhoe mine reported a wonderfully good development at the 2,800 feet level last year. But that development has gone further. At the 3,000 feet level there is a lode 30 feet wide, and of rather good length, worth 48s. per ton. Thus pessimism, even as regards the Golden Mile is not well founded. Everything I said in this House last session was on the conservative side; my statements have proved to be absolute facts. The Kalgurli mine was given up by the company, and sold to the Oroya Brown Hill. It is on tribute, and the Oroya Brown Hill people have expended £7,000 in remodelling the plant for the purpose of treating lower grade ore, so as to help the country along and incidentally help themselves and their shareholders. The North Kalgurli Mine must also benefit from the up-to-date mill being built on the Kalgurli Mine. We expect to get a good many thousand ounces from these sources. As regards Mt. Monger, members recently read of another small development. It is only a foot wide, but it is worth five ounces; and a development five feet wide and worth one ounce would be regarded as a big thing for any mining company to have. The Broad Arrow district is looking well. I may tell the House about one man there, who worked for two and a half years without any assistance from the Government. He battled along until he could not get half a crown's worth of dynamite.

Mr. Teesdale: Did he apply for it?

Mr. BOYLAND: Yes, and was refused. One cannot blame the board, because they thought the man had got to the end of his tether. That man was shovelling his dirt six times. He filled buckets, and went up on top and fished them up. The proposition has come out trumps for that man. He has a small fortune in sight. Even the store-keepers, who have been so good to the prospectors there and at Ora Banda and Comet Vale, had to turn this man down, because they thought that they had gone as far as they could go. South of Ora Banda there is another new find whose first crushing of over 100 tons yielded 2 ounces 10 dwts. There was another crushing recently, and this second crushing went 2 ounces 7 dwts. The crushing which took place really came out of development; there was nothing picked, everything was taken right out. The Associated Northern Gold Mining Company, of Ora

Banda and Kalgoorlie, now have that mine under option for £20,000. The latest information, which reached me last night, is that the mine is opening up better than ever. There is reason to hope that that mine will make a new Ora Banda. Hon. members may have heard of the Norseman field as being worked out, but recently an American geologist, Mr. Millsom, came along and pointed out that the lodes had only met a slide and broken. Old miners would know that the thing to do was to develop and prospect. The tributaries who took up the mines after the companies are doing well to-day. Hon. members will have heard of the famous Red, White and Blue Mine. One of the men working it now, an old mate of mine, has been there for some years. The party have a big low-grade proposition. They are picking out the eyes, and on the average it goes about 17 dwts. The reason they pick out the eyes is that they have to cart eight miles. If some company were to put a big mill on that property, undoubtedly the proposition would turn up trumps and there would be a big yield from that quarter. Then we have the reports from the Murchison goldfields. Murchison members have told us that their field is looking better than it has looked for some time past. I wish to comment on the suicidal policy of the Mines Department, and more especially of the Minister for Mines. We cannot expect to get consideration for the mining industry from other Ministers because in that connection they must get their information from the Minister for Mines, since he understands mining.

Mr. A. Thomson: No.

Mr. BOYLAND: Well, he is supposed to understand mining. He has to accept the responsibility of the Mines Department. I consider that the Government have put a stranglehold on mining. It is time we placed in charge of the Mines Department a man who will take an active interest in the mining industry, and help the State by pushing the industry along. But the present Minister for Mines is happy-go-lucky and cares not a rap for anything. When there is a problem to be solved he goes away to Java, and when there is an unemployed difficulty he goes into the back country, and he allows the Como tramway to be constructed, concerning which matter I shall have something to say later. With such a Minister for Mines, how can we expect the mining industry to prosper as it should? We want a Minister who is absolutely in sympathy with the industry. While the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) was speaking to-night, I interjected that after a lot of trouble the rebate on explosives was being allowed to mining companies. The companies also want the hire of trucks for firewood running into the mines to be reduced. I have already quoted the correspondence which has passed between myself and the Government on that subject. I still await a reply. To put up railway charges, more especially the hire of wood trucks, was a mistake, even according to the evidence given

