

suggest that copies be made available for people in the industry desirous of having them.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.47 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 11th August, 1925.

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

QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways:—1, What is the estimated consumption in units of electricity for the present financial year in the metropolitan area? 2, What is the minimum point of consumption at which, in the opinion of the Minister and his officers, it would be economically sound to transmit a bulk supply of current from Collie, utilising the East Perth power house merely as a stand-by or to assist in meeting the peak load? 3, How long is it estimated that the construction and installation of the main Collie to Perth high tension scheme, including the provision of a main power house, would take to inaugurate and complete?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 48,000,000 kilowatt hours. 2, The technical considerations are such—in a scheme of the magnitude of generating and transmitting power from Collie—that the point of consumption is not the influencing factor. 3, Three years.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, C.O.D. SYSTEM.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has any report been made by the departmental officers upon the C.O.D. system recently inaugurated? 2, Is it contemplated applying the system to goods traffic? 3, If so, when?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Not for the present. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTION—SWEEPS AND LOTTERIES.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Minister for Justice: 1, How many applications were received between 30th June, 1924, and 30th June, 1925, for permission to run sweeps or lotteries in Western Australia? 2, What were the names of the applicants, and what were the objects for which the money was to be devoted out of the proceeds of such lotteries or sweeps? 3, How many applications were refused? 4, What were the names of the applicants, and the objects of those so refused? 5, How many sweeps or lotteries are being conducted at the present time in this State? 6, What are the names of the applicants, and the objects to which it is proposed to devote the money to be obtained from the sweeps now in operation?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1 to 6, A return will be prepared and laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASE. BELLILUNA COMPANY.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Lands: What were the conditions under which the last 7,000 acres of pastoral country were granted to the Belliluna Pastoral Company?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied: The Belliluna Pastoral Company does not hold any lease of 7,000 acres. The last lease granted to the company on the 14th January, 1924, was 71,680 acres. This is held under the conditions applying to pastoral leases, as prescribed in the Land Act, 1898, and the amendments thereto, particularly Sections 101 and 109a, Subsection (3), of the Compilation of the Land Act, 1898. The rent has been fixed at 5s. per thousand acres per annum, and the lease is subject to re-appraisal in fifteen years.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 6th August.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.37]: I should be failing in my duty if I did not mention the position of the unemployed at present in our midst. Twelve months ago, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, I stated that when the present Government came into power the position of the unemployed was very acute. At present it is more than acute; it is very serious. I am not going to say the Government have not done quite a lot. I know they have some men out at work, and have done more for the unemployed than any previous Government.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The unemployed do not say that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: They have not, however, done as much as they could have done, and there is a lot more they can do. I am going to raise my voice on every occasion until the unemployed are given a chance to work. Some people say that the men out of work are unemployable, but that is not so. At least 98 per cent. of the unemployed in Fremantle are employable, and only too willing to work if they get a chance. I was present the other day when 40 men were picked up for the Dwarda-Narrogin railway, and the officers could have secured another 140 without trouble. I do not believe in the present system. Those unemployed who are on sustenance get the first preference. There are some people who will always rush in and claim sustenance, when they do not deserve it and should not get it.

Mr. Mann: Was not the position at Fremantle due to the shipping trouble?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No. There were unemployed at Fremantle before that, and they will be there for a long time unless something is done. The department find it difficult to differentiate between those who are entitled to sustenance and those who are not. There are quite a large number of battlers for work, and the last thing they will come at is sustenance. I see men like that every day. They will not apply for sustenance until they are forced to do so. They are, however, affected detrimentally because those who receive sustenance get the first preference. Married men also receive preference of work in the towns when any work is available.

Mr. Sampson: Sustenance is not given unless there is need for it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There are always a few persons who can put up a case to show the officers that they should receive sustenance, but the genuine unemployed will not go for it except as a last resort.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Quite true.

Mr. SLEEMAN: When work is available in the city or the metropolitan area married men must receive preference.

Mr. Richardson: Hear, hear!

Mr. SLEEMAN: Single men, however, are entitled to some consideration. When men are being picked up in Perth or Fremantle the married men are given preference. When there is work in the country they are again given the preference, and single men are told they are not wanted. Single men have as much right to Government assistance as the others, and when work is available in the country single men should be taken in rotation with married men.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: They will not take it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That is not so. If I could get an order for the employment of 50 single men I could get the men at once.

Mr. Richardson: And I will guarantee another 50 men.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Something must be done, and I will continue to raise my voice in protest until something is done. These men are coming to me day after day, half of them praying for a feed. The whole thing is wrong. In Perth sustenance is being given to single men, and if work cannot be found for them it is right they should receive it. Because we have no Salvation Army Home in Fremantle to provide a feed for 6d. a day, single men are not eligible for a feed. One of our unemployed at Fremantle, a single man, not having the price of his fare to Perth, walked up that he might be registered amongst the unemployed single men of Perth. He was told that because he had not resided in Perth for 10 days nothing could be done for him, and that he would have to stay in Perth for that length of time before he could receive two meals a day as the others were getting. The unemployed of Fremantle should be treated in the same way as the unemployed of Perth.

Mr. Sampson: That is encouraging the unemployed to come to Perth.

Mr. SLEEMAN: This young man was practically told to starve. Everyone should

be treated alike. I hope the Minister will afford some relief for these men. They are not unemployable, but are only too anxious and willing to work. Unless something is done the position will become serious. Nothing could be more serious than to have an army of men ranging about the city with empty stomachs. We do not know what may happen if this is allowed to continue.

Mr. Sampson: No member is organising the unemployed now.

Mr. SLEEMAN: They are in too great a force already.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I have no time for the Communists amongst them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not think there are many Communists amongst my people in Fremantle, but whether a man is a Communist or not, I say he should either be given work or a feed. I will not differentiate between a man who belongs to the same party as I do, and one who belongs to the Communist party. He is a human being, and should be treated as such. Because a man does not belong to the same party as I do, he should not be obliged to starve. I hope it will not be necessary for me to go on protesting over this matter, and that something will be done to provide work for these men. There are always some who will not take work, but if it is offered to them and they refuse it, the country need not be put to any further expense regarding them. Every man should either be given work or sustenance, but most men would rather have the work than the sustenance.

Mr. Sampson: Some encouragement is being given to people to come into the city.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The previous Government brought them from the Old Country under false pretences. Half our trouble is caused by that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. SLEEMAN: A week or two ago I encountered a young man who had been brought out by the previous Government under false pretences. He was told that all he had to do was to put his name down on the list as an emigrant and all would be well. He was a merchant seaman, yet he was brought out to be a group settler. When I spoke to Mr. Crawcour, the Immigration Officer, about this man, his papers were looked up and we found that he was described as a merchant seaman having a

life-long experience with horses. When I asked the young fellow why that reference was included regarding him, he told me that the man who had obtained the passage for him in England stated that he would have no chance of coming to Australia unless it was included. He also told me that when he arrived at the group settlement, the foreman asked him what his occupation was. The young man replied that he was a seaman and the foreman said "You will be no good with the horses. You had better get an axe." That shows that people totally unfitted for the work are being brought out as migrants. This young fellow wanted to know if Mr. Crawcour would allow him to go to sea, as he had a chance of a berth on a ship, and he promised to pay something off the money he owed to the State. That proves that men are being brought out here who have no right to be put on the land in such circumstances.

Mr. Taylor: The same story was told in Queensland in 1882.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not concerned with stories told in Queensland when the hon. member was a young man, but I am concerned with the stories told to-day.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That sort of thing has been heard of before, but where did you come from?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Not from outside Australia. The Government did not give me assistance when I came here. I will not labour the question, but I hope it will not be necessary to voice such a protest much longer.

Mr. Taylor: There should be no unemployed with a Labour Government in power.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There should not be with any Government.

Mr. Taylor: There was no unemployment trouble when the previous Government were in power.

Mr. SLEEMAN: On the other hand, when the present Government came into office, the position was acute, and notwithstanding that they have done more than any previous Government it is still serious. I would not be surprised if much of the present position were caused by those supporting the Opposition side of the House. They have been employing foreigners.

Mr. Mann: You are on thin ice now.

Mr. Richardson: There are more unemployed in the metropolitan area to-day than for six years past.

Mr. Heron: And there are more foreigners in the country on clearing work.

Mr. Richardson: You are from the country; why do you not look after them?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The secretary of the New Settlers' League has just returned from a trip through the agricultural districts and he remarked upon the large percentage of foreigners he had seen at work.

