

representation on the board of members of the union will be passed.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.29 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 9th November, 1933.

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

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYED, HOUSING.

Mr. MOLONEY asked the Premier: Will the Government take steps to place approved unemployed persons and their dependants in untenanted houses in Subiaco, and West Subiaco, or wherever they may be in the State, at a rental commensurate with their income?

The PREMIER replied: No. The Government have no control over the houses referred to, and in any case cannot accept responsibility for rent payments. The Government are endeavouring to attend to this aspect by finding employment for the people.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, PRIORITY OF CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Who decides the order of priority in which proposed railways are to be built? 2, On whose recommendations are such decisions based?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The decision is one of Government policy and the whole of the circumstances are taken into consideration. 2, No recommendation is made, the matter resting entirely with the Government, but all information possible is collated.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—AUGUSTA ALLOTMENTS.

Further report of Committee adopted.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.34]: As the Treasurer told the House, this Bill is identical with that which has been brought down during the last two years. I am very pleased to know he has been able to find sufficient money without imposing additional taxation by this method. Additional taxation just now would mean a greater impost upon primary industries, which are not in a position to stand it. The House has made considerable progress with the Estimates, and in consequence we have already authorised the expenditure of a good deal of money. It becomes the responsibility of members to see that the Treasurer gets the money he asks for after they have authorised the expenditure. Nothing can be said against giving him the authority set out in this Bill. We sometimes have a wrong idea of what amount of money is received from this source. We really get a very small amount from land and income taxation. The Premier anticipates getting only half a million this year. The source of income under this heading is land tax, income tax and dividend duties. The greatest amount of money is provided from other sources, particularly from public utilities. The railways provided roughly £3,000,000—that is the estimate for this year—towards the £8,000,000 the Treasurer requires for carrying on the services of the State. After the utilities have provided the money, most of it becomes absorbed in interest payments. In his an-

nual report last year the Auditor-General pointed out that 49 per cent. of the revenue received for that year was used in interest, sinking fund, and exchange rates. A very large sum of money has to be found for these purposes. The people expect a great deal in the way of services, notwithstanding that we have to find this very large amount of money under those three headings. I should like to point out how the money is made up. The Commonwealth find £1,073,000, the railways find £3,000,000, water supply and sewerage £356,000, electricity £290,000, tramways £286,000, Harbour Trust £250,000, and Goldfields Water Supply £175,000, the balance being made up of small items, except the financial emergency tax, which is estimated to yield a little under £400,000. For interest alone, £3,323,386 is required out of that sum. We must always bear in mind that we give authority to the Treasurer to raise the money. We have already committed the State to find a very big sum ahead of the amount we are authorising now. The percentage of increase in interest during the last few years has been considerable. In 1923-24, 37 per cent. of the actual revenue received went out in interest, and now it is 49 per cent. Furthermore, the revenue has fallen a little since then.

The Premier: It has not decreased very much since then.

Mr. LATHAM: But the borrowing has increased considerably over that period.

The Premier: The percentage of revenue has decreased since then.

Mr. LATHAM: We are not getting the revenue we did. The greatest item of expenditure the Treasurer is called upon to incur is £677,000 from which he has to find £500,000 for exchange. Education accounts for £564,000, employment and child welfare £504,000, and police £203,000. This does not leave a great deal for the Government services that are rendered to the people. We have to meet the charges that are made against revenue out of special Acts, such as Loan Acts and others of the same kind. We have to remember that for the future. Unfortunately, the people demand from Governments and members of Parliament all sorts of additional items of expenditure. Members will have to stand up against that sort of thing, because the State cannot afford it. We have reached the stage when we cannot go on increasing

the deficit year by year, or carrying forward the deficit year by year. It is money that is spent to meet the State's commitments, for which we have no tangible asset. We should endeavour to educate the people to refrain from making requests for additional spendings, and teach them to understand that the State cannot find the money. Industry cannot find it. It will be a long time before we can make up the leeway, owing to the difficulty of the times we are experiencing with our industries. I am not blaming members, but the public generally for the demands of expenditure that are so constantly made. People make requests for money to be spent in their districts, often enough on unprofitable undertakings. A good deal is spent in land development. Whilst it is very difficult to obtain interest from that investment, this has to be met by the Treasurer from other sources, chiefly from borrowed money. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall be able to find money from those industries in which we have made these investments. Meanwhile we must walk warily. We have a big responsibility towards the people, particularly those for whom we are finding work out of Loan expenditure. At the same time, we must keep down our Loan expenditure wherever possible. It is all right to preach that doctrine here, but it is difficult to induce people to realise the importance of it. Members are alive to their responsibilities towards future generations, but I am afraid that very often the people outside do not realise this. When they make demands for expenditure, the Treasurer is called upon to find the money. It is becoming a serious matter. Part of the actual money raised, that is, earnings from utilities, taxation, grants from the Commonwealth, and everything else, goes in the payment of interest accounts, sinking fund and exchange. That represents a big claim against the Treasury. The position cannot improve under such conditions. We must endeavour to live within our income as far as we can. I agree it is almost impossible to do that to-day when wheat is at its present price. It will be some years before the wool industry will be able to pay taxation, I mean the taxation it used to pay. We hope the day is not far distant when we shall get something, but, under our system of assessment on the three years' basis, it will be some time before any revenue will be derived from that source. The only bright

speck on the horizon is the dividend duties. Most of that will come from the goldfields. The Premier anticipates receiving an additional sum from that source. I hope we can keep better control of the Loan expenditure, because of the interest account that is creeping up against our revenue year by year. I am pleased that the Premier has not increased taxation this year compared with what it was last year, except in respect to the small amount he is able to get from sources that will not greatly affect the community, namely, the entertainments tax.

The Premier: That is not an increase.

Mr. LATHAM: The people pay no more than they did, but there is a little increase for the Treasury. Whilst we cannot object to this taxation Bill going through, we can, as a House, endeavour to educate the people not to make demands upon the Government for additional Loan expenditure. There is no harm in borrowing money and investing it if it will provide interest and some money for redemption purposes. There is, however, grave danger in borrowing money and wasting it on road construction or other utilities which cost a lot of money and bring in a very small return. I propose in Committee to raise one question, but have nothing further to say now. I will reserve any further remarks I have to make on loan expenditure until the Loan Bill is before us.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.45]: During the boom period, the unimproved value of land was greatly increased and there is now widespread feeling that the valuations are in excess of the true worth of land. I would be pleased if the Premier would give consideration to provision being made for assessments to be based on present-day values, or, in connection with improved land, on a percentage of the earning power of the land. Possibly the Premier might favourably consider an amendment to the applicable clause dealing with tax deductions, so as to enable a similar deduction, namely, 20 per cent, which is allowed in respect of the income tax, to be allowed in respect of land tax. The other point I desire to mention is the period allowed for the payment of the tax. Under the Federal law 60 days are permitted, but under the State law the period is 30 days. The public would appreciate uniformity and I suggest, in order to accomplish that end, that 60 days be allowed for the payment of the State taxation as

well, also that the period allowed for the lodging of objection to the assessment be similarly extended.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [4.47]: I have no desire to delay the passage of the Bill, but it is necessary to observe that, although the Bill is an exact copy of the statute passed last year, the imposition of the burden of taxation on the people has enormously increased this year. The true picture is, I think, portrayed when we take into account the financial emergency tax, which is simply another form of income tax. If I may take as an illustration of the average taxpayer the incomes enjoyed by members of this Chamber, the position is clear that this year the tax we will pay will be more than doubled. Last year we paid 4½d. in the pound, and this year we will pay 9d. in the pound.

The Premier: The taxation is not doubled; it is not increased at all. The same amount will be received from the taxpayers as in the past.

Hon. N. KEENAN: But that is impossible. The Premier cannot escape from the position. If we have to pay 9d. in the pound this year, that is double what we paid last year, when the rate was 4½d. in the pound. Many other people will be in the same position as members of this Chamber. They will have to pay double.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not think the Premier is serious in his interjection. There is certainly no alteration in the Bill before us, and the people will have to pay exactly the same under the Bill as they did under the Act of last year, but they will have to pay double in respect of the financial emergency tax.

The Premier: Some will.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Every member of this House will have to pay double.

The Premier: Some of them.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Surely every one.

The Premier: Some members who had to pay last year, will not pay at all this year.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am talking of those who will pay taxation. Of course I know there are some exemptions allowed, but the fact remains that the emergency tax will hit many people heavily. I dare say members will find they will have to pay far more this year than last year.

The Premier: The total amount to be received by the Treasury this year will not be greater than the amount received last year.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is purely an estimate.

The Premier: Certainly it is an estimate.

Hon. N. KEENAN: And, as such, we must accept it for what it is worth. That does not affect the illustration I take, when I refer to the fact that every member of this House will have to pay double.

The Premier: No doubt, but thousands will not pay this year who had to pay last year.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I would not say that thousands will be in that position.

The Premier: Many thousands.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Premier has a greater grip of the official figures than I have, and I must accept his assurance, but the illustration I gave concerned what might be regarded as the average incomes of the community and those who have to pay tax on such an amount will have to shoulder a far heavier burden this year than last year.

The Premier: No.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That may, or may not, be justified, but I have indicated the effect of taxation.

Mr. Moloney: They will be able to carry the increased burden.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the hon. member had been listening he would have grasped my meaning. I said the taxation may, or may not, be justified, but inevitably a large section of the community will have to shoulder a greater burden.

Member: Others will secure relief.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is no good telling people that someone else is to be better off as the result of the additional taxation they have to bear. Members who suggest that people will feel happier because someone else escapes may accept that view, but I have never known people to be pleased in such circumstances.

The Minister for Employment: Of course, there are many who will be glad that those who cannot afford to pay have escaped.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not think so. In my experience, I have not yet known anyone to be really happier because he has to bear an extra burden in order that others

may escape. There may be no alternative for the Premier, and he cannot avoid it.

The Premier: I have avoided hardships under this year's taxation that were apparent under last year's arrangements.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The true criterion is: Can it be avoided? In other words, has the expenditure incurred, or circumstances, made it necessary for us to raise revenue to meet the financial demand. I am prepared to concede a good deal to the Treasurer on that point, but I, together, I believe, with a great majority of members of this House, would like to know whether the Premier can hold out any prospect of something to be accomplished as the result of this taxation. Is there that prospect, or does this simply represent, as one Minister remarked the other night, a case of hanging on and doing nothing else, merely keeping the wheels turning over, and accomplishing nothing more? It would be difficult for anyone to maintain opposition to the taxation proposals if the Premier could assure us that there was a goal in sight. It is there that I do not think the Premier fully discharged the duty we would expect of him. Does he expect to achieve some objective as the result of this taxation, or is it a case of merely keeping the wheels turning?

The Premier: That is a fine suggestion to come from a leading member of the Opposition!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I did not hear the Premier's interjection; perhaps it was not worth repeating.

The Premier: Perhaps not.

Hon. N. KEENAN: While I have no desire to delay the passage of the Bill, it is difficult to find absolute and complete justification for it. It may, or may not, be necessary. On the assumption that it is necessary, I do not propose to offer any resistance to the Bill.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.53]: Before the Bill passes the second reading stage, I desire to comment on the system adopted for raising revenue. Every year, for some few years, it has been customary to impose some form of tax disguised under the heading of emergency or necessity. Always the taxation is imposed from a different standpoint, and with allegedly different objectives. Principally, I think, the idea is to make the imposition of the tax as palatable as possible to the people. In the pro-

cess, we are providing employment for an army of officers, with the result that we are practically paying out an amount corresponding to that which we derive from any such excess taxation. The time for a review of our system of taxation imposition is overdue. There are systems in vogue in other countries where the collection of taxation is most economically accomplished, and everyone pays in accordance with the law. The Premier knows, as well as I do, that in his electorate, as well as in mine, there are scores of foreigners, earning reasonably good wages, who have never paid, and never will pay taxation. I take bitter exception to that being allowed.

Member: Perhaps they are exempt!

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course not, and they are never pulled up.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Cannot the departmental officials get at them through the wages sheets?

Mr. MARSHALL: I am complaining about what is actually happening.

The Premier: The Taxation Department is in touch with the name of every wage earner on the goldfields, knows what he earns, and collects the tax.

Mr. MARSHALL: I tell the Premier that nothing of the sort prevails.

The Premier: It does.

Mr. MARSHALL: I say it does not, and I am just as well acquainted with the position in my electorate as any other individual in the Chamber.

The Premier: I shall be glad to have the information.

Mr. MARSHALL: We have well paid officers to do this job, and I would be glad to know that they did it thoroughly. Apart from the foreigners, there are Britishers who have worked for many years on the mines in the employment of one company, and they boast that they have never paid taxation, and never will. The wages sheets are sent down every 12 months, but somehow the foreign element is never molested. Those men send hundreds of thousands of pounds to their relatives in their native land, thereby impoverishing the State where they have secured employment, and, at the same time, do not pay a penny in taxation. The facts are well known to everyone closely in touch with goldfields matters.

Member: Attempts have been made to make them pay.