before the Forestry Commission by Mr. Hedges, the manager of the competing company, the Kurrawang Company. That gentleman said that there was an honourable understanding that if the conditions of 1916 as to the cost of commodities were reverted to everything should go on as before. But last year the Government put up the freights. I fought the matter, and the Chamber of Mines fought the matter, and I think every goldfields member has been trying to get those additional charges disallowed in order to assist the mining industry. These charges still go on so far as the mining companies are concerned; it is taxing the production of ore at the source, and it is not calculated to assist the people on the goldfields. In his wonderful speech last session, the Minister for Mines dealt with the mining position. Had he been in earnest in carrying out the spirit of his own speech, which meant that primary production from the mines would be helped to the same degree as the agricultural industry, it would have been of great assistance. The Minister, however, could not have been in earnest, and actions, not words are required.

Mr. J. Thomson: He is never in earnest; he cannot be.

Mr. BOYLAND: Then there is the question of the treatment meted out to the two goldfields firewood companies. It looks as though the Government have taken sides, one company being penalised and the other being assisted. One company, according to the evidence taken by the Forestry Commission, was not allowed to run a line parallel to an existing railway, whereas the other, the Kurrawang Company, was allowed to run along the Coolgardie line and to cross at one point. Why should such special treatment be meted out to one company? Is it because Mr. Hedges is, in their eyes, a wheatgrower, and as such should get the concession? The companies should be treated alike. An important matter that will come before the House later on is the suggested lifting of existing railway lines in the goldfields areas. If it is the policy of the Government to do this iniquitous thing it means that they will abandon the gold mining industry. If those lines have been put there for a special purpose, they should be left there. We do not know from day to day when another Golden Mile will be found. Should such a field be discovered, all the existing lines will be required. The lifting of the railways should not be wantonly done, nor should pipe lines be pulled up.

Mr. Richardson: Have they pulled up any line yet?

Mr. BOYLAND: No, Parliamentary sanction has to be obtained first and I do not think Parliament should give that sanction. New gold finds are made every year and many times in a year and while we depend on the great mining industry, we must foster it. Last year, the Minister for Mines pointed out that the loss of £12,500 in the utilisation of Collie coal on the railways was a mere nothing, so long as the money was

spent in the State. On the other hand, the Government take a few paltry hundreds of pounds out of the mining industry, by way of increased freights on explosives, bullion charges and freights on trucks! As to the Como tramway question, I feel this matter very keenly because of the principle involved in the breaking of the Premier's word given to this Chamber.

Mr. Teesdale: Not the Premier's word.

Mr. BOYLAND: Ministers absolutely betrayed the Premier in his absence, and broke his pledge to Parliament. Ministers did that behind his back. That was not loyalty; it was rank disloyalty. What is the use of Ministers saying they did not know? Within two hours of the decision to go on with the line, the "Primary Producer" representative was on the Acting Premier's doorstep. That is not the first time such a thing has occurred. If I broke my word to my constituents, could I honestly sit here and continue to represent them? No, a thousand times no; I could not do it! We have fathered this thing and no one has said anything about it.

Mr. J. Thomson: Yes, something has been said about it.

Mr. BOYLAND: Only in a mild sort of way. I heard the harsh criticism by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) to-night, and I realised he had an ideal before him. When we had that wonderful Indian statesman, Mr. Sastri, with us he showed us what was the ideal before Parliament.

Mr. Teesdale: Do not quote that fellow, for God's sake.

Mr. BOYLAND: We must quote these educated men. If we honoured him when he was here, we should take some notice of his remarks.

Mr. Teesdale: Then be consistent and don't talk about a White Australia.

Member: Why not?

Mr. BOYLAND: We can ask such men to be in our company, without allowing them to come into our homes.

Mr. Angelo: Mr. Sastri represents a very wealthy section of the British Dominions.

Mr. BOYLAND: We had a gentleman on the goldfields sometime ago, who gave a promise concerning the Esperance railway, but he broke it. We all know what happened to him. We know that if we break our promises to our constituents, we will be turned out in due course. Yet this particular matter is allowed to drift on. When the acting Premier, Mr. Colebatch, gave it out that he did not know that a promise had been made by the Premier, did he not have the Minister for Mines to advise him? The Minister for Mines knew all about that promise. I will draw the attention of the House to what the Minister for Mines said in this Chamber on the 30th August, 1921. On page 492 of "Hansard," the following is recorded:—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will get our vote to manufacture them here.