Mr. Davy: If they were not employed in the country, they would be in the towns.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The hon. member and his friends encourage them to come here.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No such thing.

Mr. Richardson: Your party have been in office for more than 12 months.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: These men have come in during the last 12 months.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes, to Kurrawang. Regarding the cost of living—

Mr. Taylor: You had better get off the other question.

Mr. Sampson: You are on too thin ice.

The Minister for Railways: There are 2,000 of these foreigners here, and nearly all of them are working.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Not much progress is being made in making the cost of living cheaper. Although the Government have appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into prices, it will be more than 12 months before we get anything definite.

Mr. Panton: You will be lucky if you get it then.

Mr. SLEEMAN: With all due respect to the members of the Commission, I regard it as useless. If a Bill had been introduced to provide for the appointment of a price fixing commission straight away, much more good might have resulted.

The Minister for Railways: Do you think it would have been passed?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not know, but I do not think the Commission will do much good. Even so, a price fixing commission will have to be appointed later on, when the members of that body will go over the same ground. The price of bread is as high now as it was during the worst period of the war, while the price of meat is much higher than it should be. After reading the evidence that has been published so far, one might gain the impression that all butchers are broke, and that if the big men closed down on the producers to-morrow, the latter would have to go out of business. The pre-

sent Royal Commission will not get us anywhere, and it is a huge waste of money. I believe that much good would result if the Government were to reserve certain space on the State steamers for the convenience of the small cattle growers. We know that one or two companies have a monopoly of the space of the steamers on the North-West coast. If the Government reserved space for 40 or 50 bullocks on the State steamers, the small grower would have an opportunity of getting his meat to the metropolitan market.

Mr. Panton: Mr. Glyde said that there had been no small growers for five years.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not know that I would attach much weight to Mr. Glyde's statement, but I would be prepared to listen to the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley), who understands the position regarding North-West shipping and the cattle industry.

Mr. Mann: Has he given evidence before the Commission?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No. His evidence would have been valuable.

Mr. Richardson: We will call him before we finish our work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The member for Kataning (Mr. Thomson) criticised the Government regarding the appointments to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I welcomed his statement that the Government had turned down a proposal by the Harbour Trust Commissioners that would have saved the country £10,000. That was to be done by cutting out one of the launches used in connection with the pilot service. No such saving could be achieved for the people. Some time ago there was an industrial trouble at Fremantle and when it was finished the Harbour Trust Commissioners suddenly woke up and found they could save £10,000. Why did they not find that out long before and not wait until there was an industrial trouble?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That saving would have gone to the shipowners, not to the State.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The object of the Harbour Trust was to irritate and annoy the workers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have no right to say that.

Mr. Taylor: Nonsense!

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is not nonsense. This was not the first occasion on which the Harbour Trust Commissioners had done that sort of thing.

Mr. Taylor: The members of the Trust are capable men.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The member for Katanning also criticised the Government regarding appointments to the Harbour Trust. The present Government did not appoint the Commissioners; they were appointed by the previous Government in its dying hours. I object to the term for which those Commissioners were appointed. Instead of appointing them for three years, the Mitchell Government would have done better had they appointed the Commissioners for three months until the then Premier knew whether the people endorsed his policy.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you mean, political appointments and spoils to the victors?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The previous Government appointed Commissioners who might not be prepared to carry out the policy of the present Government. Such appointments should not have been made in the dying hours of the Mitchell Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then the police and the magistrates should resign, too.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No; they are permanent officers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The member for Katanning said that you made one appointment that was a bad one. He said the man to be appointed should have been a farmer.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hold a different view. The Commissioners should not be appointed to represent any particular party.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I thought that was what was always done.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The new member on the Harbour Trust has as much experience of harbour work as any other man in the State. The member for Katanning complained bitterly that a representative of the Primary Producers' Association had not been appointed. When it comes to a question of representing political parties on the Trust, those sitting in Opposition have the largest representation on the board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

Mr. SLEEMAN: We hear about the Country Party, the National Party, and the Labour Party, but to my mind there are two parties only in the House—the Opposition and the Government.

Mr. Richardson: I wish you meant it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: In my opinion those appointed to positions on the Harbour Trust should be men who understood the work and not merely members of political parties.

Mr. Taylor: Every board is wrong from your point of view. You had trouble with the Fremantle Hospital Board.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: There was no trouble there whatever.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That is so, and the present board have placed the hospital in a better financial position than it was in before.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The management by the present board is the best for the last six years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have no right to reflect upon previous boards.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I refer to the balance sheets.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Does the member for Katanning desire to have a representative of his party on the Trust in order to get wharfage rates reduced? At present the wharfage on wheat is nil; evidently that is too much for the hon. member! No one section of the community should receive preferential treatment. The timber industry has to pay 1s. 6d. per ton on timber that goes over a wharf. If timber were placed in the same category as wheat, the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) would be very pleased.

Mr. Taylor: What about coal?

Mr. J. H. Smith: What about other commodities in the South-West?

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the same consideration were extended to all South-Western products, it would make a great difference. The handling charges for wheat down there works out at 2.27d. per bag, which probably covers two handlings, namely from the truck into the stack, and from the stack into the boat. It is not sufficient to meet the cost of working. Yet the member for Katanning complains bitterly of the way the Harbour Trust is constituted, and wants a representative of the primary producers on the Trust to see that the farmers get a fair go. If 1d. per bag wharfage were placed on the wheat instead of its passing over the wharf free as at present, it would be a very good thing for the country. Farmers have no right to preferential treatment over the timber workers or anybody else. The member for Katanning also complained of the amount of money sent out of the country for imports,

and shed crocodile tears over the money sent East for agricultural machinery. We had the State Implement Works brought into being for the purpose of giving the farmers cheap machinery. Those works are still doing that and keeping down the prices of all imported machinery.

Mr. Thomson: You do not ask me to believe that? It is not correct.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The people behind the member for Katanning put it forward as an excuse that the local machinery is inferior to the imported. That is not right, for many individual farmers agree that most of the local implements, especially ploughs, are superior to the imported article, notwithstanding which members of the Primary Producers' Association declare that they are inferior. Then the member for Katanning in his next breath complained of the importation of a man from overseas to improve that machinery, and declared that a local man ought to have been given the job. Where is his consistency? If the implements are inferior, it is the duty of the Government to import an expert with a view to improving them.

Mr. Lindsay: Who says they are inferior?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Why do not the members of your party patronise the State Implement Works? If the price is right, it can only be that the implements turned out are inferior. Even the late Government would not support the State Implement Works. It must be that all of you on that side regard the local implements as inferior. Recently the "West Australian" published an article dealing with the bulk handling of wheat, in which it was said that a representative of that journal had personally seen the bags being ruthlessly cut and destroyed, and that unless stricter supervision were maintained the whole of the bags would be rendered worthless. I took the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) down there, and as the result of his personal inspection of the work and the bags he complimented the men on the way the work was being done. Yet the "West Australian" comes out with an article intended to discredit the men at Fremantle who are putting in such good work on behalf of the primary producers. Now I should like to say a word about police administration. Sergeant Anderson was in charge of the central station from the 1st March, 1923, to the 19th August, 1923. Evidently he was then shifted to make room for

Sergeant Johnson. On 11th February, 1924, Inspector McKenna marked Sergeant Anderson's record sheet "Conduct and efficiency good." Yet the same officer on 28th August, 1924, when leaving the force placed the following venomous minute on Sergeant Anderson's file:—

On the transfer of Inspector O'Halloran, who had been in charge of the central station for a number of years, to the new liquor branch on 1/3/23, I was instructed to place Sergeant Anderson in charge of the station. He remained in that position until 13th August, 1923, and during that period did not give satisfaction. I found that the men were doing practically what they liked, and he was rendering me no assistance in seeing that the various duties were carried out. Sergeant Anderson had it brought under his notice by me, but he knew nothing of what was going on, and he was practically useless. The condition of affairs became so acute that on 13th August, 1923, I sent for him and told him he was a failure; that he was not fit to be in charge of a body of men whom he allowed to do as they liked; that he was the laughing stock of those working under him and that it was my intention to relieve him of his duties. Sergeant Anderson returned to his station at Highgate Hill, and Sergeant Johnson was placed in charge. Sergeant Anderson expressed his opposition to my action and stated that he was being made a tool of. He was informed that if he was dissatisfied he could place the matter before the Commissioner. I would add that every time I visited the streets I found men gossiping in various parts of the town, and that in itself was sufficient to justify me in relieving him of charge of the central station and placing Sergeant Johnson in charge of it and the town; men from beat duty were hanging about the station instead of carrying out their duties, and a similar state of affairs existed in regard to the sergeants. It was no wonder then that he was being held up to ridicule by the men at the central station, and seeing that he made an absolute failure of the position entrusted to him there was nothing else to do but to send him back to Highgate Hill. (Sgd.) J. McKenna. 23/8/24.