Mr. MARSHALL: If that is so, it can be said to the credit of those concerned. The fact remains that there are scores of men, both British and foreign, who have never been caught and who openly boast that they never have paid taxation and never will.

Mr. Latham: Probably those men are being reached now under the new system of taxation at the source.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not talking about the financial emergency tax, which admittedly is reaching a greater number of employees, but of the income tax. Incidentally, under the financial emergency tax, many of the men I have in mind are being unfairly treated because of the system under which the tax is imposed. We have the hospital tax and then quietly the amusement tax was imposed, but that taxation is to go to the hospitals.

The Minister for Health: No, it is not; not a penny of it.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then it used to go to the hospitals. The previous Government imposed a tax with the object of providing for the sick, maimed and ill in the country districts, but that was merely to tickle the ears of the people. That was all it was because, in the very year that that tax was introduced, practically the equivalent of the sum the tax was to produce was taken from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member can discuss that phase under the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, but I am showing the different methods we have adopted by which taxation has been imposed, and indicating the different excuses that have been resorted to in order to pacify the people, and, at the same time, I desire to bring before the House the position regarding the foreigners on the goldfields who are impoverishing the State by sending money they earn here to their native countries.

The Premier: How long have you known these facts?

Mr. MARSHALL: No longer than the Premier himself.

The Premier: You might have advised the officers of the Taxation Department.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will not pimp for the taxation officials or anyone else.

The Premier: You are reflecting upon the foreigners, and upon the officials.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not saying anything against the foreigners, but I am re-

fleeing upon the officials of the Taxation Department.

The Premier: Your responsibility is to advise the officials.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will not advise them or anyone else; it is their job.

Mr. Moloney: You are advising us of the position now.

The Premier: If I knew that a lot of foreigners were evading the tax I should regard it as my duty to advise the taxation officers.

Mr. MARSHALL: There is a law which makes the collection of taxation a simple process, and an army of officers is paid to do that work. Yet the Premier suggests that I should walk in and say to the departmental officers that, notwithstanding all the facts before them, they are failing to do their job. I am not going to pimp for anybody.

The Premier: It would not be any different from what you are saying now. That would be pimping, just as you are pimping now.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not going to the departmental officers to tell them that those foreigners are not paying their tax. It is the job of the officers to find that out.

Mr. Patrick: They should be able to learn it from the wages sheets.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course they should. Officers are sent out to those various places, but what do they do? I do not know. If they were closely to scrutinise all the wages sheets sent in to them, they would find out exactly what each employee had received. But they fail to do that, which makes the burden all the heavier on those who do pay their taxes. The financial emergency tax hits the goldfields employees more severely than any others; particularly does it hit those who are doing contract work and who earn huge amounts, but only periodically.

The Premier: The financial emergency taxation is not under this Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, but I am trying to point out that those who are caught under the financial emergency tax, which is collected at the source, and who have to pay under the Bill also, are paying more than they are entitled to pay, bearing in mind that a large number of people are not paying income tax at all. In the Old Country the authorities have a card system, and every individual has to present his card. If it is found that someone has not paid his taxation, he is liable to a penalty. That is

a more economical and efficient system than we have, for we merely tell an army of officers to enforce the law. Once the Taxation Department get hold of a defaulter, I admit that they make a particularly good job of it; they do not relax, once they get their talons into a man. How they come to miss such a large number of foreigners, I do not know. Admittedly many of the names of those men are very similar, but after all only a close scrutiny is required to identify them. The time has arrived when we should evolve some more economical system of imposing and collecting taxation. For my part I should say, let it be one tax and be finished with it.

Mr. Moloney: You are a single taxer.

Mr. MARSHALL: It would be far better if we had but one tax to pay.

The Minister for Mines: It would be better still if we had none to pay.

Mr. Griffiths: If it were all aggregated in the one tax, probably we should be alarmed at the extent of it.

Mr. Hawke: It is impossible to exist without taxation.

Mr. MARSHALL: We shall certainly find it impossible to exist if the present states of affairs continues, rendering it necessary for fresh taxation because of the annual burden increasing on every Government in the world. It is not fair that a section of the community should be obliged to pay more in taxation than they can afford, while another big section, earning just as much as the first, get off scot free because those in charge of the administration of the laws do not do their work efficiently. We should evolve some better system of imposing and collecting taxation. Ours is the most expensive system of all. Collection at the source is the cheapest and best, and collection by stamps is also an economical way.

Mr. Latham: It does not seem so hard when only a little at a time is taken from us.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not that, but under the existing system so many are able to evade taxation, while those that are caught are compelled to pay more than they should. The Premier will agree that that is so. The existing system is altogether defective. Whilst I have no objection to the passing of the Bill, for the Government must have money with which to carry on the business of the State, I think our present system is wrong and that a better one should be

evolved, more especially in respect of the collection of taxation.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.7]: What the hon. member has said discloses a serious state of affairs. The Premier claims that in his own electorate such a state of things does not exist, but the member for Murchison emphatically declares that what prevails in his own electorate must prevail also in the electorate of the Premier. The unfortunate part of these taxes is that they have a habit of remaining with us once they are established, and it seems to me we cannot ever get rid of them.

The Premier: This is not an emergency tax; it is a recognised form of taxation.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, but apart from that, when the Premier says that taxation is not increased, it may not be increased to a number of people; but it cannot be rammed down my throat that taxation is not increased, when in one instance I have had to pay £18 as against the £9 I paid last year.

The Premier: Of course!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I hope when we get round the financial corner we so often hear about, some of these taxes will be taken off, and I certainly think that what the member for Murchison has said should be seriously regarded by the officers of the Taxation Department.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco) [5.10]: I will support the Bill because, despite impressions to the contrary, it does not inflict any additional taxation in the aggregate. It is refreshing to find the zeal that has been displayed both by the member for Murchison and the member for Avon in giving information to the House, and also the desire of the member for Murchison that some Draconian law should be introduced for the purpose of enmeshing those people who are allegedly evading the provisions of the Act. A remarkable feature is that the attitude adopted by the member for Murchison is entirely contrary to that usually adopted by him, for generally he stands as a champion of the submerged portion of the people. To-day, however, we are told the Taxation Department is inefficient and is not looking into the question of those people evading taxation.

The Premier: Wage-earners on the goldfields.

Mr. MOLONEY: He desires that those constituents of his who have evaded taxation should be caught by the department; he wants some drastic law instituted in order that they shall be caught. Yet in his desire to assist the State, his public-mindedness is not sufficient to impel him to indicate to the department that those people are evading taxation. He would not pimp. No, but he would come along and tickle our ears by telling us that foreigners are evading the law. The hon. member seems to display a certain amount of racial animus against those people. I am surprised at that, because in his electorate there are many of those people who, if his desire were gratified, would find themselves, as the result of the spur given by him, included in a long list of offenders called upon to pay, not only their due taxation, but penalties also. Does he want that? I have yet to learn that the Taxation Department are as inefficient as has been stated here to-day. I have found them a most efficient body. People come to me moaning about the activities of that department and wondering where they glean all their information. I will not accept such a sweeping assertion against the department as has been made here to-day, for it is one of the most efficient and vigilant departments in Australia.

Mr. Griffiths: The member for Murchison admitted that.

Mr. MOLONEY: He condemned the officers at the start, and then extolled them. But I am dealing with the charge that they are officially lacking in doing that which they should do. As an example, the hon. member said there were innumerable people evading taxation. The member for Avon said practically the same. I suppose those people will all thank those two members for drawing the attention of the House to the alleged evasions—which the member for Murchison denounced in a spirit of public zeal which, I take it, he had previously exhibited on the platform. But he did not intimate to the department that those people were evading their just obligations. Then we find that the spirit of abnegation is lacking, even in the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), one who stands very high in public esteem. He does not desire that he should be one of those to carry the burden, does not desire that he should take up that load merely because financially he is better fitted to do it than are others, even

though the taxation received by the State is not in excess of that previously received. But it is not desired that the fellow on the bottom rung should have the weight lifted off his shoulders, and transferred to his and ours. So I say the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of charity that we always extol is absent on this occasion. Even though taxation is an essential factor in the life of the community, he objects because there has been added to his taxation another 4½d. in the pound.

The Premier: That is the point.

Mr. MOLONEY: Even the member for Murchison did not bemoan that fact so much. Those who are best fitted to carry the burden are the ones who should carry it. The incidence of taxation referred to by the member for Nedlands has been shifted from those who are weak in that respect and imposed upon those who are financially strong. The Bill before us contains not one iota of increase. It is only a perpetuation of that which has been operating, and only those in receipt of the incomes specified in the measure will be liable to pay the appropriate amounts of taxation. I refuse to believe that the Taxation Department have not exercised the greatest efficiency and vigilance, and I refuse to accept the assertions of the member for Murchison and the member for Avon.

MR. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [5.17]: It is a matter for great regret that we have to impose so many taxes on the people, but while the obligations of the State remain as they are, it is the duty of Parliament to provide those whom the people have placed in control of the Treasury benches with sufficient finance to discharge the obligations. In common with other members, I regret this tax but I cannot see how its imposition could be avoided. There is one phase of this taxation to which I should like to direct the Premier's attention with a view to his ascertaining whether an injustice is being inflicted upon a certain section of taxpayers. One clause of the Bill contains a proviso that such land tax shall not apply to improved land within the meaning of Section 9 of the Act if used solely or principally for agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, or grazing purposes. In the outer suburban areas are men settled on small blocks, which, in my opinion, come within the definition. The blocks are used for

producing a few pigs, cows, and poultry, which are fattened on what is raised on the blocks. Yet the holders of the blocks have been informed by the Commissioner of Taxation that they are not exempt from land tax. I realise that when a man is a dealer pure and simple, the position is different, but when a man goes into the outer suburban area, gets a small block, produces stock—no matter whether it be pigs, cows or poultry—it would be fair and equitable to exempt his land from taxation on the score that it is used mainly for grazing and for the production of stock. The Premier might take up the matter with the Commissioner of Taxation, and ascertain whether it would not be fair and equitable to exempt those men.

Mr. Sleeman: Why did not the Government do it last year?

Mr. Raphael: Why did not you advocate it?

The Premier: Or why not the year before? You were there for two years while the exemption operated.

Mr. FERGUSON: When I was a Minister, I did not control the Commissioner of Taxation.

The Premier: It is not a matter for the Commissioner of Taxation. It is a matter of the Act.

Mr. FERGUSON: I believe the Act exempts such people.

The Premier: Then they will be exempt.

Mr. FERGUSON: I am very glad to have that statement from the Premier. My attention has been directed to the matter only during the last six weeks.

The Premier: The Commissioner can only work within the Act.

Mr. Latham: Some people have been using such places for their homes and have been working in town.

The Premier: The Commissioner can only work within the Act. He has no discretion.

Mr. FERGUSON: It is his definition.

The Premier: There is an appeal.

Mr. FERGUSON: But it is impossible to get a lot of men producing in a small way to take the trouble to appeal. They are not lawyers; they do not understand the question. When they receive an assessment, they feel bound to pay it. Many of them know nothing about it.

The Premier: Yours is rather a belated appeal, seeing that the provision has been the law for three years.

Mr. FERGUSON: The matter has been brought to my notice only in the last six weeks.

The Premier: The provision is the same as that in the Act of three years ago.

Mr. FERGUSON: I was unable to understand the member for Nedlands. If he had taken a little trouble to work out the figures of what he would pay by way of taxation, he would not have made the statement he did make. If he paid income tax on the allowance received as a member of Parliament, he would pay £9 5s. 7d. per annum. The addition of the financial emergency tax in operation last year—4½d. in the pound—would make him liable to pay £18 5s. 7d., and with the addition this year, he would pay £27 5s. 7d. That amount is not double £18 5s. 7d. It represents an increase of only about 30 per cent.

Mr. Latham: That is quite enough.

Mr. FERGUSON: Yes, but in the circumstances it is unavoidable. It was not quite fair to say that this tax, plus the financial emergency tax recently approved by Parliament, would increase the taxation of members of Parliament by 100 per cent. It would not.

Mr. Raphael: They can well afford to pay it, anyhow.

Mr. FERGUSON: The hon. member should speak for himself.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [5.22]: I desire to say ditto to all that the member for Subiaco has said.

Mr. Raphael: You would not like to repeat it.

The PREMIER: No, I do not wish to take up the time of the House, but I endorse every word he has said. The member for Murchison spoke very eloquently about having one uniform tax, but did the hon. member put forward one constructive idea as to how it could be introduced? I know of nothing so easy in this world as to criticise existing conditions without being able to offer one idea as to how they ought to be altered.

Mr. Latham: And without having to do it.