The Minister for Mines: I do not want the hon. member's vote. I am going to do it without that. When I make up my mind to do something, I go ahead, and take the risk of getting a vote upon it. I know, of course, that I will get it because I always do the right thing.

The Minister did not do the right thing in this instance, but this extract from "Hansard" indicates the temperament of the Minister for Mines, who says he "always goes ahead" and does things. In this case, he flouted Parliament and betrayed his leader when that gentleman was overseas. Again, on page 496 of "Hansard," during the course of the same debate, there is the following reference:—

The Minister for Mines: Yes, and yet when people in certain localities say, "If you give us the facilities, we will shoulder the cost of the work," can we withhold those facilities?

Mr. Johnston: They said that at South Perth.

The Minister for Mines: They said that in every place where they asked for these facilities.

Mr. Underwood: Do you take their word?

The Minister for Mines: No, I am too cautious for that. This is what I am prepared to do. I am prepared to come down to the House with a proposal that where local authorities, acting for the people in their district, are prepared to tax those people to raise the necessary amount to cover interest and sinking fund on the construction of a line, the line should be authorised; but not otherwise.

Mr. Clydesdale: They are prepared to do that at South Perth.

In face of that interjection by the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale), who was interested in the Como extension, hon. members can see that the Minister for Mines did not try to conserve our interests, in this particular matter. "Hansard" reports clearly show the position. After his expression of loyalty to Sir James Mitchell at Albany, the Minister for Mines stated on the occasion of the opening of the Como extension that he thought the right thing had been done, and that there was nothing to regret. That Minister absolutely does not care about anything. A great mistake has been made regarding this work. This indicates that Parliament has been flouted, or the printed word does not indicate what the language means.

Mr. J. Thomson: Quite correct.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. BOYLAND: I leave the matter at that; I have quoted the record of the Minister's remarks as to what should be done. Another important question is the dropping of preference to returned soldiers. This matter is being allowed to drift on too far for my liking. In the first place, we should ask ourselves: Are the dependants of those who went out and left their bodies on the

fields of France and elsewhere, entitled to the pensions they receive to-day? If so, they are getting them. Are the maimed and broken soldiers entitled to their pensions? If so, they are getting them. When it comes to the man who returned with his life preserved, after offering that life on the field of battle, and we find that he only asks for an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, and cannot get work, it is a crying shame.

The Minister for Works: Whom do you blame?

Mr. BOYLAND: I blame the country and the Government.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. BOYLAND: When a late Minister of the present Government can go to the Arbitration Court and sit on the bench, and give an award which means that the last man on must be the first one off, thus cutting out preference to returned soldiers, it shows that there is no preference so far as the Government are concerned. If not, how is it that the late Minister can go straight to the Arbitration Court and allow that to happen? I had occasion to see the Minister for Railways and all he said to me was: "What can I do? The Arbitration Court says the last man on is to be the first man off." I say with Sir Talbot Hobbs that if employers, or the Government, cannot give work to returned soldiers, then we should tax those who can afford to employ those men, for they should not be let down. If the widows and orphans, the maimed and broken are entitled to pensions, surely those men who have come back are entitled to work.

The Minister for Works: You do not suggest that the Government could interfere with a judge of the Arbitration Court?

Mr. BOYLAND: No, but it shows how much earnestness there is. People are forgetting their obligations. Something should be done, if it were only the imposition of a special tax, to see that those men never want for an honest day's work.

Mr. Carter: Neither the Government nor anybody else has a right to assess a man's wages in relation to his pension.

Mr. BOYLAND: We had an instance on the goldfields. The manager of a certain mine heard that his bosses were not in sympathy with the returned soldiers or those who backed them. He said to his bosses, "If you do not play the game by these men, you will get out and make room for others." The same thing should be done in Government departments.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not characteristic of all the mines. I know of some on which the soldiers were the first to be put off.