Yet fully 12 months before that, Inspector McKenna had marked Sergeant Anderson's conduct sheet "Conduct and efficiency good." It seems there was some motive in getting rid of Sergeant Anderson. He had to be pushed on one side. Then when it was found that Sergeant Anderson was making inquiries about his file this was arranged between the Commissioner of Police and Inspector McKenna as a means of acting detrimentally towards Sergeant Anderson. This, too, notwithstanding that one of the regulations of the Police Department provides that when an officer submits an unfavourable report to the Commissioner concerning a subordinate,

the latter shall be given an opportunity of perusing such report, provided it is intended to place the report on his personal file, or that the Commissioner decides that the report shall be used or in any way recorded against him. Sergeant Anderson only asks that he shall be given an inquiry or, alternatively that that minute shall be expunged from his file. It is but fair, and I claim that Sergeant Anderson is quite within his rights. Unless there is something to hide, the Commissioner, I hope, will do the right thing and, alternatively, the Minister will see that he does do it. This is not the only case of the sort. We have the case of Water Police Constable Mortimer in Fremantle, who a little over 12 months ago put up certain proposals to the inspector in charge at Fremantle. Whether right or wrong, those proposals were turned down, and there the matter should be ended. But a little while afterwards, when Water Police Constable Howard was being transferred, I asked certain questions in the House about the water police at Fremantle. Those questions did not emanate from Police Constable Mortimer, who indeed knew nothing of my intention to ask them, but immediately after I did ask those questions, Mortimer's correspondence was resurrected and sent on to the Commissioner with the following footnote:—

As questions were asked in the House, it is likely those questions emanated from Police Constable Mortimer.

That was never reported to the constable. It is very wrong that such statements should be made without an officer being given a chance of defending himself. It is intolerable that merely because I, a representative of the people, ask certain questions in the House, a water police constable should be victimised. It seems to me that many things come before the House of which Ministers take no notice whatever. If notice be not taken of these matters I have brought up this afternoon, I shall have to go further and ask for an inquiry, especially in respect of Sergeant Anderson, who in consequence of the treatment he has received has worried himself into an illness.

The Minister for Railways: He will get his opportunity next week.

Mr. SLEEMAN: He will be very glad to hear that. Now I want to complain of the way our railways are run in the metropolitan area. When I choose to ride first-class I can get any amount of room, can in fact get a compartment to myself; but when I

want to ride in with the boys, there is no chance of getting a seat at certain hours of the day. There should be more second-class coaches and fewer first-class coaches. It is very nice for a member of Parliament to have a reserved carriage to himself when he wants it, but it would be nicer still if the workers were able to ride to and from their work in comfort. During certain hours of the day, it is impossible to get a seat in a second-class carriage.

Mr. Panton: Why should there be more than one class?

Mr. SLEEMAN: It would be very much better if we had but one class. I see no reason for the distinction, especially on short metropolitan runs. The railway examiners especially those at Fremantle, seem to be very unfortunate. Their work is highly important yet at Fremantle they have nothing but a little pit in the yard, with no cover, and whenever it rains the men are forced to leave their work and wait till the shower is over.

Mr. Withers: What about the shunters?

Mr. SLEEMAN: They have to work in the rain, but they are provided with oilers. However, the Commissioner refuses to provide the examiners with oilers.

Mr. Lindsay: There is nothing to stop their having overcoats.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The department provides oilskins for the shunters, but not for the examiners. Yet the shunters do not have to get down under the trucks to do their work. They are in a different position altogether from the examiners, whose duty, it is recognised, is very important. The Commissioner should wake up and see to it that this small but important section of railway workers gets a fair deal. There was quite a little noise just now because unionists were mentioned. The policy of the Government is preference to unionists. Yet some of the departmental heads are deliberately doing things likely to bring discredit upon Ministers. A reservoir is being built at Buckland Hill and one or two little stoppages have occurred there. We have been promised that if certain work was continued men would be picked up for it, but we find that the foreman is sent down to dodge amongst the crowd and pick out a few men who, on handing their names into the Labour Bureau, are selected for the work.

Mr. Taylor: Perhaps they are men whom the foreman knows

Mr. SLEEMAN: Perhaps so, but the men who have made a little noise by sticking up for the unions have been cut out.

Mr. Taylor: The ganger wants men who will do the work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The other day a man went to Buckland Hill and was instructed to go to the Labour Bureau and submit his name. He was told that if he did so, he would be picked up on the following Monday. He was practically a stranger on the job. Some of the unemployed, learning of this, rang up the foreman and told him the Labour Bureau was speaking. The foreman replied, "Yes, we want one man and he must be so-and-so." The unemployed got busy and had inquiries made. When the departmental officials were questioned, they denied the statement and said the reply given had been that there was no work. I am prepared to believe that whoever put that explanation to the Minister told a deliberate lie. I have since been in communication with a friend of the man mentioned, and have been informed that he is now complaining that the unemployed in Fremantle lost him the job. That is only one of many instances that I could cite. Anyone who has taken an active interest in the union is cut out whenever there is any retrenching to be done. An inspector in the Water Supply Department was retrenched just after the close of the war to make room for a returned soldier. The latter was a returned soldier, although he did not leave the department to go to the front, while the man who was retrenched went into camp at Blackboy, but was rejected for active service on account of unfitness.

Mr. Panton: He was very lucky.

Mr. SLEEMAN: This man was doing a few odd jobs for the Works Department. While engaged on one job at the Fremantle gaol, he was supposed to have committed the unpardonable offence of leaving tools lying about. The man claimed that he was not guilty of the offence, and yet that is a bar to his getting employment. When he was an inspector he was informed that he must get out of the union, and because he would not do so, he has since been victimised. On one occasion he received a letter asking him to call at the Water Supply Department, and when a few days later he inquired why he was wanted, he was told that the job had been given to another man. Had he been informed in the letter that there was a job

for him, he would have been on the doorstep next morning. This shows how men are being treated. I congratulate the Government on the steps taken to replace the steamers "Eucla" and "Bambra." I hope it will be possible to take action in the near future regarding the North-West shipping service. It is hopeless to expect any improvement until there is a change in the Federal Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There has been a change of Government in the State.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But I am looking for a new Federal Government, because I believe that Labour will be returned and that we shall then be able to get justice.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If a Labour Government be returned, you may have half the people in the country out of work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The return of a Federal Labour Government is our only chance of getting rid of the black boats on the North-West coast. Those boats are of no use to the State, or even to the business people who belong to the party of the member for Northam.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about the people declared black?

Mr. SLEEMAN: They may be declared white again, but it is impossible to whiten the people to whom I refer. Black they are and black they remain, and they are no good to any country. They get two "bob" a day and spend nothing in the State. It was only on the strength of a recommendation by the previous Government that one of the boats was given exemption. When a Labour Government is returned to the Federal Parliament, the State Government should forward a strong recommendation for the cancellation of the exemption. I hope steps will be taken this session to inaugurate a system of State insurance. The need for it is long overdue. While I was in Brisbane recently I noted how well the State system was working there. Queensland has also unemployed insurance for the few unfortunates likely to be out of work in that State. Unemployed insurance should be included in a system of State insurance for Western Australia. Recently I have been brought closely in touch with widows and orphans who come under the State Children Department, and I trust the Minister will be able to increase the dole at present paid for State children. The present method of financing hospitals must go. I could never approve of a system of going cap in hand to the community for funds to

maintain the hospitals. There should be no need for "white cities" and institutions of that kind for the maintenance of hospitals. The Minister might be able to raise some money for hospitals by taking the totalisator fractions, as is done in some other countries. This money does not belong to the racing clubs, who have no right to retain it. These fractions cannot be paid out to the rightful owners, the investors, and they should be taken by the Government to assist to finance some of the charitable institutions. The Government should strongly support the gold bonus. The gold output is declining, and the payment of a bonus by the Federal Government should materially assist to resuscitate the industry. The Federal Government are always prepared to grant beef or sugar bonuses to the other States, and efforts should be made to secure a gold bonus for this State. Western Australia is being bled almost white by the Federal Government, and it is only right that we should get some return from the Commonwealth to help an industry that has done so much for the State.