The PREMIER: Or even suggest how they should be altered. The hon. member said that the wage earners on the mines in his district and in my district, and particularly the foreigners, were escaping

taxation. I do not think it is so. I do not think he has a knowledge of the facts. He may have heard of one or two instances. Some man, in the course of a casual talk on the street corner, may have told him that he did not pay the taxes, and the hon. member says the great majority of them are not paying. Particularly, did he stress the point that the foreigners were escaping. Why should the foreigners escape? Is there anything behind the statement suggesting that foreigners are escaping in greater number than are Britishers because of laxity on the part of taxation officials? When I suggested to the hon. member that he might have advised the Commissioner of Taxation that large numbers of wage earners including foreigners, in Wiluna and on the goldfields in his district were escaping taxation, he said he was not going to be a pimp. Well, what has he done to-day except be a pimp? If to tell the taxation officials would be pimping, the hon. member is pimping to-day. He has told the House and the whole country that large numbers of his electors, the wage-earners and mine workers in his district, are escaping taxation, but he need not have done that. He could have advised the Commissioner of Taxation that he knew they were escaping. The hon. member cannot draw a distinction of that kind. If it would be pimping to tell the Commissioner of Taxation, it was pimping to state it in the House. I do not believe the statement is correct. I believe the taxation officials are most efficient. In fact the whole complaint of the people is that they are too efficient.

Mr. Raphael: Too right!

Mr. Ferguson: Not a bad fault.

The PREMIER: I have heard taxpayers complain of the energy of taxation officers.

Mr. Raphael: I wish you would shoot a few of them.

The PREMIER: I do not give any credence to the statement of the member for Murchison. The member for Nedlands, the Leader of the Nationalist Party, made a most extraordinary statement. He said we had doubled taxation.

Hon. N. Keenan: In some instances. I think the Premier heard me say that taxation had been doubled in respect of income such as members of this House enjoy.

The PREMIER: Yes, and the hon. member made that statement by way of complaint.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is so.

The PREMIER: What was the object of saying it, if not by way of complaint? The member for Irwin-Moore pointed out that taxation had not been doubled, but if it has been doubled, it is only because we have relieved thousands of people from taxation that they ought not to have borne before.

Mr. Moloney: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I agree that we have increased taxation on some sections of the community. I am paying double, if the hon. member would like me to put it that way. My payments have been increased from 4½d. to 9d. in the pound. But I am paying and the hon. member is paying because we can afford to pay much better than could thousands of people who were taxed previously. The hon. member supported a tax of 4½d. in the pound imposed upon men receiving £2 per week. According to his ideas there was nothing wrong with it, but when those men are relieved and he and others are charged 9d. in the pound, it is all wrong. Again the member for Nedlands made an extraordinary statement. He said I had not given the House any reason why the taxation was needed, or why it was justified. Let me inform the hon. member that this is the accepted form of taxation in every country of the world. It does not apply to this State alone, and there is nothing new about it. From his remarks one would imagine that I had introduced a new form of taxation, one of which he had never heard. It has been the accepted form of taxation in Australia ever since the inception. The tax I am proposing is no different from the tax imposed in the years when the hon. member was a member of the Government. Yet he says I have given the House no reason why the tax is required. Is any reason required more than is disclosed in the Estimates that the 437,000 men, women and children in this State are faced with a deficit of three-quarters of a million pounds? With that information before him, the hon. member still asks why I want the tax. This State requires much more, but I felt that in the circumstances it would not be wise to increase the tax. The hon. member says I gave no reason why the money was required. Required! Let him look at the Budget statement, and see the balance of three-quarters of a million on the wrong side, a sum which has to be made up from loan money, and which will be the

means of adding to the interest bill, as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition—a procedure that ought to be avoided. Yet the hon. member asks why the tax is required, and says I gave no reason for it. I need not answer him further than to say it is the usual Bill that is presented to Parliament year after year. It is not departing from any accepted principle in any way whatever. If ever there was need for it, there is need to-day, having regard to the financial position of the State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Rate of income tax:

Mr. MARSHALL: On the second reading of the Bill I made statements for which I do not apologise. Apart from that, I would tell the member for Subiaco and the Premier that if it is a question of defending the miners on the Murchison, I can do that just as well as either of those gentlemen can.

The PREMIER: I submit the hon. member cannot make a second reading speech. What is the point he is dealing with?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member certainly is out of order.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am dealing with the incidence of the tax. The rate of the tax is too high simply because some people are evading payment of it altogether. I would ask the member for Subiaco if he thinks an elector in his district ought to pay his income tax in full, while his next door neighbour evades payment of it altogether.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot continue on those lines. He can discuss the rate of the tax.

Mr. MARSHALL: The rate of the tax would not be nearly as high as it is now if every taxpayer were made to pay. The reason why the rate is so high is because some people pay no tax at all.

Mr. Moloney: Show us how we can make all the taxpayers pay.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not think I need waste time in attempting to show the member for Subiaco anything.

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot show him under this clause.

Mr. MARSHALL: During the second reading we found the member for Subiaco on his feet. One would think he was delivering a sermon from the pulpit on virtue and honesty.

Mr. Moloney: You don't find me vilifying my electors, which is what you are doing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not. I cannot possibly understand how it is that certain taxpayers evade their responsibilities.

The Premier: Are you sure their income is taxable?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. I could give the Treasurer name after name. They are not all on the Murchison, either.

Mr. Moloney: They are not in Subiaco.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. That is the model suburb with the model representative, until next election.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WHOLE MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1933-34.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Vote—Police, £203,094—agreed to.

Department of the Minister for Employment, Child Welfare, and Industrial Development (Hon. J. J. Kenneally, Minister).

Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £134,996:

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

(Hon. J. J. Kenneally—East Perth) [5.42]: This is the first occasion on which Estimates dealing with this department have been made in this form, and it is the first occasion on which a Minister has been asked separately to deal with the department. It was found that alterations were necessary with respect to the administration of the department and the preparation of departmental Estimates; and consequently a com-

parison cannot be made with any previous period. The first vote that comes under consideration is that for child welfare and outdoor relief. Members are aware that this department has a fairly big range of activities. It deals with infant life protection; the legal adoption of children; the investigation of complaints of ill-treatment of children; supervision of children placed in orphanages and industrial schools, also children boarded out with foster parents and foster mothers, and those released on probation by the Children's Court; assistance to women on whom children are dependent; assistance to unmarried mothers, this assistance being both financial and by way of legal aid to obtain affiliation orders where possible; outdoor relief to those in distress through sickness; street trading by children; and offences by children up to the age of 18 years dealt with through the Children's Court. These activities necessitate the employment of competent officers to deal with matters arising not only within the department, but outside it. I will later on indicate what additions have been made to the staff in consequence. On the 1st July, 1933, the following children were under the care of the department:—

Children in institutions, wards of the Department on subsidy	604
Children boarded out on subsidy	384
In Government Receiving Depot	40
	1,028
Children at service and in training	245
Children with relatives and others without subsidy	253
Children with mothers receiving allowance, but not wards of Department	2,016
Children under six years of age placed out with licensed foster-mother and paid for by relatives	65
Children on probation from Children's Courts	272
	3,751
	4,779

Of this number, 644 children were maintained in institutions, and were distributed as follows:—

Clontarf Roman Catholic Orphanage	90
Swan Boys' Orphanage	67
Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Home, Gosnells	3
(a) General division	37
(b) Industrial division	12
(c) Backward division	18
Salvation Army Boys' Home, West Subiaco	61
Salvation Army Girls' Home, Buckland Hill	64
Seaforth Girls' Home, Gosnells—Industrial	11
St. Joseph's Orphanage—Girls	65
Perth Girls' Orphanage	55
Methodist Children's Home, Victoria Park	25
Parkerville Home	16
Home of the Good Shepherd for Girls—Industrial	18
St. Vincent's Foundling Home	65
Castledare Special School—Backward Boys	7
Government Receiving Depot	40
Warribee Farm School—Methodist	12
	644

In addition to the above, 384 wards were boarded out with 274 private families. The desire of the department is to see that instead of institutional methods guiding the lives of the children, the influences of home life shall be, wherever possible, the dominating factor. It will readily be realised that in the interests of the children, wherever homes are available, the young people should have the advantage of the homely influences surrounding them and directing their lives. That would be infinitely better both for the children and ultimately for the State. So, wherever possible, we see that the influence of mothers, even though they be foster-mothers, and their homes shall be available for children who come under the control of the department. With regard to assistance to women upon whom children are dependent, on the 1st July, 1933, relief was being given to 1,269 cases as follows:—

Widows	473
Incapacitated husbands	365
Deserted wives	299
Single women	79
Husbands in sanatorium	10
Husbands in asylum	15
Husbands in prison	14
Foster mothers	14
	<hr/>
	1,269

In addition, there were 248 cases of outdoor relief as under:—

Widows	81
Deserted wives	43
Husbands in asylum	1
Incapacitated husbands	55
Sick single girls	68
	<hr/>
	248

The above cases include assistance to 2,916 children. Each of the cases is visited once a quarter by departmental inspectors, six of whom are qualified nurses. The Government recently approved of the appointment of a woman probation officer. Members will be aware that a male probation officer has been actively engaged for some years in carrying out excellent work on behalf of boys. Soon after I assumed office, I gave attention to the position of girls, and decided, on behalf of the Government, to extend to girls who had strayed from the paths of rectitude, the same consideration as had been extended to the boys. The duties of the woman probation officer have been published.

Mr. Marshall: Is she a nurse.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, and she is a very good officer. She was selected from the departmental staff, and another officer was appointed to fill the position she formerly occupied. The probation officer has been appointed under the provisions of the Public Service Act.

Mr. Raphael: Additional inspectors have been appointed too, have they not?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, temporarily. The duties of the woman probation officer are as follows:—

1. Attend Children's Courts at Perth, Fremantle, and Midland Junction when any girls before them.
2. Preventive work in metropolitan area (Fremantle to Midland Junction) in respect to dance halls, beaches, and such like.
3. Look after probation girls.
4. Look after single mothers and expectant single mothers.
5. Follow up delinquent service girls and other service girls who may be causing trouble or desiring help.
6. Visit and report on Alexandra Home and Hillcrest Maternity Home.
7. General help to any mothers when they seek her assistance in respect to their daughters.
8. Visit and report on industrial institutions for delinquent girls.
9. Visit and report on delinquent girls in industrial institutions.
10. Women police to keep her advised of any cases that may come under their review, which should be looked into by her.

It is considered that the appointment of this officer will meet a long-felt want in the assistance of girls in difficulties or distress. Moreover, the appointment represents the natural corollary to that of the male probation officer. The question whether the woman probation officer should have her duties linked up with those of the women police has been considered, and I have decided against that course. It is desirable to have the atmosphere of the Children's Court removed as far as possible from ordinary police activities, whether of male or women police. At times it will be found necessary for the women police to advise the woman probation officer of cases that come under their notice, with a view to enabling the probation officer to take the necessary action. Any action deemed advisable against delinquent girls will be taken by the woman probation officer under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act. In dealing with the care of young girls suffering from venereal dis-

eases, some of whom are wards of the Child Welfare Department, the Government have experienced great difficulty in providing reasonable housing accommodation. In some quarters, the department has been criticised because of the action that was taken. That criticism would be well directed if it were made against the conditions that previously operated regarding the girls. Shortly after taking over my Ministerial duties, I visited the quarters provided for the girls. Without fear of contradiction, I assert that the conditions there were an absolute disgrace to any civilised community.

Mr. Doney: How long has that continued?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: For 12 months or two years. I admit there were difficulties, and that the girls represent a difficult proposition. If we are not in a position to build a separate home in which adequately to care for them—neither were the Mitchell Government nor are the present Government in a position to do that—then some arrangement should be made by which the atmosphere of home life should surround them.

Mr. Latham: Are you referring to the accommodation at the Women's Home at Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes.

Mr. Latham: You know there was a very good reason why the girls were put there?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. I am not complaining about the girls having been placed there.

Mr. Raphael: There are many people who complain about it, and justly so.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, and I want to answer those people who have complained, justly or otherwise. When the Government were faced with a decision as to whether the girls should be sent to the Women's Home or to gaol, the decision naturally was against sending the girls to gaol.

Mr. Raphael: No one would advocate sending them to prison.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: In the circumstances, there was no option but to send the girls to the Women's Home. On the other hand, the accommodation should have been made as homely as possible. I have to admit that the accommodation provided was not nearly as suitable as it might have been. I do not know

whether the Leader of the Opposition has visited the home.

Mr. Latham: I know all about it.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If the hon. member knows all about it, he will agree that the surroundings were not as good as they might have been.

Mr. Latham: I agree, but the question was whether they should go there or to gaol, and the decision was that they should be sent to the home rather than to gaol.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I was dealing with the accommodation provided for the girls.

Mr. Latham: I will admit it was rough.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It was rather more than rough.

Mr. Raphael: It was scandalous that the Government should have allowed it.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I have in mind the fact that the floor of the room next to that in which the girls were housed was covered with bird-dirt.

Mr. Latham: It was not in that condition when I saw the place.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: There was considerable trouble with these girls. They broke away, and endeavoured to get out of the home at night.

Mr. Latham: They were breaking out everywhere; that was the trouble. It was not desirable that they should be allowed to mix with the public.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, and it was also desirable that they should not be housed under such conditions.