Mr. BOYLAND: The soldiers of Kalgoorlie are well satisfied with the treatment they have received. But when you come into a city like this, you cannot concentrate as you can in Kalgoorlie. Ministers do not know what is going on in their own departments.

The Minister for Works: There has been no case of preference against the soldiers in any of my departments.

Mr. Carter: Can you say that no wages have been fixed in relation to pensions?

The Minister for Works: I can say that in two cases such a matter has been adjusted.

Mr. BOYLAND: I give a case in point. A poor man with one arm came down here last year and got work on tramway repairs. He was paid a man's wages for a boy's work, 13s. 4d. a day instead of £2 odd per week. The union secretary told him he was not getting enough money, and by chicanery he was induced to stay away from the job for a couple of days. When he came back, he found in his place another man sent out from the Trades Hall. I stated the case to the Minister for Railways, but the onus was put on this man because he had not turned up. In view of the facts I gave the Minister, the Minister should have seen to it that the man was supplied with work. Instead of that, the Repatriation Department had to find him a job. He was a married man, and his only offence was that he had been a special constable, that when 600 were challenged by 2,000 he went out, although he had but one arm, to fight the 2,000. Because he did that, he was victimised. I heard a returned soldier, a disgrace to his uniform, cry out in glorification of the fact that this man had lost his job merely because he had been a special constable. Only the other day there was appointed secretary of the football league in Kalgoorlie a man who during the war refused to enlist or to contribute a penny to the patriotic funds. During the fracas up there, when a young soldier was done to death, that man rushed round to the Soldiers' Institute to help them with the fight, but the heads of the R.S.L. would have nothing to do with him. Yet the man who did those things could beat two other candidates—both returned soldiers—for the secretaryship of the football league. On all sides the returned soldier has been dropped. I suggest to the Minister for Railways that one-legged men should be employed as motormen on the tramways. They would have a seat to sit upon; and would be fully capable of doing the work. On the question of miner's complaint and what is being done to alleviate it, I pay a tribute to the Ugly Men's Association. Two years ago they collected £1,400 for a recreation hall at Woolooloo. The Government have subsidised the £1,400, the work is now going on, and the patients at Woolooloo will have their much needed hall. I have here a report regarding miner's phthisis in South Africa. It is by the Hon. J. Cornell, M.L.C., with notes by Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, and it is issued by the Hon. John Scaddan, M.L.A. I do not know whether this is all the Minister is going to do to help the men suffering from miners' complaint. Last year

he said that South Africa had not dealt with this problem successfully. I retorted that it had. He has to-day a letter from Dr. John Porter, of South Africa, who travelled through this State, and who wrote back saying they had dealt with the problem in South Africa, and that to-day they had not a man in the mines suffering from miners' complaint. This information could have been obtained all along. The Mine Workers' Relief Fund had reciprocal relations with the South African fund, and what one board knew was known to both. In South Africa they have a wonderful compensation fund, with the reading of which I tired members last session. I did it for the purpose of helping those men in the same position as I am, but who cannot help themselves, and who have no money for their own relief. Going home last Thursday night, I had to drag on to every picket from the tram to my gate. What about those other men who cannot help themselves, who cannot get the creature comforts which I get, who cannot have the use of this splendid radiator which warms me and keeps me in good order while I speak? Those men deserve some consideration. What Mr. Montgomery has contributed on the South African Commission is to the point. On page 96 he says—

The problem of dealing with the results of past years of neglect, however, is the one most immediately before us and requiring immediate solution. It is by no means clear that Western Australia can follow the example of South Africa in imposing the whole of the cost upon the existing mines.

I do not ask for that, but I do ask for a national insurance scheme. To one deputation that waited on him in Kalgoorlie the Minister for Mines said, "What you want is a national insurance scheme," knowing in his heart that he considered it was a Federal matter, and that he had no intention of bringing in such a scheme to help us. I am going to prove that by quoting from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund as follows—

It has been found that if the fund is to continue satisfactorily its sphere of usefulness the board must be vested with greater powers and be legally able to enforce its demands. Legislation to this effect has been asked for and approved by Cabinet.