Mr. Thomson: We agree on one thing—that Federation is bleeding us!

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes. At the Old Men's Home the other day I saw an inmate who had had the misfortune to lose both hands and both eyes in an explosion on the gold-fields. Because this man did not apply for the invalid pension before entering the institution, he is debarred from receiving it. That is a monstrous state of affairs. Before the recipient of an invalid pension enters an institution the pension is worth 17s. 6d. After his entering an institution, the amount is reduced to 13s. 6d. Thus the Commonwealth rob us of 4s. For every invalid who enters an institution before applying for the pension, the Commonwealth rob us of the whole lot. The pension should be paid irrespective of whether the invalid enters an institution. The housing problem in the metropolitan area is serious. The number of houses is short and the prices are high. A Fair Rents Bill introduced last session was defeated, but I hope something will be done this year to afford relief to those people who are paying exorbitant rents. I have a cutting from a newspaper dealing with the rent reductions made in Sydney recently. In one instance rent was reduced from £2 7s. 6d. to 25s., the magistrate remarking that he was then allowing a return of 91½ per cent. to the landlord. In another instance the rent was reduced from £2 2s.

to 31s., and in another instance from £2 2s. to £1 13s. If such a measure can be operated successfully in Sydney, it could be enforced here. It was unfortunate for the workers of this State that the Bill introduced last session was lost. I hope the Government will announce their policy regarding workers' homes. I am continually being chased by workers of the Fremantle area in respect of workers' homes, but we can do nothing at present. One young fellow who submitted an application was told some time later that he was sixth on the list for Fremantle. Nearly 12 months elapsed and he was then informed that he was fifth on the list for Fremantle. That, however, did not convey much because he was about sixty-fifth on the list for the State. I hope it will be possible for the Government to make workers' homes available in the near future. The Education Department have nurses going from school to school to examine the children's teeth. A while ago my little boy had occasion to get his teeth attended to necessitating chloroform being administered. Fortunately for him, his father could raise the necessary £2 10s. to get the teeth out and the operation was done. It is only a farce, however, for people to run around the schools sending Jimmy and Tommy home to say they must get their teeth out, while the people, at present rates of wages, are unable to comply with the recommendation. We should proceed on the same lines as South Australia. I investigated the position in that State, and was told that South Australia has eight dental officers and propose to appoint four more this year. These dental officers travel round the State and attend to the teeth of the children. It is no use our sending round nurses to see whether the children's teeth are right if the matter is not to be followed up by practical attention. Then there is the useless expenditure we have in sending a man round to see that the children are drilled right. It is of much more importance for the welfare of the people that the health of the children should be looked after than that they should be drilled right. I trust that during the present session the Jury Act will be amended, or at least that jurymen's fees will be raised. That is a burning question among the workers. I am being continually asked why the fees were not raised during last session, and I have told inquirers exactly what happened—that the fees were not raised because an

other place would not allow the amending Bill to go through. I hope the workers and also the business people of this country will soon get some reasonable recompense for attending the courts as jurymen. It is a scandalous shame that men should be forced to leave their work and function as jurymen for a fee of 10s. per day. I also wish to mention the question of protection of life in the picture theatres of this State. Action in that respect is long overdue. At present the ridiculous position obtains of firemen being on duty in picture shows from 7 p.m. It is far more necessary to have firemen in attendance at matinees when the theatres are filled with women and children. I shall use my best endeavours to see that the position is suitably adjusted.

Mr. Taylor: Are not the people about here too green to burn?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I would favour something on the lines of the Victorian system, where firemen are on duty in places of entertainment during the whole of the time that these are open. For an attendance of 500 and not exceeding 1,000, one fireman must be present; for an attendance of 1,000 and not exceeding 1,500, two firemen must be present; and so on. Unless we take action in that direction we shall infallibly have, one of these days, a conflagration accompanied by serious loss of life; and we shall be culpable if we do not legislate so as to prevent the possibility of such a disaster. I am always prepared to admit a mistake when I have made it, and I think I made a mistake during last session, in the matter of the Traffic Act. Personally I did not recognise that the measure was going to operate as harshly as it has done with respect to horse-drawn vehicles. Some relief ought to be afforded to the owners of horse-drawn vehicles, because the taxation on them is much too heavy. Most of these people are not wealthy; they are generally owners of one or two drays, and they should not be called upon to pay a large tax while farmers, sandalwood-getters, and others, are allowed to go scot free in that regard.

Mr. Panton: Who told you that?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Sandalwood-getters and wheat farmers are let off with about one-quarter of the taxation which these other people have to pay.

Mr. Panton: Sandalwood-getters are never on a main road

Mr. SLEEMAN: Before closing I must draw attention to that hardy annual, the Fremantle railway bridge. One of these days a train will go flying off the bridge. I was present recently when piles were being pulled out at the traffic bridge and new piles were being put in, and anyone who saw the condition of the bridge under those circumstances must have felt something like terror. As I say, new piles are now being put in. Some of the old piles on the railway bridge are in such a state that one could thrust a lead pencil into them. The time has arrived when that bridge must be moved, for the safety of the public, for the extension of the Fremantle harbour, and to permit of the provision of a dock. Fremantle will never be a port worthy of this State until it has a dock. A dock has got to come. I hope that the Premier, when he was in the Old Country, made some inquiries regarding docks, including floating docks.

Mr. Taylor: Bunbury wants a dock.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not against Bunbury having one. I am not prejudiced against Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton, or any other port. Let them all have their dues. However, seeing that Fremantle is the main port of the State, a dock must come. Probably the matter may have to be put off until the new engineer-in-chief arrives, but I hope that when he does arrive he will get busy and see that the Fremantle railway bridge is removed, for a start, and then proceed with the extension of the harbour and the provision of a dock.

Mr. Taylor: Could he not bring a dock out with him, to save time?

Mr. SLEEMAN: That has been done, though the hon. member interjecting seems to think it is a ridiculous proposition. Docks as big as the one required at Fremantle have been towed out over great distances. I shall have more opportunities of speaking before the session finishes, and therefore will not detain the House longer now.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.39]: In view of the fact that in my district there are some 17,000 persons, I feel that this session I must say a few words more than I said last session. No doubt members representing constituencies of a few hundred people can get through what they have to say more quickly than a member circumstanced as I am. On the other hand, I hope that before the end of the present Govern-

ment's term we shall have the electorates altered so as to be more uniform. I see no mention of a Redistribution of Seats Bill to be introduced this session, but I hope that next session something of the kind will happen. In spite of the fact that so many people live around Claremont, Peppermint Grove, and Cottesloe Beach, I shall keep my speech on this occasion down to five short questions which I have been asking myself, and on which I shall try to get the views which are put forward accepted by the Government. The first question is, in view of the experience of the recent industrial trouble, is the settlement of disputes by arbitration still the policy of organised labour? The answer to that question, I take it, is that it is still the policy. That being so, I feel justified in criticising in anticipation of the Bill which is to come forward the present position with regard to arbitration and its efficacy and value. At present it may be said generally that where arbitration is effective it is not necessary. As regards 90 per cent. of the trades which work decently and obey awards and agreements, the court is unnecessary; settlements could be come to without the court. But where there is trouble, as there was recently, the court proves impotent. If arbitration is to continue, I trust the Government will bring forward some effective policy to enforce any agreements come to or awards delivered. I do not think the last amendment of the Arbitration Act altogether covered that aspect. We have to face the fact that not only in the local catering dispute, but also in the big seamen's dispute, the agreements eventually arrived at were come to outside the Arbitration Court altogether.

Mr. Pantou: In fact, there are just as many agreements outside the court as in it.

Mr. NORTH: That is the trouble.

Mr. Pantou: No; it is a good job.

Mr. NORTH: But it makes one question how far the Arbitration Court is valuable at all.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Act is too rigid.

Mr. NORTH: That may be.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You want to amend the Act.