Mr. Doney: Was it not possible to clean up the dirty conditions you refer to?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, I have cleaned it up. I have placed before the Premier a recommendation that improved accommodation should be provided. As the Leader of the Opposition has already mentioned, it is undesirable that these girls should be allowed to mix with the general public. If we place them in a room and lock them up, naturally they will endeavour, by every possible means, to gain their freedom. An attempt has been made to provide them with more homely surroundings. Cubicles have been constructed in the long hall, and arrangements have been made to fit up a sitting room for them. Then again, some sewing machines have been made available so that the girls may do sewing for themselves. In addition, a special matron has been appointed, and she will

be on the premises all the time and will have to accept the responsibility of looking after them. I am hopeful that in the New Year we shall be able to provide better accommodation in more homely surroundings. The present arrangements are of a temporary nature, and I do not propose to allow them to continue indefinitely. It has been said that some of the women at the home have complained about the presence of the girls. No such complaints have been lodged with the department. As a matter of fact, the girls are receiving motherly attention from the women, because the maternal instinct is ever-present. The women refrain from ostracising those less fortunately circumstanced than themselves, and if any complaints have been made, they have not been made by the women in the home. As to any danger of infection, I have consulted Dr. Atkinson, who declares there is no possibility of anybody being infected by those girls, except through one channel.

Mr. Latham: He distinctly says that infection is impossible except by contact. I should not like to use the towels they use.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: In these measures we have to be guided by the medical expert.

Mr. Latham: I can tell you of some cases that have occurred up North.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The medical officer has been consulted and his recommendation was obtained before the improvements were made to the premises. These improvements, I hope, will be beneficial from all points of view. Street trading by children has been strictly controlled during the last 12 months. Under the Child Welfare Act, a child may not trade if below the age of 12 years. Provision is made in the regulations that a child under 14 years of age may not trade after 8 p.m. or if under 16 years, 9 p.m., provided that the Minister may vary the above hours in specified cases. This later provision has been made to meet the special circumstances of to-day, and certain children between the ages of 14 and 16 years are permitted to trade until 11.30 p.m. on Saturday nights only, to assist the older boys to earn a little money for their homes. Street trading by children is not permitted during school hours or after 10 a.m. on Sunday.

Mr. Latham: Has not that been in operation during the past 12 months?

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I am dealing with the 12 months operations of the department. The expenditure for 1932-33 on certain items with which I will deal later, shows an increase of £484, which to a large extent was accounted for by grade increases for members of the staff. In the general Estimates there has been a slight increase of expenditure allowed for, but that is explained in the various items. I do not propose to weary the House dealing with each item, unless information be asked for. The Fairbridge Farm School, really another activity of the department, is conducted under an agreement between the Imperial Government, the Commonwealth Government, and the State, the Imperial Government providing 5s. per week per child, the Commonwealth 3s. 6d., and the State 3s. 6d. The agreement provides for a maximum of 300 children at the school. For some time past the actual number has been below that maximum, and during last year the school authorities arranged for a number of additional children to be brought out. This has necessitated expenditure, but a result of that expenditure is that a considerable amount of money has been brought into the State; for whereas the total expenditure per child per week is 12s., of that amount 8s. 6d. is paid by other than the State Government.

Mr. Latham: The State has to educate the children. That is additional.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Children under the Child Welfare Department are being cared for in a manner which, I think, is not excelled in any other part of the Commonwealth. Provision is made in this department for the adequate care of those in want. I think it can be claimed that the linking up of the Child Welfare Department and the Unemployment Relief Department under the one ministerial head, has made for co-operation between the two departments instead of, as in the past, one department trying to transfer responsibility to the other. The Unemployment Relief Department is quite new, having been created by the Government making provision for a Minister to control it. When introducing the Estimates for this department for the first time, I may be pardoned if I run through our system of relief under the unemployment relief provision. Normally, single men, applicants for work, must be registered at the employment bureau for seven days before claims can be considered. The proba-

tionary period is waived however, where it is shown that men have just been discharged from hospital or are obviously in need of immediate relief. Where, upon investigation, a single man is shown in the light of the family bread-winner, that is through the father being physically incapable of manual work, the single man, for the purposes of work, will take the place of the father, and be treated as a married man. For married men in the metropolitan area, the basis in assessing sustenance is 7s. per head weekly for husband, wife, and children under 14 years to the limit of five. Thus 49s. weekly is the maximum sustenance allowable to any one family. Provided always that this maximum is not exceeded, the admission to sustenance of one child over 14 years in each family may be approved. The onus is on the applicant to make a claim for this additional sustenance on the prescribed form. Although I say that is the maximum, there have been occasions when permission has been given for the 49s. to be exceeded. Such cases will occur from time to time, and we cannot make a hard and fast rule. Applicants who have been in regular work at a reasonable wage for a number of years should not require sustenance within a week or two of becoming unemployed. In such cases a period should elapse before sustenance is granted, provided there are no special features which would influence the decision. Wherever possible, approved applicants will be offered Government relief work. I will deal with that a little later, and show the effect of men being offered work, the effect it has on the department's operations. Men who are obviously physically unfitted to perform manual work are not picked up. Such cases will be placed on food relief, or local work suitable to their condition, and periodically reviewed. Food relief takes the form of milk, meat, bread, groceries, and cash in the proportion of 2s. in every multiple of 7s. Men re-applying for sustenance after having been engaged in private work for periods of three months or longer, will be required to complete a new application form, and will be subject to inspection by an officer from the inspection branch. In the process of dealing with sustenance applicants, many distressing cases are encountered which call for special treatment. To meet any of these contingencies the following concessions in addition to sustenance, are available:—

Pre-natal assistance to expectant mothers; free tram or rail passes to enable sustenance recipients or their dependants to receive hospital treatment which may be of a continuous nature; special milk supplies or patent foods to delicate children where specially prescribed; and firewood. It has been found necessary to increase the inspectorial staff. There has been a fairly definite move in regard to industry in some cases, as for instance the timber industry, and there has not been a proportionate decline in the number of cases claiming unemployment relief in the districts in which that move has been made. Naturally one wants to know why. Consequently officers have been appointed to go round those districts, and see why, when work is offering, the sustenance payments do not decrease. When it is found that sustenance payments are being continued unnecessarily, every effort will be made to see that they are stopped. The general position of unemployment in this State permits of a brief review. The coming of the depression rendered it necessary for the Government of the day to do things which, in the light of subsequent events, should not be viewed too critically. Sudden emergencies were created demanding immediate action in finding employment of some sort, and to find it very quickly. In those circumstances it was not possible to bring to bear that reflection which perhaps would have enabled a better class of work to be selected. Therefore, any remarks I may make on this subject are not to be taken as being addressed against any Government or any department. The handling of unemployment is not a task for any Government or any Minister, but is the duty of every person in the community.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.3 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I was dealing with the greater activities of the Employment Department. I think we can rightly claim that we have experienced the worst of the depression and that, from now onwards, progress should be made with the State's development. A little time devoted to examining the position as it has developed should be of interest to members. In January, 1930, there were 380 persons receiving sustenance at a weekly cost of £560. In September, 1931, the number had increased to 17,000 receiving relief and

2,000 employed on Government relief works, a total of 19,000. In September, 1932, there were on sustenance 7,677 and on Government relief works 9,049, a total of 16,726. In September, 1933, there were on sustenance 5,300 and on Government relief works 8,778, a total of 14,078, while to-day there are on sustenance 3,752 and on relief works 10,167, a total of 13,919. In September, 1932, the number on sustenance was 7,677 compared with 3,752 to-day, a difference of 3,925. I think that we can fairly claim to have overcome the greater part of the difficulty, and that if the development that the State's position promises is maintained, we should be able to cope with the unemployment difficulty in future with success equal to that attending our present efforts. A pleasing feature is that while in September, 1931, the State either by sustenance or relief work had to make provision for 19,000 people, to-day it is providing for only 13,739. I am excluding prospecting and mining in which an additional 1,400 or 1,500 men have been placed.

Mr. Doney: You appreciate the fact that the reduction has been gradual and has been pretty evenly distributed over the several years?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I appreciate what is more important to the people, namely, that a considerable number of those who were receiving relief have been absorbed in private employment. Whereas the Government in 1931 had to make provision for 19,000 people, to-day they are called upon to provide for 13,000 odd, a difference of 5,000 odd people who have been placed in private employment. As one who has taken part in advocating the consumption of local goods, I find the latest figures of the Government Statistician interesting. Those figures show an advance in the number of people employed in private industry producing local commodities totalling about 4,000. The number of people on sustenance at present—3,752—is the lowest since June, 1931, when the depression overtook us, and it is to be hoped that progressive improvement will continue proportionate to that of the last few months. The number of people now employed on Government relief works is the highest ever employed since Government relief works were provided. To some extent the one would be a corollary of the other. If work is provided for people, they are taken off sustenance. As

the number we provide with work increases, so should the number on sustenance decrease. The decrease, however, does not occur in the same ratio, because the policy of the Government has been to get away—even if only partially—from the practice of compelling men to go on to sustenance before they are given Government work. It has not been possible to extend that policy to the number we would have liked to benefit, because the greater the extension in that direction, the less is the relief to sustenance funds. Therefore, the number who are not on sustenance and whom we can put into Government employment depends upon the amount of money we are able to expend to provide work for the people. Wherever possible, we have endeavoured to get away from the practice of compelling a man to be on sustenance before he is considered eligible for Government relief work.

Mr. Ferguson: But still he has to be on sustenance before he can get Government relief work.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No.

The Minister for Justice: Not altogether.

Mr. Latham: Unfortunately, the officers say so.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Not definitely.

Mr. Doney: What is the actual position?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: When funds permit, instructions are issued that a few men who are not on sustenance may be picked up for work. Among them are people who helped to blaze the trail in this country. They are not on sustenance but, had they desired, they could have obtained sustenance long before people who have been receiving it for years. That being so, even though Government funds are limited, we are endeavouring to provide the opportunity for work for people who have had sufficient spirit to remain off sustenance, though entitled to receive it.

Mr. Seward: I tried to get some men on relief work and could not because they would not go on sustenance. I tried until I got tired of trying.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The hon. member must have grown tired quickly.

Mr. Seward: No.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I am making a statement that I know to be true.

Mr. Seward: So am I.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I doubt whether the hon. member's statement is true. He has been to me and, according to his statement to me, has received satisfaction. That being so, it ill-befits the hon. member to make such an observation. Either he is wrong now, or he was wrong when he said he had obtained the satisfaction he desired. Shortly after we took office, we found it advisable to alter the policy of sustenance relief. To do that we had to take some 1,380 men away from the local governing bodies in the metropolitan area. The local governing bodies in the metropolis particularly, were employing a large number of men and, in most instances, were simply paying them sustenance. To say they were paying the men sustenance scarcely describes the position; the local authorities were simply acting as the agents through whom the Government paid the sustenance. Most of the local governing bodies merely handed over the sustenance provided by the Government and got work done to that extent, though some added a few shillings to the amount provided by the Government. It became apparent that, if that system were continued and if men were kept simply at a sustenance standard, the lack of money in circulation would make itself felt to such an extent that it would not be possible to break away from the system. It has been the considered policy of the Government to endeavour to restore purchasing power to the people who have lost it, namely the workers. We believe that, when the purchasing power is restored to the workers, not only are they benefited but work is automatically provided for other people. The Government desired to get away from the idea of having people on the sustenance standard, or on sustenance plus a few shillings. In two and a half years the sustenance paid by the Government through metropolitan local governing bodies amounted to £104,000. To that sum the local governing bodies added £46,000. For that expenditure of £46,000 the local governing bodies had work performed to the value of £450,000. Seeing that the men who were employed under these conditions were employed in the main at sustenance rates, or sustenance rates plus a few shillings, it will

be evident that had we not made the attempt to get away from that system, we would never have been able to achieve the object we desired, namely, to bring about a return of purchasing power to the people concerned. I am not criticising those who instituted the system. We have to bear in mind what the position was at the time it was instituted. Many things may have been necessary then, which the authorities would desire to get away from as soon as the opportunity occurred. In the opinion of the present Government, that opportunity occurred soon after we took office. We were criticised for taking away from the sustenance standard 1,380 men, but this resulted in placing many of them in full-time employment, and giving to others what was more beneficial to them. That was the commencing point of the improved conditions that are operating to-day.

Mr. Latham: When that system was instituted, we were able to give the men money instead of issuing ration tickets. That was of benefit to them.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not want to argue that. The same argument was advanced when I endeavoured to take the men away. It was said that if I put them on sustenance orders instead of their receiving the money that was handed to the local governing bodies for them, I would be depriving them of the opportunity of making their money go a little further through the wife having the spending of it instead of securing her requirements through orders. As I told the people concerned at the time, we had been so long away from the wage standard that the right road to it was necessarily a rough one to pass over. One cannot travel back to-day without being prepared to pay part of the price necessary to again get on the right track. Even though for the time being some of these people had to go back to the sustenance order, that is, receiving sustenance orders instead of money, it was not long before the altered system brought its beneficial effects. One local governing body had 45 people employed on sustenance. When instructions were issued that these men were no longer to be made available, it was pointed out to me that 45 people would inevitably come back to the sustenance fund. These people did not come back on to sustenance, nor did they remain on sustenance.

Member: Are you referring to the Greenmount people?