Mr. Scaddan knew of this and must have recommended it to Cabinet. He has been fooling a man like me, and fooling those other men who have been so earnest about it. He has been fooling us to the fullest extent. It is a damn crying shame that any Minister of the Crown should fool men dying from miners' complaint, when the industry in which they contracted the disease should be responsible for their care. If a nigger country can deal with the problem, surely a white man's country can do the same. And if the country does not do it, why cannot the Minister in charge get down to the work?

Mr. Underwood: You are not a man to be fooled.

Mr. BOYLAND: I am not going to be fooled always. I would pension off both the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Education at £10,000 a year, and the country would be the better for it.

Mr. Carter: Why not the Minister for Works as well?

Mr. BOYLAND: Yes, he could be joined in. It would save the State hundreds of thousands of pounds. When a man is careless in his administration, can fool people and be called "Happy Jack," he is not going to do much to help the country out of its difficulties. Where is our boasted loyalty to Sir James Mitchell? I do not know why the Premier is being fooled to such an extent by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Mines.

Mr. J. Thomson: And by the Minister for Works.

Mr. BOYLAND: I have a number of letters dealing with the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. I brought the matter before the Minister for Mines and pointed out that those responsible for the fund had turned down people who should have benefited. The Minister denied it and said I was wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: They are doing it every day.

Mr. BOYLAND: I told the Minister that I had the proof and that the letters were there. He asked me—a sick man—to put the matter before him and I had to put the case up. I wrote this general letter to the Minister under date 22nd May, 1922—

As one who takes a keen interest in miners stricken with the diseases peculiar to and prevalent in the mining industry, and as one who took a particular interest in procuring a fund to help those so disabled, I have some grievances to present to you. In 1915, a Mine Workers' Relief Fund was inaugurated, contributed to by the Government one-third, the employers one-third, and the employees one-third. There is no need for me to go into the constitution of the Board as you know it as well as I do, but, I want to tell you that, when the fund came into being, it was a condition of employment in the mining industry to contribute to the fund. The fund also applied to those men who had worked in the industry retrospectively for two years, and who were suffering from diseases due to the industry. The employees at that period contributed 3d. per week, the other contributors doing the same, but, to-day, it has been increased by 200 per cent., as they now pay 9d. per week, or 3s. per month. With the increases made, the fund has seen fit to eliminate beneficiaries, who they think can provide for themselves with the help of their families. As you are aware of these cases, or some of them (as I showed you letters from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund to that effect), do you not think it is time, now that the fund has outlived its usefulness, to provide something lasting for those who have given their lives to the mining industry? As a member of Parliament, and

member for Kalgoorlie, I am now refused information from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund when men who are stricken approach me to take up their cases for them. Seeing that the Government contribute one-third of the cost of the fund, is it right or just, when a man who is stricken, and who has contributed his quota, and is agreeable for me to inquire into his case, that I should be refused information? The Mine Workers' Relief Board has admitted, in the Press, also by letters to past beneficiaries, that on account of shortage of funds the strictest economy has to be practised. They also say to-day that it is purely a relief fund, yet the collect 3s. per month from each man working in the mining industry, and he, the worker, contributes his life as well. Now, sir, seeing that South Africa has dealt with this problem successfully, will you not, as Minister for Mines, bring in a scheme of the same order, to provide adequate compensation, and mainly to save the great economic loss of life to the State through miners' complaint, which is increasing? Will you also rectify the position or attitude taken up by the Mine Workers' Relief Board that we members of Parliament, when approached by men who have a claim on the fund, can be refused information? Will you also attend to the matter of fibrosis cases being found suitable homes, owing to the invalid state, instead of placing them in the Old Men's Home?