Mr. NORTH: I suggest, by way of anticipation, that something should be done not only to amend the machinery side of the Act but to enforce agreements when come to. When parties in ordinary circum-

stances agree to something, they go to a solicitor and get a contract fixed up. Then, if the contract is broken, they have specific performance and damages, and rescission to choose from. They can go before a judge to obtain specific performance of contract. They can go for damages for breach of contract. Failing damages, they can have the contract rescinded. In recent industrial troubles it seems as if the agreements had been rescinded. However, that is no good to the public. I think we should consider the alternative of letting arbitration go by the board, as in fact it did go by the board in the catering dispute, and that we should consider whether it would be advisable for these questions to be settled by ordinary contract or law, or whether the law should be altered to suit the position which arises during strikes. I expressed myself to the same effect the other evening, and the Premier then interjected that he was prepared to amend the law so as to eliminate from the Criminal Code and Traffic Act the provisions with regard to strikers and pickets. If arbitration went by the board and the law were tightened or enlarged or extended in such a way that when there was trouble of the sort we had recently, some arrangement could be made by which the police could handle this question, it might be well. The police could handle strikes and lockouts in the same way as they now deal with big crowds, processions, the arrival of the American Fleet, and other events of an exceptional nature which lead to unusual situations in large cities. Under those conditions the whole matter of industrial arbitration could go by the board. The second question I wish to deal with I will put in this form, succinctly, does Labour still hold that competition is wasteful, and does Labour adhere generally to its policy of nationalising the means of production, distribution and exchange? A very old writer put the position in regard to nationalisation very well. The late Edward Gibbon said in regard to monopoly—

The spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy and oppressive; their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists, and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations above the fear of a rival and below the confession of an error.

Those are very striking words, describing the effect of monopolies. The present Government stand, so far as I know, for the gradual

extension of nationalisation. Take as an instance the railways, a large concern which has been carried on now for a great many years under political control. Recently we have had a very serious shortage of trucks.

The Minister for Railways: No, we have not.

Mr. NORTH: I am glad to hear the Minister say that, but in a conversation I had with Colonel Pope three days ago I was informed that owing to the shortage of funds the question of trucks was always in front of him. I said, "That is a curious position; why is it?" Colonel Pope replied, "The reason is because of this being a State enterprise, and run by the Government, all profits are put into general revenue, and I cannot handle the position out of my present profits."

The Minister for Railways: The railways have not had any profits for eight or ten years.

Mr. NORTH: Precisely.

The Premier: We had a profit last year from the railways and we hear you now talking about the profits of the railways as though they had always existed.

Mr. NORTH: I am raising the point of a shortage of trucks and mentioned what Colonel Pope said to me that he could not get trucks, and that if he had £100,000 he would put the whole of it into trucks.

The Premier: Anyhow, I do not know what the Commissioner of Railways means by making a statement of that kind to you. It is his job to administer the railways and not to criticise us for not providing trucks.

Mr. NORTH: I understand it is common knowledge that there is a shortage of trucks. I am not sure that the Premier has not mentioned this himself. All the same, it is to my mind a serious commentary upon a public concern.

The Premier: If there is a shortage of rolling stock, as stated by the Commissioner to you, it is due to the fact that money has not been provided in recent years.

Mr. NORTH: Of course, the National Government are to blame: I do not deny that.

The Premier: We cannot in the space of a year remedy the defects of many years.

Mr. NORTH: I am speaking generally on the question of running Government concerns and classing the action as a monopoly. I maintain that the time has come for us to find out whether the railways are as good as they should be.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If you want to make comparisons, why not compare the system with the Midland line?

Mr. NORTH: I think the Midland is a wonderful line.

Mr. Panton: Have you ever travelled on it?

The Premier: And incidentally they use our rolling stock.

Mr. NORTH: There are other things I could say about the railways. It was not until recently, when the motor buses appeared on the scene, that we found any attempt made to improve the system. Now we learn that owing to the competition that has sprung up, like a toadstool in the night, the railways have appointed an officer to go out and seek business. But that is a small side-issue. Let us compare our railway system with that of South Australia. In that State they imported new blood to overhaul the railway organisation, and we cannot help drawing attention to the effect of the administration of the new Commissioner in that State. I am told that a considerable sum of money was spent, a good deal of it on rolling stock, and that to-day profits are being shown and the position is different. In Western Australia the State institutions are monopolies and the present Government propose gradually to extend them, but like, shall we say, the Argentine cattle, they will become costly and deteriorate. Then we shall find that some great man, associated with private enterprise in another part of the world, will be brought here to give us his views on the enterprises and perhaps put them right gradually. That is the kind of thing that has happened in several States, and it continues to occur from time to time. It points to the fact that all State enterprises need serious attention. The Premier himself is only too pleased to limit State activities, and from what he said last session we gather that it is his desire to transfer them to smaller planets in the shape of boards or trusts. He is prepared in the case of water supplies and tramways, to transfer those obligations to another form of control.

Mr. Lambert: And a good idea, too.

Mr. NORTH: It may be better than the present arrangement, and it certainly will relieve the Government of borrowing powers in respect of those concerns. I mentioned a little while back that motor buses have appeared on the scene, and that immediately the railways, the proud monopolist of 30 years, appointed an officer to look for busi-

ness. The move is good, and the Government should be congratulated. The motor buses also deserve to be congratulated for appearing on the scene. There has been created recently a board to decide whether or not motor buses should run. One extraordinary instance has come before my notice. Some six months ago a driver was running a bus from Fremantle to Perth, and after having operated along that route for six months he desired to serve some of the outlying districts off the Fremantle road, places like Peppermint Grove, Buckland Hill and Cottesloe Beach. The people living in those places could not reach the city except by walking a considerable distance to the station. The driver of the bus applied for permission to run a second vehicle and gave his reasons. Up to date the license has not been granted, and the only reply that has been tendered is that the Fremantle route is already sufficiently served. The attitude of the authorities in this case is particularly hard, especially when the Government declare it is their desire to help every section of the community.

The Premier: Even private enterprise!

Mr. NORTH: Why should those who live, say, 100 yards from the railway receive all the consideration, and those who may be 25 minutes' walk from the railway station not be able to get any at all?

The Premier: The hard toilers who live around Peppermint Grove!

Mr. NORTH: The present Government have actually granted a license for a bus to travel from Peppermint Grove, but they will not grant a license for the Buckland Hill and Cottesloe Beach routes.

The Premier: The hardy workmen can walk.

Mr. NORTH: I would like to read an extract from an instructive article in an American magazine on the subject of motor buses. The ideas expressed, if applied here, would stop the harassing that is taking place:—

The motor bus industry has found itself. Producers of equipment and users of equipment alike now see the motor bus for what it really is—the builder of new business, not a substitute for established and necessary forms of transportation. The experience of the past year has blasted the old notion that every passenger carried by motor buses represented the loss of a fare to electric railways, steam railways or other forms of transportation. The truth is, modern buses create new business. This is nothing more than a repetition of the history of transportation. When railroads were de-

veloped, steamboats interests feared that people no longer would travel by river and lake. Instead, steamboat travel grew faster than ever. When automobiles appeared, railroads at first were apprehensive as to the future of rail travel. Instead of decreasing, however, railroad passenger totals soared to new heights.

Only a few minutes ago the Minister for Railways told us that for the first time for many years the railways had in the year just closed shown a large profit, and this, too, in spite of the competition of motor buses. These facts must be looked into when the routes advisory board considers the applications for extensions of the motor bus system. We should face the question as it is being faced all over the world, and we should realise that passengers alone do not make the railways, that the railways live entirely by freight and passengers are a mere side-line. If that is admitted to be a fair proposition, a great deal more of this unnecessary hostility to the road vehicle will disappear. I wish to make a final point in the matter of municipalities and the trouble consequent upon the extension of State activities. Within a period of six months it may be impossible to detect the effect of increasing State activities. I hear we are to have State insurance. The effect of State activities may not be noticeable to-day or to-morrow, but in the years to come we shall see it. In view of the present system of government in force in five of the States it is hardly competent for us in opposition to be cheerful. Those five States have gone against us. Now is the time to look to our laurels, as business men do when they suffer losses, and as Henry Ford did when he came out trumps. I suggest that in the past Governments have pursued a policy that will not have its effects until later. The present system of canned politics which leads to the creation of State activities will also lead to the lack of social vitamins. In the course of five or six years we shall know whether that is true or not.

Mr. Pantou: Why worry about posterity?

Mr. NORTH: That may be the excuse for the present Government. Now we come to question two. Has not the time arrived when steps should be taken to revive the status of public men and public questions, and to restore respect for the law? I maintain that during the last few years there has been a gradual depreciation in the status and value of our public men, and in the value of public questions. I am sure all members will agree

with me. I have heard Federal members talked about in the train, and I can only guess at what is said about State members. There are many reasons why public men have gone down in public estimation. This question should be faced during the term of the present Government.