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not want to mention any particular local authority. We have to judge the attitude of local governing bodies in the light of circumstances as they existed at the time. If some local authorities took up a certain attitude and assisted the Government of the day in the way that was thought best, and if the position has so altered that we can now change the system, we have to be thankful for what was done and look for better things.

Mr. Doney: You recall that quite a number of local governing bodies put sustenance men on to work which would otherwise not have been done, and to that extent greatly eased the situation.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not want to go into that question.

Mr. Doney: Why not?

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Certain local authorities claimed that they were doing this. That is why one of them made a profit of £4,000 in a year through employing workers on sustenance all the time. That is why one local authority, which previously employed a big permanent staff, was able to reduce that staff to two.

Mr. Doney: Were there not several local authorities to which my remarks could apply?

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Some did attempt to assist the Government. I have taken out the percentages of the monetary contributions which the local authorities added to the funds made available by the Government, and in no case do these percentages look well. It was nearly time we altered the system. If we take 45 men from a local governing body and if sustenance is then only paid for 35, it means that the local governing body that is deprived of the right to work the men on the sustenance provided by the Government, are employing ten men at full wages.

Mr. Doney: Quite a number did exploit the system.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: To the objection raised by certain local authorities against the withdrawal of the sustenance a general reply was given, that if they had work to perform, they would have to do it at arbitration award rates by employing the men at those rates. I say to the credit of local governing bodies that, now things have settled down since the withdrawal of the men, they are working in harmony with the department, and are doing

their share in tackling the big problem of unemployment that lies ahead of us. Shortly after assuming office I visited a number of places where relief work was being carried out, and looked around with a view to starting other relief works. The department was not too well treated by the retiring Minister. A large number of men were due to go out of employment almost immediately after the present Government took office. Little or no provision was made for their absorption in other avenues of employment. When the previous Government left office we had to find out what could be done to prevent that large number of men from returning direct to sustenance. With the exception of 380, we were able to keep them in employment. The 380 had to return to sustenance and gradually we have had to work up from that position. Complaints were made by different people employed at piece work rates on clearing and drainage operations. I was one of a deputation which waited on the Leader of the Opposition, then Minister for Lands. We asked that an appeal board should be appointed to which those who were dissatisfied with the price fixed for the work might present their case. I have since given effect to that request. An appeal board has been appointed, consisting of a representative of the Government, and a nominee from the men employed at the centre concerned. The two representatives have to appoint a chairman upon whom they can mutually agree. If they cannot agree upon a chairman, the Minister is called upon to appoint one. I am pleased to say that although the board has heard numerous cases in different centres, and different chairmen have presided, not on one occasion have I been called upon to choose the chairman. The two representatives have always been in accord on that subject. To provide against any cessation of work, provision has been made whereby the decision of the board will be retrospective to the date when the appeal was lodged. If the cause of the stoppage is removed, it is much easier to deal adequately with any situation that may arise. While the cause remains, a different attitude has to be adopted. The decisions of the board have been honoured by the Government. I do not expect the board will be overworked in the future. This tribunal was appointed very much in accordance with Section 66 of the Railways Act. It is akin to the board in the formation of which I took a fairly prominent part when attached to the railway

service myself. For many years there was great discontent in the railways concerning the punishments inflicted upon employees. That led to the loss of a good deal of time on the part of the union and Government representatives owing to the number of conferences that had to take place. There were constant arguments concerning whether the determinations arrived at were right or wrong. When the board was first asked for, the request was made that it should consist of a representative of the men and one of the Commissioner of Railways, with a magistrate as an independent chairman. We were told that if such a board was appointed, we should be taking the administration of the railways out of the hands of the officers responsible for it.

Mr. Latham: I did not tell you that when you asked me.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I did not ask the hon. member.

Mr. Latham: You infer that you asked me about the appointment of the board.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Apparently the hon. member was asleep. I am now dealing with another aspect of the case.

Mr. Latham: You suggested that I raised an objection.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I am dealing with the question of the Railway Appeal Board.

Mr. Latham: But you said "at that time," suggesting, of course, that I was responsible.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: At the time I was speaking of, the hon. member had not appeared on the political horizon.

Mr. Latham: Why refer to "that time"?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I can only use ordinary language; it is not my province to teach the Leader of the Opposition to understand what it means. The Railway Appeal Board at the commencement of its career was kept busy. If I remind hon. members that there are 8,000 or 9,000 members of the railway service, they will readily realise why the board was kept busy. After the lapse of some little time, however, the business of the board fell to such an extent that it was not necessary for it to meet on an average more than once in three weeks. That was brought about by the fact that those in authority knew their decisions could be subjected to review, and

consequently they were more disposed to act reasonably than if they were clothed with definite, final and arbitrary authority. The same thing applies to this board. Since its establishment, it has been kept busy, but I expect that later on its activities will decrease. Ultimately there will be very little if any, work for it to perform. That is because those who have to make decisions know that their decisions are subject to review and the tendency will be for them to do the right thing.

Mr. Latham: Can you say whether prices have been put up on account of those references?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: In some instances they have been put up a fair amount. I do not know what the highest amount is. The hon. member will know that the Manjimup prices were increased before the board was appointed. At Sabina Vale there were increases in prices ranging from 5s. to 30s. I speak subject to correction, but I do not think there is one case where the increase then was more than 30s.

Mr. Piesse: Has the board sat at Frankland River?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. It commenced sitting there last Tuesday, and finished yesterday.

Mr. Piesse: Was there an additional board for the settlement of the Frankland River dispute?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: There was one board to settle that matter. The point is, however, that it rests with the men to appoint their representative.

Mr. Piesse: Previously the Government were represented by the foreman of each camp.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: What does the hon. member mean by "previously"?

Mr. Piesse: Previously to the appointment of this board.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The board has to make a determination.

Mr. Piesse: Does the board determine the prices?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Under the present system, the foremen may and sometimes do make the determination, which stands unless the person who has to do the work is discontented with the price fixed. If he is, he lodges an appeal, which comes before the board. The board's determination operates from the date the appeal

was lodged. The Government, of course, pay the expenses of their representative on the board and also for the time of the men's representative on the board. The men's representative is paid for the actual time he is engaged upon board matters. I am hopeful that the board will continue to function so far as those works are concerned, in view of the greater content that has manifested itself since its appointment. I know it is the desire of members that we should get reasonable service from the people whom we employ and that if we can make them contented, that is what we should do. The Government have also, in accordance with the promise they made to the people, instituted a system of part full-time employment. The effect of the alteration is making itself felt in the figures which I have been able to present to the House. As I have said, in September, 1932, there were over 7,000 families on sustenance. This month there are 3,730 families on sustenance. The part full-time employment to which I refer is regulated according to the domestic responsibilities of the man. In the early stages of the scheme I was desirous of making no distinction between married and single men. I desired to treat the single man as a potential married man and to bring him under the full-time provisions also. Lack of money, however, prevented me from proceeding very far in that direction, but the rate for the single man was increased from 25s. to 30s. in order to give him some relief. With regard to the married men, they previously got four weeks on full time and then had to stand down for a period on sustenance which varied in accordance with the number of children a man had to support. I was later able to alter that arrangement by providing that the married man, instead of standing down for the period he would otherwise have stood down on sustenance, would be able to earn that sustenance before he left the job. That accomplished two things. First, there was a return for the money spent and, secondly, the man received money instead of being given sustenance orders. Formerly the married man with four or five children was booked to work for four weeks at full rates and then stood down for three weeks. Now he works for six weeks and stands down one week. Hon. members will concede that even in normal times a man who was employed casually would be very fortunate if,

throughout the whole year, he got six weeks' work out of every seven. He is getting now as much as he got even in normal times. Take the building trade, for instance. In the Arbitration Court the argument was adduced that the men engaged in that trade should receive a higher rate of pay on account of the casual nature of their work. They might be working on a job for six or seven weeks, and then be out of employment for some weeks before securing work again. To a very large extent, therefore, we have solved the problem of providing for the people with four or more children.

Mr. Latham: Are they better off than they were under the scheme of 7s. per unit?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, out of all knowledge.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That only applies to the maximum number of children.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It applies to every married man, with one, two or more children. The fact that these men are permitted to work for their sustenance during the period when otherwise they would have been stood down, involves the Government in additional expense, because if the men work for a calendar month they are entitled to a day's holiday pay. The effect of their working for the additional two weeks for which formerly they would have been stood down means that they are entitled to pro rata holiday pay for that period. In some cases, their holiday pay amounts to a day and a half. I would also point out that the four weeks full time is not paid for merely at the basic wage rate; in addition, the men are paid their respective margins and camp allowance. If a man's margin is 2s., 3s., or 4s., per day, he gets four weeks at the basic wage, in addition to his margin, while on top of that he gets a camp allowance and holiday pay, which in the average case amounts to a day and a half. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) asked me if this scheme were better for the man with a few children. It is.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I mentioned two children.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: One, two or three children. We have not yet reached the goal at which we are aiming. I say candidly that we should not rest content, nor for that matter should any other country, until we can give our men full-time

employment. The sooner we can get our people back to full-time employment, the better it will be for everyone, because members, as they have been going about their constituencies upon their Parliamentary duties, must have had the same experience as I have had. They must have gone into the homes of the people and noticed, as I have noticed in East Perth, that each week some additional article has disappeared. That has taken place to a large extent in many homes throughout the State. If we can restore normal purchasing power to those people, even though they should receive a surplus over the basic rate for full time employment, it will take those individuals years to replace the goods that have been disposed of. While the Government have considerably improved the position, there are yet 3,700 men who are on sustenance and their interests have to be attended to. When we can get those men with their foot on the first rung of the ladder, we will then be able to take steps to help the others ahead a little further. It will be agreed that those who should receive first attention are those who have not yet had any opportunity to better their position. Bearing that in mind, the Government are now giving consideration to the position of the 3,700 men to whom I have referred. Members will be pleased to know that the Government policy has had the effect of enabling the Minister in control to close down Blackboy camp. Although inaugurated three and a half years ago, at the time it was closed there were still in residence some who had been sent there at the inception. In other words, they witnessed the birth and were present at the obsequies. The trouble regarding Blackboy was the tendency to collect there a number of men who developed the idea that they were at an absolute dead-end from the standpoint of their existence. Some of them were quite able to work, but through having been out of employment for so long, had become affected by the psychology necessarily created by the atmosphere of such an institution, and had lost any idea of ever again working. Nevertheless, some of them were desirous of being considered when pick-ups were called. I visited the camp shortly after taking office, and I promised that they would be considered in future pick-ups. I am pleased to be able to announce that the camp, which was costing the Government between 14s. and 15s.

a head per week for every inmate, has now been closed down.

Mr. Latham: What have you done with the inmates?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: With the exception of few who have had to remain on ticket on account of ill-health—two of them were found to be suffering from incurable growths—employment has been found for them. On account of the inability of a proportion of the men to keep up with the average worker in employment the Government have made funds available to enable the land adjacent to the Wooroloo Sanatorium to be cleared in the hope of making the sanatorium self-contained with regard to necessary products. In addition, various departments require posts for one purpose or another, and it is expected that the men employed on this work will be able to provide those posts.

Mr. Latham: So it is really costing you more than before, except that you will get something for the money expended.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: These men will be able to earn 30s. per week per head, and it will certainly cost more from that standpoint.

Mr. Doney: But you think you will get value for the money.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: There is no doubt about that. The great object I have in view, however, is that the work will inculcate in the minds of these men the understanding that they are not down and out for all time.

Mr. Griffiths: You want to restore their morale.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. I expect that before the work they are engaged upon is finished, a large proportion of the men—there are 51 from Blackboy and 30 from the Immigrants' Home at Fremantle—will have had an opportunity to ascertain for themselves that they are still able to work, that they will drift away, and become occupied in farming operations.

Mr. Latham: Are they engaged in new clearing at Wooroloo?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. I anticipate that those men will be absorbed into private employment gradually. I know that is what members desire, because these men are amongst those who gained the impression that they were no longer suitable for work. Blackboy camp, in the three and a half years it was in

existence, cost the State £121,375, and while it was open 4,735 men passed through it. To give the Committee an idea of the magnitude of the work there, the meals served during that period totalled approximately 2,500,000. There are still five men employed at Blackboy in cleaning up the property prior to the Government handing it back to the military authorities. One phase of the closing of Blackboy Camp that did not give me satisfaction was the fact that a staff had been created there consisting of 30 men. An endeavour, successful in most instances, has been made to find employment for those men elsewhere. Two of the officers only were under the Public Service Act. One has been absorbed in another department, and Mr. Pilkington, who was in charge of the camp, has been given control of the men employed on the Wooroloo Sanatorium farm land. Members will be pleased to know that the Immigrants' Home at Fremantle has at last been closed. The Home has housed 290 men, and, as at Blackboy, they included some who could not keep up with the average worker in employment. As I have already indicated, 30 of them have been employed in the clearing operations at Wooroloo. The Immigrants' Home cost the Government £7,826, and 1,380 men received relief there. The cost I have given does not represent the full expenditure, because fortunately at Fremantle a public spirited committee, led by the Rev. E. H. O. Nye, have done their best to provide relief for the men at the port. The effect of their work is manifest in the figures available, which show that while the cost per head of maintenance for men at Blackboy was between 14s. and 15s. per week, the necessary provision for the men at Fremantle amounted to 6s. per head. Members will agree that the thanks of the Government and of the State are due to the Committee for doing such splendid work at Fremantle, and I take this opportunity personally to indicate my appreciation of their efforts.