The answer I got was that the matter was being considered. On reading this report issued by the Minister, I find that Cabinet has bound itself to perpetuate this iniquitous fund, in the report of which some glorious figures are quoted for the benefit of the general public. There is a table showing the number of people who have benefited, those still on the books, and the total amount paid. Over £600 and under £700 it shows five; still on the books five; the total amount paid, £3,000 odd. Then it shows £300, and quotes 60 people as having been paid £24,921, "disclosing," it states, "an average of £415 to beneficiaries, and in no case could an individual worker have paid more than £1 10s. in contributions." Then there is a table of those contributing: First year 7,610 men, second year 7,147, third year 6,627, fourth year 5,892, fifth year 4,465, sixth year 4,705. All these men contributed and the report quoted a paltry 60 who had received great benefits from the fund, but not a word about the thousands who had never received and are never likely to receive one penny. In fact, some of the men are now working on the Herdsman's Lake scheme. The chicanery of the report is evidenced in the reference to the percentage cost to administer the fund. The money, however, is collected on the mines and handed over, while the mines and the Government forward their respective contributions. The figures are absolutely misleading. This system must go out. If the Government are humane at all, they must help these men. If they do not help them,

the Government will go down in history as one of the most unkind to the men who have given their lives to the industry. I must refer to the treatment meted out by the Government to the six miners who were shifted from the Wooroloo Sanatorium to the Old Men's Home. A clerk was appointed to look after the interests of the Medical Department and that man is practically the dictator of the policy of the sanatorium, notwithstanding that we have a splendid organiser in the person of Dr. Mitchell. The institution is kept in such good order that one could eat one's meals off the floor; there has never been any trouble. I experienced some trouble in getting letters into the "West Australian" because I had dared to attack their Government—the Government they had put into power. A couple of items were cut out of my last letter. I do not know why. One was my statement that the Colonial Secretary had hidden himself behind the chief clerk, Mr. Huelin, and had allowed him to do things. He put the stamp on and therefore the thing was right. In a hospital like that, where tubercular diseases are rife, the patients were given printed electoral rolls to use in the lavatory. This item also was cut out of my letter. Is it right to issue old electoral rolls for use in such a hospital? One does not know where a tubercular wound might be, and the printed ink might affect one of those wounds. Dr. Montgomery told me as an engineer that there would be a problem to solve with the septic tank as a result of using that paper. As a medical man he said it was unheard of. We have nothing of this sort in our other public institutions. The doctor himself carries a parcel of sanitary paper around with him. This is what the Government stoop to in their economy campaign. I rang up the Old Men's Home when I received word from the men there. The Deputy at the home said he would welcome me if I went down. The first thing I saw when I got there was the tent ward. When I saw these poor fellows, especially one named Dennis, on that dirty black sandy floor, and compared the conditions with those at the sanatorium, it seemed to me an awful thing that these men, who have given their lives to the mining industry, should be tucked away down there, or else made to go out into the world on a small pension. The men were very dissatisfied with their lot and asked me to get them out. I saw Mr. Rust, who told me I should not believe the evidence of my own eyes. He bully-ragged me for a while, but when he had gone far enough I told him how heartless he was. He gloried in the fact that the men had not been receiving the hypodermic syringe injections they had been ordered by Dr. Mitchell. I asked him if he placed his opinion above that of a medical man. I then put up a case to the Colonial Secretary. On March 6th I received the following letter from these inmates of the Old Men's Home:—

Just a few lines to let you know how we are getting on. Well, we have been

shifted out of that place that we were in into the bungalow, outside sleeping, and it is a little bit better for us. In reference to what you heard about us being well satisfied, we the undersigned never said such a thing, as you know when you saw us last that not one of us was. We are just of the same mind now, and we will never be satisfied as long as we are here. Of course the sleeping quarters are a little better, but the food is not any good for our complaint. I hear that you were told that one of us came down here and had been on the needle in the sanatorium and he is still getting it. Well, I am the one. T. Dennis, and I never had a needle nor have I seen one. I was told by the doctor that I would get no needles here, so you can see for yourself that it is a pack of lies they are telling you. We remain, T. Dennis, John Brown, Henry Dennis, J. A. Moore, M. Melish, N. Ash.