Mr. Panton: Surely we are not to be blamed for that!

Mr. NORTH: We are speaking for ourselves also this time. Every member is entitled to greater respect than he now receives from the general public. Remarks are made of a disparaging nature concerning members of local councils and other persons who are engaged in State and Federal affairs. In some cases they are shocking. They are calculated to lead to the public being served in the manner their comments suggest. In my opinion members of municipal councils and road boards should be paid for their services. In one of the States that is being done to-day. Federation is costing Australia too much, and local government is costing too little. Our local governing bodies are costing us approximately 2s. or 3s. in the pound. In the Old Country, as the Premier will know, local government is costing anything from 14s. to 17s. in the pound. That may be too much.

The Premier: I was in one place where the rates were 20s. in the pound.

Mr. NORTH: The time has come for us to face this question seriously, and to think about the payment of members of the local governing authority. Even if this meant raising the rates there would be more competition for seats on those councils or boards, and we should probably get better local government in the long run and probably reduced rates.

Mr. Sampson: That principle has already been adopted in Greater Britain.

Mr. NORTH: Local governing bodies have a greater claim in this respect than any other body in the State. At present we expect men to become members of those local authorities and control perhaps £30,000 a year of the ratepayers' money—in Perth a great deal more than that—and to give good service and a great deal of their time, to put up with a great deal that is said behind their backs, and, in the case of Perth, the insult of an attendance of four or five ratepayers at their annual meetings to listen to the story of their year's work. The time has come when such members should

be made more respected through being paid for what they do. It would be found that not only would there be competition for these positions, but that in the long run the cost of civic administration would be reduced. If we could conjure a little of the money that is wasted in Federal expenditure, and divert it into this other channel, we should be doing a great deal of good. In my opinion the local governing bodies carry two-thirds of the weight of the government of the country upon their shoulders. Although the fountain may be in the Treasury, the streams of finance reach the local governing bodies through health, road, and other matters. They are carrying all the burden. Members of those bodies give about a third of the time to their duties that we spend in this House. They do their work zealously, but for doing it they receive a glass of beer and a little cheese once a fortnight. I commend the example of Queensland in this respect and also that of Great Britain.

Mr. Davy: Is no one to do anything for nothing?

Mr. NORTH: It looks like it. The good old days seem to have gone when we could get men of means to come from the Old Country and enter public life in this State.

Mr. Sampson: Honorary workers are usually the most industrious.

Mr. NORTH: If we can get them, but in local governing work they are as rare as the dodo.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. NORTH: The days have gone when we could get men who would come here and do this work for nothing. Has not the time come when we can consider that health matters, drainage, and the making of roads are quite as important as the making of money over the counter?

Mr. Davy: It is not suggested that local authority members are such a poor lot.

Mr. NORTH: No, but there is room for a great revival in local government.

Mr. Panton: Then one has to judge the question of respectability by L.S.D.

Mr. NORTH: I wish to judge the value of the work by payment. The Act was modelled upon times when we had a number of rich landowners in the Old Country, who were willing to give their time for nothing. It was not for nothing, after all, for they may have been sitting back behind a capital of £100,000. If the Act comes forward for

reconsideration, I am prepared to move that members of local governing bodies shall be paid for their services. It would not cost much to do so.

The Premier: You mean the money would come out of the rates.

Mr. NORTH: Yes, and the ratepayers would get back more than they lost.

The Premier: You do not mean it would come out of Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. NORTH: No.

The Premier: Go ahead then.

Mr. NORTH: That makes all the difference, does it not?

The Premier: Quite.

Mr. NORTH: I now come to the question of members of this House. I admit that for such a beginner in politics as I am, it may be a little too early for me to bring the matter forward. But I fear that constant association with a job makes one become too tolerant and conservative. I hope I may be here for a few years yet.

Mr. Marshall: I am wondering if you will.

Mr. NORTH: The future is uncertain, but I was wondering whether in course of time I would become hardened and accept things as they are. I can understand the Premier, when he is asked to present a Cup at some race meeting, or two guineas to a charity, doing so, because he has done it for 20 years.

The Premier: You do not know me.

Mr. NORTH: Not many years ago it was enacted that no candidate for political honours might within three months of an election give a donation.

The Premier: They made a mistake in confining it to that term.

Mr. NORTH: I should like to see the law amended so that no man while in politics should give a donation. If it is bribery to give these things before an election, what must it be to give them during the three years in which one is a member of Parliament? It is also the law of the land that a member of Parliament shall receive roughly £8 a week for his services, but, through a system of partial bribery and partial blackmail—if the member is rich it is bribery, and if he is poor it is blackmail—this £8 a week may be reduced to £4 or £5 a week, upon which remainder the member must be respectable and uphold his position. That is entirely wrong, and I should like to see the law amended to cover the whole term during which a man is a member of Parliament.

Mr. Panton: You are getting a lot of support now.

Mr. Taylor: We are solid on that.

Mr. NORTH: There may be support inside this Chamber, but the stormy winds may blow outside.

The Premier: I assure you it is not a party question.

Mr. NORTH: I am surprised it has been overlooked for so long. I now come to the question of election days. I mentioned this last session, but it sounded at first utterly impossible and ridiculous. If we could have one particular day in the year set aside for elections and voting, dealing with all public questions, we should do a lot to educate the public, and remind them of the importance and value of giving attention to such questions on one particular day in the year. While the present system operates it is a question of pull devil, pull baker. We may have the Federal elections affecting the national policy in one direction. A little later on we have the State elections resulting in an opposite form of government. Further on still there may be municipal elections, and a mayor with Conservative tendencies may be elected. So it comes about we have a policy of pull devil, pull baker, instead of having one or other of the three types of policy placed before the people as a straight out issue so that they may know exactly what type of Government to expect in all its resulting effects.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. NORTH: Before the tea adjournment I was attempting to suggest that there were certain reasons, why, in recent years, the status of public men has not been maintained. I was suggesting the setting aside of an annual election day when all elections for that year would be held—municipal, State and Federal. The object would be to increase the interest taken by the public by focussing the attention of the people upon the issues. If, as the result of such an election, all affairs were conducted on a uniform policy, we might be ruined, as the Premier suggested, but, on the other hand, we might be agreeably surprised. At any rate, we would know where we stood and it would give us greater confidence in voting solidly at future elections. The swing of the pendulum might be quicker, but public questions would probably be dealt with more succinctly than would be possible with muni-

civil, State and Federal polling taken on different policies at different times. Coming to the question of lack of interest in public questions, as opposed to that of public men, and also the growing disregard for law and order, I suggest that the time is ripe for many of our laws to be codified. Some of our laws date back into the dim distant past. The present affords the Government a splendid opportunity to undertake the arduous process of codifying such laws. If that were done completely, it would be necessary to refer to four or five volumes only, instead of having to go back to antiquity in order to ascertain what the law is. Such a step would be in the interests of not only the public, but would be of benefit to lawyers as well. The Bills of Sale Act is in a shocking condition. If one is asked to give advice on a question affected by that Act, one has to look through numerous amendments as well as the Act itself. I cannot see why codification should not be undertaken. If that were done, we would know what the law was and it would be easy for all to read. I cannot see the sense of continuing the present state of affairs. Then, as to the amendment of laws. There is a growing lack of interest in public questions and obedience to the law. One instance was the recent strike in the catering trade, while another is to be found in gaming. If we cannot bring Mahomet to the mountain, we should take the mountain to Mahomet. If the people will not obey the laws, the latter should be brought into conformity with the views of the majority of the people. In the "West Australian" recently there appeared references in one column to the use of gambling devices by some people, and in another column to a common gaming house. The former paragraph contained the following statement:—

Some weeks ago a "White City Carnival" organised by a financial officer of the Trades Hall, Perth, was held for two weeks at Collie in aid of a Trades Hall building fund. Over £1,500 was raised, and £100 was donated to the Collie hospital.

Mr. Wilson: That was not the amount raised.

Mr. Sampson: That was the salve to their conscience!

Mr. Wilson: It was not a salve, it was a gift.

Mr. Richardson: Where did the other £1,400 go?

Mr. Wilson: There was no £1,400 raised.

Mr. Richardson: The published statement has not been denied.

Mr. Wilson: You can take my word for it.