Mr. Marshall: Fremantle is a fine little place.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Let us hope that it will be a better little place as a result of the closing down of the Immigrants' Home. If the men are placed in employment, and we do away with the atmosphere that necessarily surrounds such institutions as those I have mentioned, it will be to the benefit of all concerned. It

will be admitted generally, even if member's representations have not met with the satisfaction desired, that the staff of the Employment Department at Marquis-street and at the head office comprise very capable officers, who are performing what might be termed a very unsavoury task in an exceedingly efficient manner. As members will see by the Estimates, when the present-day abnormal conditions cease, and the position becomes stationary, it will be necessary to classify the staff. That question arose shortly after I assumed office, but I postponed any definite consideration of the request until such time as we can determine what the normal work of the office will be. The passing phase of to-day does not permit one to judge what the ultimate position will be. In order to relieve the position regarding sustenance workers, the Government made available £60,000 to carry out the renovation of public buildings. Those who have travelled around the country, and have visited the public buildings scattered throughout the State, will admit it is time that something was done along those lines.

Mr. Doney: Is that money to be spent in the country districts as well as in the city?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, and the Government's decision may necessitate the payment of additional sums subsequently. Members themselves are enjoying the benefit of a small proportion of that expenditure, because of the alterations taking place at Parliament House. The Government are engaged in extending the women's portion of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, by the erection of buildings at a cost of over £10,000. That in itself is having an effect regarding the absorption of men from the ranks of the unemployed.

Mr. Latham: When you finish that, you ought to build a new ward at the King Edward Memorial Hospital.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Leader of the Opposition will recollect that the Minister for Health the other day announced that he was giving attention to that. When the Minister for Health makes up his mind to do something in the interests of the people, he takes a lot of stopping.

Mr. Latham: You are all making up your minds in that regard, and I am wondering which of you is going to win.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Well, probably that is preferable to the chaos that might result if none of the Ministers was making up his mind in that way. The Government will relieve the unemployment position by attending to belated railway repairs. The Minister for Railways, when dealing with his Estimates, will be able to tell the Committee that the Government have made available for that purpose a quarter of a million of money.

Mr. Latham: Is that for rolling stock, or for cutting down those embankments that the trains have been running over for more than a quarter of a century?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: And running over all the time the hon. member was a member of the Cabinet of the day.

Mr. Latham: And all the time that your Government were in office with plenty of money to spend.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The money will be devoted to, amongst other things, regrading the Kellerberrin embankment and also the Hines Hill embankment.

Mr. Latham: What about the Subiaco embankment?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: That will be attended to in its turn. The Minister for Railways is making a distinct move, not only in respect of the department handling the goods it will have to handle, but also in respect of providing work for men out of employment. The Minister for Mines has already pointed to the number of men the Government placed under the prospecting scheme. Also we have been able to assist some municipalities with schemes they had in mind, but which they were not able to finance. For instance, there is being constructed at Collie a water scheme to cost £36,000. Ultimately, that will be the financial responsibility of the Collie municipality. In addition there is a fair number of men employed on the Canning reservoir, on sewerage and drainage, and on harbour and river improvements, and we hope in the near future to have a number employed on the Esperance jetty. Certain land works will have to be attended to in the approaches to the new jetty, and shortly we shall be able to make a definite start on the construction of the jetty itself. Attention has also been given to other means by which men can be usefully employed, from the point of view of the Government. The Leader of the Op-

position will know of the existence of the cattle wasting disease in the Denmark district. It has been reported to us that the disease has been more prevalent on the higher lands, and the experts advise that the gullies should be cleared and laid down in pasture, thus minimising the disease by allowing the cattle to graze over mixed country. We are employing at present a number of single men so as to make that land useful for those who require it. Also we are using a number of men for reconditioning Agricultural Bank holdings in the South-West. The work of those men will make itself manifest in the improving of the assets of the State.

Mr. Latham: Will the cost be charged against the blocks?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No, it is being charged up to the land development scheme.

Mr. Latham: It should be charged against the blocks.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Ultimately, it will be.

Mr. Ferguson: Does that apply only to the South-West?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Before applying it elsewhere, we want to see what the cost will be. It is better to spend money in that way, improving the assets of the State, than to find sustenance for men doing nothing at all.

Mr. Latham: But in that way you are spending twice the amount.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No, we are not.

Mr. Ferguson: In the end it will mean that you will have to write down the valuations.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I repeat that it is better to spend money in improving the State's assets than to give away money for nothing.

Mr. Latham: What does it matter? If you are getting a job done for £1 which is worth only 10s.—in the long run it boils down to the same thing.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not see it in the same light. Taking the hon. member's own illustration, not only would we be 10s. better off from the State's point of view, but it means restoring men's independence by giving them work instead of charity. We are providing employment and getting the work done. Attention is being given to the clearing of occupied proper-

ties to bring them earlier into productivity, so that the State shall benefit.

Mr. Seward: Is that new land?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:

No, abandoned blocks and also occupied blocks. If the State is charged with the responsibility of assisting settlers on holdings until they reach productivity, and if the State, by expending money can hasten that end, there will be a lesser period during which the State will have to assist those people who are reaching the stage of productivity. The Minister for Lands will give almost immediate attention to that, and it may mean that men engaged on certain works not of a reproductive character will be taken off those works and utilised in this new work, which will be of greater benefit to the State. In the absorption of both married men and single men, the present position is very satisfactory. In November of last year the number of men on sustenance was 5,891, whereas on the 4th November of this year it was 3,413, or a reduction of 2,478. The total cost of sustenance for the week ended the 5th November, 1932, was £5,961, and for the week ended 4th November, 1933, it was £4,078, or a reduction of £1,883.

Mr. Doney: But that was not money saved, for you exchanged sustenance men at a low rate, and put them at work at a much higher rate.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:

Not necessarily. There has been a bigger development than that. As a matter of fact, the total amount provided for fell by £1,694. That is to say, the men went off both sustenance and Government work. And from that there has to be deducted the number of men placed under the prospecting scheme, of which these figures take no cognizance. Shortly after accepting office, I communicated with representatives of every section of the community and, as the result of the response given to the invitations I issued, there was constituted the Economic Council. In some places the constituting of that council was criticised. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition was altogether free from indulging in such criticism.

Mr. Latham: Every word uttered by me on that subject has been uttered in the House, and I have never said anything at all about its constitution.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:
I was referring to the council having been

constituted. The Leader of the Opposition said it was simply a device by which the Minister was transferring his responsibilities.

Mr. Latham: And I believe that, even now.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:
One cannot help the hon. member's beliefs.

Mr. Latham: I am entitled to them.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:
The hon. member is.

Mr. Marshall: And no one else wants them.

Mr. Latham: And I will not take yours, for they are very crooked.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:
The constituting of the Economic Council was based on the principle which has actuated me in whatever I have been able to do in the public life of this community, based on the idea of getting all sections of the community to confer and consider the difficulties with which they are faced. I have freely expressed the opinion outside the House that if we could adopt a system under which representative men and women could confer to determine where the difficulties actually lay, it would be calculated to secure more adjustments of difficulties than would be likely if the two sides took separate encampments and cockshied at each other from a distance. I preached that doctrine long before I entered the House. The lesson of the big industrial upheaval in New South Wales in 1917, where I represented the State, indicated to me and those with whom I was associated the absolute necessity for both parties conferring if progress was to be accomplished. In this State the system has been adopted by the Australian Labour Party and the Employers' Federation and is in contradistinction to the system adopted in other States. In other States upheavals have occurred for years and the parties have been at each other's throats, in some instances, for months. Here the experience has been the reverse. When people ask why we have been free from major industrial disturbances as compared with the other States, the answer is because we have adopted a system of collective bargaining between the Australian Labour Federation, representing unions of workers, and the Employers Federation, representing the employers. By that policy we have been able to minimise the number of stoppages in industry.

Mr. Latham: It has been a good idea at Collic.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It has, even though the hon. member's remark was made sarcastically.

Mr. Latham: Who said it was made sarcastically?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I assume that it was.

Mr. Latham: You cannot see anything from a fair standpoint.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If the hon. member did not intend it sarcastically, I am sorry, because I was going to point out that it is an actual fact.

Mr. Latham: I am satisfied that one should not open one's mouth when you are talking.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Perhaps not.

Mr. Latham: Or listen to much of the stuff you are putting up.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If that is so, there is room for the hon. member outside.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Even at Collie, the system has proved very successful. If members carry their minds back a little, they will realise that weekly disturbances occurred in Collie until arrangements were made between the Collie Miners' Union, the Loco. Drivers' Union and the A.L.P. under which disputes were referred to the three bodies before drastic action was taken. Although that system may have been departed from during recent disturbances, it does not alter the fact that the system has been beneficial to Collie as well as to other parts of the State. The constitution of the Economic Council is based on the same principle. When I was getting the council constituted, I endeavoured to have every section of the community represented. We have representatives of the Chamber of Manufactures, Chamber of Commerce, Primary Producers' Association, mining industry, Institute of Architects and Engineers, local governing bodies, trades halls, Labour Women's Organisations, National Council of Women, Women's Economic Council, Australian Workers and Railway Unions, Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Carpenters and Joiners, Employers' Federation, State Shipping Service, Metropolitan Markets, Builders and Contractors' Association, Pastoralists Association, and Boys' Employment League, and the Superintendent of Technical Training. If members had an opportunity to attend the

meetings of the Economic Council they would appreciate the work that men and women are performing in an honorary capacity to solve the problems confronting the State and could not fail to be impressed with the fact that if the co-operation of the people can be enlisted to attain a certain objective, success is assured. As Minister in control of the department, I wish to say a word in praise of the work of the Economic Council. The members are giving their attention sometimes weekly, some on the executive daily, to assist in the work, and when I hear of the council being criticised, as a system by which the Minister transfers his responsibilities to others, I am not at all concerned. I keep my eye on the objective, and if we can attain it by securing the co-operation of every section of the community, I shall feel that I have accomplished something toward placing back in employment people who for so long have been without work. The Economic Council recommended to the Government that £20,000 should be made available in the form of small loans to private people to enable them to extend, renovate, or paint their homes. The Government readily adopted the proposal, the money has been made available and to date close on 100 applications have been received from persons desirous of securing loans. The money will be made available at five per cent interest. The maximum amount to be granted to any individual is £300. If later it is necessary to make an additional amount available, the Government will favourably consider the proposal.

Mr. Piesse: Will that scheme of loans be extended to country districts?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes; applications are being received from all over the State.

Mr. Ferguson: Will any security be given for a loan?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, the property itself.

Mr. Doney: A new mortgage will be necessary in each instance, no matter how small the sum.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes.

Mr. Doney: It would have to be so.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: As a result of the council's activities, the Building Trades Congress has been re-established, and reports that there is now decidedly more activity in the building

trades than since the end of 1929. Attention has been given to the matter of encouraging the purchase of local products. A definite effort has been made to direct the attention of the people to the need for buying local goods. Various exhibitions have been held, culminating in an exhibition at Government House Ballroom, which some members viewed. Some 70,000 adults attended, and arrangements were made for all school children between Armadale, Fremantle and Midland Junction to be franked over the tramways and railways to witness the exhibition. The idea was that if we could take the child and mould its opinions on such a question, we would not have to spend much money to spread the gospel of local buying at a later period in life. It was arranged for the children to write essays on their impressions of the exhibition and I have no doubt that their visit to the exhibition will ultimately prove of considerable benefit to local manufacturers.

Mr. Griffiths: Is not the exhibition to be repeated at Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, arrangements are being made now. Of course it is badly needed there. The position regarding freight rates over the Trans-line is difficult, but difficulties are created only to be overcome. Arrangements are being made to secure the Kalgoorlie Town Hall for the exhibition, which will be opened, I think, on the 25th November. Much preliminary work is necessary, and I am arranging for representatives of the Economic Council to go to Kalgoorlie in advance and attend to requirements.

Mr. Doney: If you wish to do much good, side by side with that should go a reduction in freights between here and Kalgoorlie.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If the hon. member analysed the rail freights, he would find that they did not constitute the difficulty.

Mr. Doney: Not the main obstacle of goods coming from the other side in increasing quantities to Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Take potatoes forwarded from Burekup to Kalgoorlie: if the Commissioner of Railways carried them free of charge it would not be possible to sell them as cheaply as potatoes brought from the Eastern States. That is a peculiarity of the position. We have had similar experience with other commodities in

other parts of the State. The explanation is that any price is a good price for excess commodities.

Mr. Ferguson: We send a lot of potatoes to the Eastern States for sale.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: That is so in certain seasons.