On April 20th I received the following letter:—

Dear Sir,—Just a few lines to let you know how we are all getting on. Well, we are not so good as when we saw you last. I have had a very bad time of it this last two weeks and the rest are not too gay on it. In regard to the last letter that was put in the daily paper by Mr. Brown and Dr. Atkinson, stating that we were all doing well and satisfied with the place and treatment, of course you know that is only one side of the affair. They say we are all putting on weight. I will just show you how we stand from the time we left the sanatorium; we left there on 20th January. This is how the weights compare:—H. Dennis, sanatorium weight 8st. 13½lbs., O.M.H. weight 8st. 4lbs.; J. Brown, sanatorium weight 12st. 12lbs., O.M.H. weight 12st. 6lbs.; Nicholas Ash, sanatorium weight 9st. 10lbs., O.M.H. weight 9st. 3lbs.; Michel Melish, sanatorium weight 8st. 11lb., O.M.H. weight 8st. 5lbs.; J. Moore, sanatorium weight 12st. 2lbs., O.M.H. weight 11st.; T. Dennis, sanatorium weight 9st. 7lbs., O.M.H. weight 9st. So I don't know where all this putting on weight comes in, and since the appearance of that letter in the paper, I have been called into the office to state why I complain so much. Of course I am on my own, and Rust and Huelin ask questions. Rust asked me what we wanted and I told him we wanted good bread and butter and good porridge for our breakfast and something good for our dinner. He said we got good margarine, which was as good as butter, but I told the two of them that it was nothing but vegetable fat; and the way he tried to pass it off; he said they must have put it in the wrong box, but it does not wash down. Then I went for them. I wanted to know where they got all the news from at the head office, seeing that none of them had been out here or anybody else to ask us whether we were satisfied or not. They

said they did not know. Of course, I know. Huelin said he would make a note of it. I told him he could have the lot. We leave the rest to you, hoping to find you in good health. I remain, yours for the lot, T. Dennis.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. BOYLAND: I am not one to run my head against a brick wall. I gave the Colonial Secretary the facts, but he would not do anything. The upshot was I wrote to the Press, and my opportunity has now come of placing the facts before Parliament. I have friends in South Africa with fibrosis or silicosis, who are being kept in a Government sanatorium at a cost of 16s. 8d. a day. It is a crying shame that the Government of this State cannot look after those men who have given their lives to the industry. I claim that the Government should assist the Medical Department by providing the money for an up-to-date X-ray plant. It would be the means of saving many lives to this State. It has been proved that the latest plant of this kind will cure cancer in its early stages, and often when it reaches the more advanced stages. It is claimed that at least 25,000 people in the Empire die annually from this disease. The Government should consider this question when the Estimates come forward, and give the medical authorities what they want in this direction. In conclusion let me express the sincere hope that the Government will take note of the matters which I have brought forward. We speak here empty every session; no notice is taken of our protests. We can say what we like, and it goes into "Hansard," and thus we can justify ourselves to our constituents as having spoken here on their behalf. But we can do nothing. The Government ask us to follow them blindly. Why cannot they help us out of these difficulties? Why cannot they do these things for the benefit of the State and for the benefit of humanity?

On motion by Mr. Richardson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.51 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 22nd August, 1922.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill (No. 1) £1,763,950.

QUESTION—STATE IMPORTATIONS, DUTY.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it a fact that the Government have paid large sums of money in respect of duty on rails and other goods the property of the State? 2, If so, have the Government cognisance of the provisions of Section 114 of the Federal Constitution Act, which provides that the Commonwealth "shall not impose any tax on property of any kind belonging to a State"? 3, Has any question arisen between the Commonwealth and any State involving the interpretation of this section? 4, Has the interpretation of the section come before the Commonwealth or State Courts; if so, will the Minister supply reference to such cases?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, 2 and 3, Yes. Sec (a) Attorney General of N.S.W. and Collector of Customs for N.S.W., and (b) The King, etc., v. Sutton; both cases in Commonwealth Law Reports, Vol. V., 1907-8, pages 818 and 789.

QUESTION—RE-SLEEPING OF RAILWAYS.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is the statement in the "West Australian" of the 28th ult., that the district engineer, Geraldton, saved the Railway Department 45,000 sleepers during the last financial year, correct? 2, Is it correct to say that there has been a reckless waste of sleepers in the re-sleeping operations recently carried out on the Government railways? 3, What conditions govern the disposal of sleepers removed from the road?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, No. The estimates for year 1921-22 provided for 53,407 sleepers for the Northern Railway on a basis of re-sleeping certain sections in a "face," but as a result of general instructions issued by the Chief Engineer,