Mr. NORTH: The particular words I wish to refer to follow—

Both the police at Collie and at Narrogin were instructed from headquarters that there would be no objection to the use of gambling devices.

Then the other paragraph refers to a case before Mr. Craig, the resident magistrate at Fremantle, in which men were charged with having kept a common gaming house and were fined £20. In that instance the police had not given instructions that the men could gamble. Thus we have one instance where people are permitted to gamble by permission of the police, not Parliament, while in the other no permission is given. Such instances should not be permitted and they emphasise the necessity for an amendment of the law. If gambling is to be permitted, some people consider it should continue in the interests of charity. If that is the view of the whole of the people in the State, why not have the law altered to that extent, and then we will know where we stand. Those who are desirous of building roads, promenades, improving beaches, and so on, would then have the power to do this instead of having to seek permission from the police.

Mr. Richardson: The Trades Hall does not constitute a charity. I reckon that was an absolute corruption of the law as it stands.

Mr. NORTH: There is room for an amendment of the law, and I would be prepared to vote for it if gambling is to be monopolised for charities or the public benefit.

Mr. Taylor: The Trades Hall is not a public benefit.

Mr. NORTH: Here we find Fremantle lumpers fined £20 for doing something that the police authorised others to do in another place. I think the whole question should be gone into and legislation more in keeping with the times introduced to Parliament. So long as legislation is out of pace with the people, so long will it be useless.

Mr. Taylor: The law is all right now if only it is carried out.

Mr. NORTH: Unfortunately the previous Government set the example in this matter.

Mr. Richardson: But the late Government permitted gambling only for charities.

The present Government permit it for Trades Hall purposes, and so on.

Mr. NORTH: We should allow this movement in the interests of charities, but it is a peculiar spectacle to have hundreds of thousands of pounds gambled away at the river side while local bodies are starving for money for roads.

Mr. Sampson: This is a great industry in Queensland.

Mr. NORTH: I come to the fourth question I wish to refer to under this heading: Is not provision out of industry for existing wives and children better than a basic wage for a wife and three children, whether they exist or not. Assuming that industry is not able to find sufficient money to provide for a man, his wife and three children, whether they exist or not, it is possible that industry may be able to provide for the wives and children that do exist. I hope that if this question comes before us this session, legislation will follow those lines. This is not socialism; it is specialised individualism, because even to-day wives and children are provided for, but there is an unfair handicap on married men as compared with single men. That brings me to the deeper question of improving the lot of the average man. I can see only three ways. One is to reduce his desires and turn all people into philosophers; the second is the increase of inventions, which we depend upon, and, thirdly, reduction in numbers. The last mentioned has not been contemplated so far. Thus, of the three possible means of improving present day conditions, practically one only remains— increase of invention. I now come to the last question I wish to raise in this debate. I refer to public health. This is a very old subject and I think that the distribution of health should receive more attention even than the distribution of wages.

Mr. Marshall: If you had worked on some of the mines you would not talk about health in that way.

Mr. NORTH: We see the results at Wooroloo. We can see many directions in which the public health of the country could be better attended to. I would cite the new shops recently erected in Perth. Ventilation has been practically ignored.

Mr. Marshall: Are you referring to the Town Hall shops?

Mr. NORTH: Yes, partly.

Mr. Marshall: I agree with you.

Mr. NORTH: They are, in my opinion, like dog boxes. We have a Public Health Department, a Commissioner of Public Health and a Minister. The department was in existence long before many of the trading concerns of recent years were heard of and it seems to me that the more we go in for trading concerns the less interest there appears to be in the Public Health Department. In view of the wide powers possessed by the Commissioner of Public Health, I cannot understand why these new shops, without any attempt at ventilation apart from the doors and fanlights, have been allowed to be erected. Those who work there will exist in an unhealthy atmosphere, which is quite unnecessary. Perhaps we may be inclined to regard such matters as trivial, but in a time of epidemic, bad ventilation is one of the main causes of the spreading of disease. Bearing that in mind, I am at a loss to understand why the erection of such shops should be allowed in modern times. At Cottesloe recently the Electricity Department supplied cheap current for cooking and domestic power purposes. The Government took over the scheme, but for the sake of £2,000 they are likely to lose the benefit of that scheme, because the Fremantle Gas Company intend to operate in the town, and take much of the trade from the Government. At the instigation of Mr. Taylor, manager of the Electricity Department, £2,000 was put on the Estimates for installing cheap cooking by electricity in every house, but the proposal was turned down by Cabinet. That £2,000 might have earned something like 30 per cent. for the department, but it is now likely to go to the Fremantle Gas Company. I trust that before it is too late the £2,000 will be provided by the Government. The water supply in our district has been very well handled during the past 12 months, and I congratulate the Government on the work done in that regard. Now I come to another question of health, namely, whole-meal bread versus white bread. Let me read the following letter from the "Spectator":—

Sir.—The letter of Mr. Fano's Hughendon in your issue of February 14th under the above heading clearly expresses the state of uncertainty existing in the minds of the majority of English people with regard to the important question of wholemeal bread—what it is, and why it is so necessary for the physical well-being of our race. With your indulgence, Sir, I will endeavour briefly to answer these questions. Before doing so let me point out that the so-called wholemeal bread at present sold by the bakers of this country is not

germ bread at all, but white bread made with devitalized flour, to which has been added a certain amount of "offal" or bran, almost worthless as food and withal indigestible.

The true wholemeal or germ bread, which was the staple food of England seventy or eighty years ago, can only be made from flour from which the vitamins have not been extracted by over-milling. This flour, so vital to the stamina of our race, the elaborate roller mills of this country are unable to produce. Only the old-fashioned stones of the old-fashioned mills, most of which have been dismantled, could produce it.

Our Health Department has never yet publicly stated whether or not white bread is harmful. As usual, it is left for private enterprise to step into the breach and tell us the value of whole-meal bread. I have to go, not to the Health Department, but to a little shop in Hay-street to read on its window, "Stop! You are starving your children. Cease giving them white bread." That shop, if its story be false, is guilty of libelling all millers and all who sell white bread. On the other hand, if its story be true, how is it that the Public Health Department has never publicly advocated the use of whole-meal bread?

Mr. Griffiths: When they started erecting the roller mills, they started erecting pill factories.

Mr. NORTH: In this, as in many other particulars, we should expect more than we get from the Health Department. We should expect that department to give us information on these matters. Then there is the value of being able to recognise the symptoms of deadly diseases. Few people know the early symptoms of consumption or of cancer, and so those symptoms are not recognised until the disease is no longer preventible. About three weeks ago I was glad to see in a Victorian newspaper a long paragraph published at the instigation of members of the State Parliament, telling the people the simple essentials of health, and how to attain it, what to eat and what to avoid. There is room for great extension of the activities of our Health Department in this and in many other directions. Take sewerage. I see no reason why Peppermint Grove or Guildford should not receive the same benefit from a public scheme of sewerage as do Perth and Fremantle, particularly since we now have a practical method of cheaply connecting houses one by one. I cannot see why the Health Department does not advocate the fitting of a septic tank to each house, as is done in Adelaide, where in certain specified areas every house has to be

fitted with a septic tank. I understand the cost is £25 per house, whereas the average rates represent 30s. or £2 per annum. So it is cheaper to instal a septic tank than it is to perpetuate the ghastly night cart service. In all these matters the Health Department has a lot of work ahead of it. I wish it success, and I trust the Minister will tackle some of the questions I have raised. Of course one can only reason as best one may, and I recognise that sound reasoning may be a beacon in the gloom of doubt, but it fades away before the daylight of actual experience.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [7.55]: We have heard the member for Fremantle, who represents the chief port of the State, and we have heard the member for Claremont, who represents a large metropolitan electorate. I represent the biggest agricultural electorate in Western Australia. It is the practise for members to bring forward on the Address-in-reply the various requirements of their electorates. If I should ask for more than my fellow members, it is because I represent a large electorate with a large population, an area which, nevertheless, is still in the development stage, most of it being but partially settled. It is only to be expected that the old established districts, that have had their needs served for so many years, should not now require as much as my electorate does. Last session I attempted to tell the House what was the production of my electorate. My figures then were not complete, but I have since approached the Government Statistician, who has provided me with the necessary data. In the Statistician's office are certain statistical plans. Each plan covers 600,000 acres, whereas my electorate comprises 6,600,000 acres. The production of wheat in Western Australia last year was something under 24,000,000 bushels: of that quantity my electorate produced 5,624,994 or nearly one quarter. Also it produced oats, hay and other things. Although my electorate produced a lot of wheat, the average for the whole of the land in the district is still a lot less than a bushel to the acre. I have here a map published by the "Western Mail," which makes the matter quite clear. The Dowerin-Wyalcatchem district has produced 1,485,000 bushels of wheat, the average yield being 14 bushels 12lbs. This sub-statistical district has three plans of 1,800,000 acres—only a small portion of my electorate. Of that area there is but 170,770

acres under crop, including wheaten hay and oats hay, so there is still great room for development in that district. Last session the Minister for Lands declared that 9,000,000 acres of light land within 12½ miles of a railway was useless. I objected to that statement at the time, and said there was more light land under cultivation in the Dowerin district than anywhere else in the State. On my suggestion the Minister for Lands has appointed an officer to go round the district and inquire. In October last I took the Minister for Works to my electorate where he saw thousands of acres of third-class land growing crops, many of them going over 20 bushels to the acre. Mr. Bos-tok reported on that district and stated that the whole of the land was suitable for wheat growing, but that unfortunately a great deal of it was beyond the recognised distance from a railway. The advisory board reported on the district quite recently.