Mr. Ferguson: It is of no use hanging on to perishable products.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: That is so. Investigations are being made with a view to relieving local governing bodies of a portion of the interest burden by consolidating the loans contracted by them. If an agreement could be reached, and if the interest rate on the £2,000,000 borrowed by metropolitan local authorities could be fixed at four per cent., instead of having the various rates now ruling, the annual saving to the ratepayers would be more than £20,000. That amount would meet interest charges on an additional loan of £500,000 if it were found necessary to raise that amount to undertake further work. Negotiations are taking place with the Perth City Council concerning a general housing scheme, and the council have expressed their willingness to make certain land available for the purpose. Further information on this matter will be given later.

Mr. Sampson: Is anything being done in the way of reviewing the railway freights from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie in order to enable Western Australian products to compete with Eastern Australian products?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I have already mentioned in reply to the member for Williams-Narrogin that from superficial appearances, the freights are not the right starting point. As I have explained, if some of the commodities for which we wish to establish a market in Kalgoorlie were carried free of charge, they could not compete with the goods being transported over the Trans. line.

Mr. Sampson: Is that the position generally?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No, but it applies to a large number of commodities. The freight from the other side is such that, combined with the fact that excess goods are being cleared at any price, the position is difficult to cope with. However, we hope to be able to deal with the matter.

Mr. Sampson: It is a serious position.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The opportunity has been taken to get into touch with farmers with a view to seeing that the Government scheme of relief works does not prevent them from garnering their harvest. Complaints have been received that the requisite labour is not available. Following upon the despatch of a number of letters to farmers, we have had a good response at the Labour Bureau. It was pointed out to them that if they applied to the bureau they would save the payment of a fare by the person who obtained the job, and in some cases save themselves from paying a portion of it. In one fortnight we received 130 applications, and were able to fill 120 vacancies. The response last week was not so good. The applications had come in, but the men were not offering for the positions. When a farmer relies upon us to send along a man who has a knowledge of farming work, we do not want to let him down. We anticipate that when some of the works on which a number of men are now engaged come to an end, particularly those in agricultural centres, the difficulty of the shortage of the right kind of men will be overcome.

Mr. Doney: Is that why you have ceased giving relief or sustenance to new single men?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: We are offering them employment instead. I hope we shall be able to continue doing so. It is infinitely better to offer work than to offer sustenance.

Mr. Doney: Decidedly so.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Council of Industrial Development has carried out a very valuable work, particularly in the investigations that have been conducted into ways and means of increasing the output of our industrial concerns. I should like to pay a tribute to the women's section of the Economic Council. This section, headed by the Lady Mayoress, has been very active in the city shops. They have been able to enlist the support of the shopkeepers. The average man who goes into a shop to purchase a pair of boots in most cases buys the first thing he is offered. With women it is different. They will often ransack a shop before they are satisfied. Certain tests have been carried out. The first two, three or four articles that have been offered to the purchaser, particularly in the boot line, have been found to be imported. We are endeavouring to alter that with the co-

operation of the shopkeeper and his assistants. We are trying to arrange that the first, second, third and fourth items offered are of local production, so that if the purchaser wants an imported article, he must ask for it. If this is put into practice in a universal way, the sale of local products will enormously expand. The women's section of the Economic Council is indeed performing a fine work for the Government. They organised a local products bazaar to finalise the exhibition in the Government House ballroom. It was a brilliant success. The Labour Bureau exists for the purpose of placing people in employment, and bringing the person who wants the employee and the employee himself into association with each other. Besides the head office agencies, branches are established at Fremantle and Guildford, and at all country centres, where a Government official is available. Police officers, stationmasters and Agricultural Bank officials act for the bureau when required. There is also a branch in Perth which caters entirely for women. I have some particulars of the applications that have been received for work. They are as follows:—

Male applications — 1933, 20,878; 1932, 25,288; 1931, 28,009.

Engagements—1933, 4,445; 1932, 4,133; 1931, 4,297.

Number of fares advanced—1933, 4,591; 1932, 4,266; 1931, 4,409.

Cost of fares advanced—1933, £5,291; 1932, £5,189; 1931, £5,681.

Refunds collected—1933, £4,122; 1932, £3,351; 1931, £3,128.

Women's Branch: Applications, 1933, 1,546; engagements, 1933, 867.

The Council of Industrial Development consists of the Under Secretary for Mines (Mr. Calanchini), the Under Treasurer (Mr. Berkeley), and the Secretary for the Child Welfare Department (Mr. H. Brodribb). Their functions are to consider applications made to the Government for financial aid for the establishment of secondary industries, and to assist in the development and extension of existing industries. It is considered in some quarters that the main function of this body is to finance all undertakings, irrespective of their commercial possibilities for the security offered. This, of course, is not the policy. Owing to the financial position, their activities in this direction have been curtailed. There is a greater and more profitable field of activity, namely the dissemination of propaganda for

the encouragement of the use of local products. The council, in conjunction with the Minister and the Chief Inspector of Factories, have directed considerable attention to this avenue. Associated with this particular activity has also been the Economic Council. Amongst the activities which come under my department is the administration of the State Manufacturers Description Act of 1931. This provides for the marking of goods manufactured locally with the State mark. It is administered under the Council of Industrial Development in conjunction with the Chief Inspector of Factories. Generally speaking, manufacturers have taken advantage of this legislation, and have applied for authority to use the State mark. I thank members for their patient hearing. They will realise that the problem of finding employment for our people must of necessity be foremost amongst those subjects that are receiving attention at the hands of the Government. I am adopting the attitude I took up when I first became Minister for Employment, that the problem of placing our people back into work is not a party one, and is above party politics. The closest co-operation of every section of the community is required. Through the council I have constituted I have endeavoured to secure the co-operation of all sections of the community, and I am pleased to say that they have loyally responded to the call. I believe that the activities of the Government in this direction will, with the assistance of those loyal citizens who are playing so important a part, ultimately be crowned with success, and that we shall thus arrive at the goal which all members of this Chamber must earnestly desire to reach.

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put, and the Committee divided.

The CHAIRMAN: I nominate Mr. Doney as teller for the ayes, and Mr. Clothier as teller for the Noes.

Mr. DONEY: I should point out, Mr. Chairman, that I recall I am paired with the Minister for Works. Have I leave to withdraw from the Chamber?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot withdraw now, as he has been named as teller for the ayes.

Mr. DONEY: I thought I should draw your attention to the matter, Mr. Chairman.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	..	18

Majority against 3

AYES.

Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Seward
Mr. McDonald	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McLarty	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. J. T. Mann	Mr. Doney
Mr. North	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. P. C. L. Smith
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Troy
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Moloney	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munle	Mr. Clothier
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Welsh	Miss Holman
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Wilson

Motion thus negatived.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [9.15]: It was out of consideration for the Minister that I moved progress. He looked rather weary, and I thought he would appreciate a rest. Whilst members may not agree with everything that the Minister has submitted to them, they must nevertheless, be indebted to him for some very interesting data which he has supplied while speaking on his Estimates. It is, of course, much easier to criticise the Minister than actually to carry out his work, but still that will not, I imagine, deter us from making some mild criticism. For instance, the Minister gave us quite a number of figures showing the men employed during the term of the previous Government and during his term of office, but he did not give us what would have been rather more interesting, namely, a tabulated statement showing the cost per annum while the previous Government were in power, and the cost since the present Government assumed office. Neither did the Minister give us a comparison between the number of unemployed and the expenditure in connection with them in the Eastern States and in this State. Again, figures pertaining to the prospecting scheme should have been given with the Minister's estimates if we are to have a correct basis of comparison. It is but fair that I should compliment the Min-

ister upon the courage with which he has administered a difficult and important department, and upon the impartiality of his treatment of the different sections of the community who bring their troubles to him for solution. The Minister's judgments and conclusions do not always seem to me to be correct, but the House will agree that, right or wrong, he at least is bold enough to carry them into effect. I believe it to be generally recognised—and recognised by the Minister himself—that in one direction he has been distinctly fortunate, in that when he assumed control of his department he found it in charge of carefully chosen, energetic, sympathetic, and common-sense men. He found the department was running very smoothly indeed, and that it was giving an astonishing amount of satisfaction not only to the country generally, but also to the unemployed men, who are of course those principally concerned. Therefore, it is correct to say that one of the Minister's principal concerns was just to keep well oiled the machinery that he found already installed by his predecessor. I would add, but only for the purpose of comparison, that the previous Government can certainly claim that during its three years tenure of office our unemployed were paid better wages, were under better conditions, suffered less, were less discontented, and certainly had a far saner mental outlook than the unemployed in the other Australian States. To my own knowledge, the Minister who preceded the present one certainly did make every endeavour to give the unemployed a square deal, and it is very pleasing to admit that the unemployed themselves gave the Government a square deal in return. So far as the restrictions imposed by his party's politics have allowed him, the present Minister has certainly made good use of the legacy left to him. There is one phase of the unemployment problem in respect to which I certainly do not see eye to eye with the Minister, and that is his big building programme in Perth. Our friends opposite seem to be very keen indeed on adding to the beauty and convenience of the capital city. For that matter, so am I, but only at the right time and in the right circumstances, and the right circumstances certainly are not existing just now. Any job that tends to create employment will have my support, provided it is proceeded with

in the order of its urgency from the point of view of reproductivity. Of course, if adding to the beauty and convenience of Perth and its suburbs is regarded as urgent and necessary work, I have nothing more to say, except perhaps to add that if it really be so, we cannot be as badly off in Western Australia as I had imagined. In any case, if there is money available, the Government might consider the advisability of reconditioning the securities of the Agricultural Bank in country areas, repairing or building new roads to sidings in isolated areas, 40, 60 or 70 miles from the railway, or in reconditioning wells on the stock route, or constructing wells and dams in agricultural areas, or even perhaps inaugurating a wire netting campaign, such as the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) pleaded for the other night, or in providing food for destitute farmers, or in seeking to make good all the wastage and decay that has been taking place during recent times. If the Government are not prepared to do that, perhaps they will utilise the money in opening new country schools, or repairing old country schools, or repairing or adding to hospitals in the city or in the country. To my mind, the only thing that can lead to a general revival in the building trade is a natural demand for dwelling houses, offices, and factories, based upon their actual scarcity. That favourable condition certainly does not exist to-day. I cannot see that the improvement in the building trade which has been so favourably commented upon by the Minister will have any permanent good effect, although in that regard I hope I am making a mistake.

The Minister for Employment: There is no doubt about it. At the present time, one finds three families are living in the same house.

Mr. Latham: There are many empty houses to-day.

Mr. DONEY: I certainly hope the Minister is right.

Mr. Latham: Three families are living in the one house because they have not the money to pay the rent for separate houses.

The Minister for Employment: That is why we are endeavouring to restore their purchasing power. When that is done they will be able to build houses for themselves.

Mr. DONEY: When passing down the principal streets of the city and the suburbs, one finds many dwelling houses, offices, and factories unoccupied. Until they are let, it is not much use talking about a sound revival in the building trade.

Mr. Latham: The Government's policy is a topsy-turvy one, of course.

Mr. DONEY: Before talking of a building revival, there must first be a natural demand for housing accommodation.

The Minister for Mines: Do not you think there is a demand for houses in the metropolitan area?

Mr. DONEY: If there is, I am not aware of it. Surely the Minister must have noticed a large number of dwelling houses and offices still empty.

The Minister for Mines: I know there is a fair number of offices vacant, but not too many dwelling houses. Heavy rents are being asked for the dwelling houses that are empty, rents that the people cannot afford to pay.

Mr. DONEY: It is rather stupid on the part of owners of houses in these times to ask for big rents. If more houses and offices are put up, that can only have the effect of decreasing the rents of existing buildings. In exactly the same way, the only sure indication of progress, as I am sure the Minister will agree, is the return of men to their accustomed occupations, not the mere transfer of men from sustenance to relief work. I am willing to concede, however, that it should be regarded as progress in the Minister's department if more and yet more men are transferred from sustenance to relief work, although that is not to say that any effort on the part of the Minister or of the Government can possibly result in the return of men to their usual occupations.

The Minister for Employment: How are you going to get the men back into their ordinary occupations if they do not perform the work they were usually employed on?

Mr. DONEY: There cannot possibly be work for the men until there is an increase in the State's income, and that can only be brought about by better prices for such of our primary products as we export overseas.

The Minister for Employment: Are we to sit down and do nothing?

Mr. DONEY: No. I compliment the Minister on the efforts he is making. I concede him all that, but I hope he does not expect

to make any great amount of permanent progress until, as I say, the prices for our major primary products are substantially increased.

The Minister for Mines: Not so much of the "major". The goldfields are employing another 3,000 men at present.

Mr. Latham: I think it is a good plan to build the right type of houses on the goldfields, but not to build houses in the metropolitan area.

Mr. DONEY: As there is more work offering on the goldfields, there should be a demand for houses there. Another matter I wish to touch upon is the question of preference to unionists. I do not feel particularly happy in bringing this matter forward, but at least it should be discussed. I am quite prepared to admit that preference to unionists found a definite and prominent place in the election programme of my friends opposite, and I have to admit that they were elected upon that programme, and consequently have a right, not a moral one, but a technical one, to put that programme into effect.

Mr. Latham: They are devoting a great deal of time to it.

Mr. DONEY: I am not disputing that technical right at all, but the Government certainly do not stand on morally sound ground when they impose that principle upon unemployed men who need every penny they can earn, as I am sure the Minister will admit, for food and clothing. I take it, it is conceded that when a man applies for a job, the governing consideration is whether or not he is a member of a recognised union.

The Minister for Mines: That is not so.

Mr. DONEY: I take it he has to be either a member of a recognised union, or else he must express himself as willing, straight away to contribute from his earnings, the fees demanded of him.

Mr. Latham: Many of these men could not find the money necessary to enable them to join the unions and were forced to form the Unemployed Workers' Union.

Mr. DONEY: I am sure the Minister will be in agreement with me when I say that any action of that description by a Government is not an indication of the spirit of liberty and equality, two considerations of which he boasts so frequently. In times like these, I can understand preference being given to married men, particularly those

with large families, to destitute men, and to those who are hungry, but I cannot understand any decent body of men giving preference to a man merely because he has money and is willing to buy a union ticket. To make that a deciding factor is to my mind definitely wrong. In ordinary circumstances, I would not have any objection whatever to unions, because they constitute a necessary and proper means of defence against strong opposing influences. Time was when the worker was right down in the gutter and every passer-by reckoned he had every right to give him a kick. Fortunately, he and others banded themselves together to—

The Minister for Employment: Form trade unions.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know that they did in those days, but the workers formed something closely allied to trade unions. It was not very long before they had raised themselves to the place where they had every right to be—on a level with the employers and able to argue the point with them. That was work quite worth while; of that there is no doubt. I am pleased to recognise that fact; it was merely a matter of fair play. In those days the worker did not get a fair deal and what I am leading up to now is to remind the Minister that there is still a section of the community not in receipt of a fair deal. The Minister knows exactly to what section I refer. To coax a man in a proper way to join a union is quite fair and permissible. On the other hand, to use governmental strength to take advantage of a man's destitution, and force him to contribute to union funds against his will, is, the Committee will agree, an outrage to the rights of the individual. I cannot refer to it in any other term and I am amazed that many who sit on the Government side of the House tolerate the position, as they apparently do. I would also remind the Minister that to sidetrack into the banking accounts of the unions, certain moneys that have been granted specifically for the purpose of alleviating poverty and unemployment is not a practice that commends itself to me, and I know, from conversations I have had with certain members sitting on the Government side of the House, that it does not commend itself to them either. I do not say such an action cannot be defended, but I shall await with interest any explanation the Minister may care to give on that point. In closing my comments—

Mr. Latham: Keep going!

Mr. DONEY: —I merely desire to say that, from the tenor of the Minister's remarks, it is pretty evident that the work associated with his department and especially that relating to the unfortunate females he referred to, is under the control of a Minister who is very sympathetic and a friend to those in whose interest his department was established. I agree with his remarks that the staff in charge of the work—I was amazed to find out how extensive and important that work is and, at times, how unpleasant it can be—are exceedingly efficient, and carry out adequately the duties that fall to their lot.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [9.35]: The Minister for Employment has this evening presented members with facts of the utmost importance. I am assured by several members that they would like an opportunity to speak to the Estimates but are not prepared to do so at once. I ask the Minister to accede to their desires and gracefully assent to their wishes, which I propose to give evidence of when I move, as I do, that progress be reported.

Mr. Latham: You cannot make a speech and then move that progress be reported.

Mr. McDONALD: I was merely prefacing my motion.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot make a speech and then move to report progress.

Mr. McDONALD: Speaking as a legal man, I must confess that I find more formalities that have to be complied with in this House than I have ever been confronted with in any court of law. Frequently we hear references to the formalities of the law courts and the difficulties of procedure. I have certainly found them to exist in Parliament in a greater multiplicity than elsewhere. Dealing with the Minister's speech, I desire to refer to one aspect only. It relates to a matter the Minister did not deal with, but I am sure the subject is ever present in his mind, as it must be in the mind of every member of the House. I refer to the position of younger people with regard to vocational employment. I say that matter is ever present in the mind of every member of the House because it is a subject we are constantly reminded of by our obligation to the community, to do something for the younger folk. It is a nightmare for parents at present. I knew it existed, but

during the recent election campaign, I found that parents were continuously oppressed by the absence of any prospects for the young people who were leaving school, and those up to an age of 21 or 22 years. The parents did not know what to do with them. It is not merely a matter of finding money for their support, but of preventing that moral deterioration that is so apt to set in, especially with young people, when they have no occupation for mind and hands. I recognise the aspect relating to the possibility of increasing the difficulties of securing a livelihood by the elder men who have to provide for their responsibilities. In the case of the rising generation there is a double danger. There is the difficulty arising from inability to secure employment, but there is also the fact that if present conditions continue much longer, the young people may lose the desire for work, and may become permanently lost as valuable members of the community. I fully appreciate the fact that the problem presents difficulties. I realise how the workers who are in employment must feel alarmed at the prospect of younger men coming in and affecting the employment of those who may have large families to support. I notice that the problem has been so serious in Victoria that some of the industrial tribunals there have modified awards or regulations to enable younger people to be admitted, not under the apprenticeship system but under the improver system. I am told that the statistics of our own Arbitration Court disclose a very serious decline in the registration of apprentices. That is quite easy to understand, because employers are reluctant, in the interests of the boys as well as of themselves, to sign contracts covering a period of five years, when they cannot view with certainty the prospect of fulfilling their obligations. In the circumstances, they refrain from employing boys as apprentices because they cannot accept the responsibility attached to long-term contracts.

Mr. Moloney: But that is provided for under the apprenticeship conditions.

Mr. McDONALD: I believe so, to a certain extent. I do not know enough about the position to express an opinion of value to the Committee. The fact remains that there is a paramount obligation on the community to provide opportunities for these younger people. I do not suggest the obligation is to provide means of livelihood, but

rather to give an opportunity to learn some worth-while vocation or trade. It may be that they should be permitted to receive sustenance, and that they should also be allowed to enter industries, factories, and trades in order to employ part of their time in learning something about the trades under conditions that will not enable them to displace existing labour. As the Minister said, difficulties will arise and, as they arise, they have to be overcome. If any difficulty was ever made to be overcome, it is that regarding the vocational training for boys who leave school, so as to enable them to have some occupation or trade of practical value that they can follow up. I am informed that 3,000 young people leave school every year in this State, and if the opportunities for employment are only gradually increased over a period of years, it means they will have no chance to learn trades, and when the time comes for industry to make demands for skilled labour, they will be unprepared and will be thrown on the labour market. In the course of my election campaign in my constituency, which is largely industrial, these problems are seriously present before my constituents, especially those who live north of the railway line. The problem was continuously before me, and the only promise I made during the campaign was that I would urge Parliament, on every opportunity that presented itself to me, to appreciate the importance of providing some means of training for the young people in worth-while occupations. I am well aware that there is nothing new in what I am saying, but it is a problem ever present, and it must have exercised the mind of the Minister as it has the minds of members generally. It is a problem of which we must constantly remind ourselves. Members would be glad if the Minister, when he replies to the debate, would take them into his confidence and give them some idea as to whether a plan is being formulated regarding vocational training for boys, which will not interfere with existing labour. It may be a matter for the Economic Council, but in any event I hope that if possible some plan may be evolved under which we can do more than we are doing now to meet the needs of those 3,000 young people who yearly leave school and are passed on to the employment market.

Mr. SAMPSON: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco) [9.45]: Following on the ably-reasoned speech of the member for West Perth, and the matter referred to by him, the question of improvers, as I interjected, already provision is made in regard to that, and in regard to trade being slack and provision being made for apprentices receiving absolution from those employing them. We find that the system of improvers is a pernicious one. It makes for poor tradesmen, for inefficient, and I do not think that even the member for West Perth desires that inefficient should be brought into being. I have been closely in touch with the matter of apprentices and with vocational training. After the close of the war, numerous men returned who had to be fitted for a trade of some sort. In consequence, vocational training was established, and I plume myself that I did as much, in an honorary capacity, in assisting those men as did any other man in the State, in regard both to theoretical and practical instruction. Of the men put through those vocational schools, many are exceptionally good tradesmen to-day. But the matter of vocational training presents to-day an entirely different aspect. We have to remember that as the result of industry being mechanised, as the result of lack of work, it is almost futile to teach trades to lads who cannot secure work that will enable them to practice the trade they have been taught. There are instances afforded to-day. By virtue of being a member of the Building Trades Apprenticeship Board, I am closely in touch with those engaged in the building trade. During the past few years we have had employers applying to us for suspension of their obligations; and the lads have had to be put aside and go off and obtain work on farms, or go on the dole; and as the result of lack of work lads are now idle after having served two or three years of apprenticeship. They have been compelled, in consequence of their employers' application for suspension, to meet the desires of those employers, and allow them to avoid being mulcted in the payment of apprentices all through the period of the indentures. In the old days the indentures had to be carried on; there was no such thing as suspension, and the employer was liable for payment during the whole period of the indenture. To-day the employer can secure suspension, and so

there is no necessity for the improver system to be introduced. In the Eastern States the improver system has proved an absolute evil, and shoddy work has been the outcome. I agree with the member for West Perth in his desire that something should be done for our rising youth. It behoves the Government to do what they can, and so long as I am a member of the Government party I will endeavour by every means in my power to do all I can, to assist the rising youth. For when all is said and done, they compose those who are to carry on the nation. In a few years all of us here will have passed on, and our froth and bubble will have ceased in oblivion, but the youth will be rising all the time. So we must make provision to give them every facility. It is easy to say that vocational training will fit them to take their places as artisans in the community; but first we must provide the avenues of work, so that work will be available to them. Those lads have been brought into competition with their fathers and their elder brothers, and so a greater degree of competition is in evidence. Even the member for West Perth does not advocate that we should open the gates of the legal profession and bring improvers into that menage.

Mr. Needham: Why restrict it to the legal profession? What about the dentists?

Mr. MOLONEY: I do not care whether it be the legal fraternity, the dental fraternity, or the building fraternity; the first essential is that the members of each of those fraternities shall be competent to carry out the work entrusted to them. The only corollary to the competence of the artisans, is that they shall be able to find work. To-day many of our bricklayers and other artisans in the building trade are working on sustenance. As a result of the Minister's industry and zeal and close application to his department, there is a decided diminution in the number of men unemployed; or at all events, in the relief conditions afforded, men are obtaining a decided improvement on what they were getting previously. I am not satisfied, the Minister is not satisfied, the Government are not satisfied, and indeed the position is as yet far from satisfactory. Still it constitutes a step in the direction we desire to travel. I must pay a tribute to the officers administering unemployment relief. As a private member, I have experienced the greatest courtesy from them on every occa-

sion, and whenever it has been possible for them to ease the rough path of those I have sent along, they have exhibited the utmost courtesy. We have often heard that officials have been callous. Whether it is that with the advent of the Labour Government those officials suddenly have become more solicitous for the welfare of the workers I do not know; but right through the system, perhaps as the result of the eagle eye of the Minister being upon them, those officials are giving excellent service, and very little complaint from the unemployed against the administration of the department is being heard. There are times when we cannot procure the things we require, but that does not alter the fact that to-day the department is being administered in a manner not partial to any particular section. Each member of the community that comes within the ambit of the department receives generous consideration and as much work as the Minister can find for him. I rose to compliment the Minister on the manner in which he has been administering his department. If things continue as they are going, it will not be long before he will be able to say that not only has the Blackboy Hill camp been wiped out, but that he has progressed considerably along the road which the Labour Government desire to traverse.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 14th November, 1933.

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ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills:—

- 1, Police Act Amendment.
- 2, Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment.
- 3, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
- 4, Fruit Cases Act Amendment.
- 5, Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagors' Relief Act Amendment.
- 6, Entertainments Tax Act Amendment.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

As to Procedure—President's Ruling.

The PRESIDENT: I propose at this stage to give my deferred ruling on the points of order raised by Mr. Harris and Mr. Holmes respectively. It is claimed by Mr. Harris that the Bill is one which in paragraph (b) of Clause 3 effects an alteration in the constitution of each House of Parliament, and was, therefore, required by Section 72 of the Constitution Act, 1889, to pass its second and third readings with the concurrence of an absolute majority. To this point I have given long and careful consideration, and feel myself obliged to uphold the objection for the following reasons:—

It is not within my province to decide whether a seat on the Lotteries Commission is, or is not, an office of profit under the Crown, but for the present purpose it must be assumed to be so, for otherwise the provisions of the paragraph mentioned would be meaningless. If, therefore, such a seat is an office of profit, the tenure of it must be a disqualification to a member of Parliament. This disqualification the paragraph seeks to remove, and is, therefore, one which concerns the qualifications of members. But does it follow that, in the words of Section 73 of the Constitution Act, 1889, it "effects an alteration in the constitution of either House of Parliament?" In answering this question, we find a guide in "The Australian States Constitution Act, 1907," and I need not stress the importance of this testimony. The object of this Act of the Imperial Parliament is to lessen the number of Australian Bills which must be reserved for the Royal Assent. Section 2 begins, "There shall be reserved for the signification of His

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