Mr. Kennedy interjected.

Mr. LINDSAY: As regards light land, I am speaking from practical experience. I learned my farming, not by driving a railway engine, but by going on the land. In my electorate there is very little worthless land, and that little consists of wodgil country and the salt lakes. The rest will some day be brought into profitable cultivation provided it is tackled by the right men using the right methods. I wish to impress upon members that we have huge areas of land in the wheat belt that can be settled if railway facilities are provided. There is one railway which has been mentioned in the House on many occasions, the Yarramony project. The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned it on two occasions when speaking on the Address-in-reply, and has asked that the line be constructed. I hope it will be built. The Minister for Lands, in reply to an interjection last session, said this line would be built in its turn. In the list of authorised railways, its turn should be next. I have an idea, however, that an attempt is being made to construct another railway before it. I have no objection to any other railway being built. I quite agree that all authorised railways should be built. But when people have been in a district since 1908 and have been promised the railway year after year, they should get their line in its turn. I wish to refer to the production of these districts. Last session the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) wanted to know whether this line would pay. Look-

ing at the map, we find many portions of the agricultural areas in which no system has been followed in the construction of railways. The lines have dodged around to tap the first-class country and have missed the second and third class land. Before the Dowerin-Merredin line was built, I happened to be living in that district. I met the advisory board in the district and tried to persuade them not to recommend the route that was adopted. The line is in the wrong place. Still, there is a big area of land between the two lines and not served by either, because the distance between the two lines is as much as 40 miles. The question has been asked whether the production in that area warrants the construction of the line. The highest production in the State is from the district adjoining the Yarramony-Yorkrakin railway. The next highest is Kellerberrin with 1,393,049 bushels; the third highest is Corrigin, and the fourth highest is Bencubbin, the latter having 1,217,000 bushels. The next highest is the Meckering district. All four plans of these districts adjoin the route of the projected railway. In no other portion of the State is so much wheat being produced as in the district which would be served by this line. The people who have been in the district so long without a railway are carting for distances up to 23 miles. One gentleman who has been there since 1908 states that he has been paying 1s. 7d. per bag to get his wheat to the railway by motor transport. These people should not have been put on that land unless the Government were prepared to give them railway facilities. I hope the present Government will carry out their promise and have the line constructed as soon as possible. For two or three years an amount of £30,000 has appeared on the Estimates for this work, but has not yet been expended.

Mr. Richardson: Would the railway serve those four districts?

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, the line would pass through the centre of them. I do not intend to deal with the report of the Group Settlement Commission during this debate, because there will be plenty of opportunity later on. In passing, however, I might remind members that when I was appointed to the Commission, I said I was prepared to do my duty, and I am satisfied that I have done my duty. On this occasion, however, I wish to reply to some state-

ments made by members both inside and outside the House. Members constantly associate group settlement with the settlement of the wheat belt. Why the two should be associated, I do not know. The Leader of the Opposition made a statement which was published in the "West Australian." It having appeared in that paper, it must be true, because that newspaper always publishes the truth when it suits it. The report stated—"Western Australia can be thankful for two things; first, that the gentlemen who comprised the Commission were not asked to report on the settlement of the wheat belt in 1910." Why pick 1910? I fail to understand the reason. I happen to know something about the wheat belt in 1910 and shall deal with that aspect of it. The Leader of the Opposition also stated, "I would like the members of the Commission to do the work that some of these people have done." That again I take as a reflection upon me. The Leader of the Opposition knows that I was a pioneer settler, but the inference is that I did not do the work.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I said you did good work.

Mr. LINDSAY: The hon. member also said that the first 500 settlers in the wheat belt did not pay any interest.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. LINDSAY: "Hansard" gives the statement thus—"If we had waited for the first 500 settlers to pay interest, the wheat belt would not have been settled."

Mr. Mann: Which is quite a different thing.

Mr. LINDSAY: I wish to say that the first 500 settlers did pay their interest. The then Honorary Minister, the present Leader of the Opposition, stated on 20th November, 1907, in a speech on the Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill—

Something of the good the bank has done may be understood when I say that there are 3,970 accounts on the books of the bank. . . . While we have this large amount of money advanced, repayments which extend over a period of 30 years are responsible for a return to the bank of £116,020.

That does not deal exactly with the first 500 settlers but it does deal with the settlers up to 1907, and shows that they not only paid their interest but repaid instalments to the extent of £116,000. The amount advanced to that date under the old Act was £640,025, and under the new Act loans were

approved amounting to £247,000. It has been suggested that the settlers who went to the wheat belt got full value for all improvements, and that every man was thus assisted in his settlement. On the 11th December, 1907, Mr. Bath complained that the Agricultural Bank would not advance money to settlers east of Doodlakine. That was nothing unusual because even to-day, according to the "West Australian," we find Mr. Sutton stating that during a trip with the Railway Advisory Board, 20 settlers who had 2,500 acres under crop were met and only four of them had received assistance from the Agricultural Bank. That shows that individual settlers have gone out and proved the country and that the Agricultural Bank has then followed. Regarding the initiation of settlement in the wheat belt, I am not alluding to the area along the goldfields line because that was rather old established and settlers had gone to Tammin, Nangeenan, and Kellerberrin in the early days. I allude to the settlement of a district at a long distance from a railway, namely, Dowerin. In 1895 the first settlers went there. That was 15 years before the time mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. The railway line then extended no further than Northam, 40 miles distant. The settlers had to cart their produce that distance, and I doubt whether one of them received any assistance from the Agricultural Bank. Later on, in 1902, the Goomalling railway was built. The number of settlers had increased greatly, but even then a number of them were a long way from a railway. The first light agricultural railway built in the State was the Goomalling to Dowerin line. I went on the land in 1906 and was 40 miles distant from a railway, and never got full value from the Agricultural Bank for the work performed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I said you had paid.

Mr. LINDSAY: When I went on the land 40 miles from a railway there was no road except the old goldfields track, and to get to my holding I had to cut a road seven miles long. The nearest water was seven miles away, and I had to carry supplies of it on my back. I am told that I got full value for the improvements I carried out. My block was probably one of the heaviest forest blocks, and the amount I received from the Agricultural Bank was 16s. per acre. If that was full value, then I do not

understand the meaning of the term. I was not long on the Agricultural Bank. I had been on the land for 12 months before I could get 1s. from the bank. I was told I had gone out too far east. I went out to prove the country and the Agricultural Bank followed. Eighteen months later other settlers went to the district and the bank then advanced them 25s. per acre. I saw Mr. Paterson and explained the position to him, and he promised to give me a better deal. His better deal was to advance me 18s. on the next occasion, whereas my neighbours were getting 25s. I say the wheat belt was settled by men with strong arms and stout hearts, and not by the sustenance granted by the Agricultural Bank. I object to the statements made about the pioneers of the wheat belt, and I will not let such statements pass unchallenged while I am a member of this House. We are often told about the "spoon-fed cockies." In those days there was no spoon feeding; one was paid for improvements, but that was all. Certainly there was a loan of £100 for stock, but none for machinery or seed or super. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I was only able to save out of my 16s. for clearing enough to buy seed wheat. I borrowed two horses, I had a saddle, and I tied the reins to the stirrups, and I put half a bag of wheat on the saddle and sowed broadcast. That is the kind of spoon feeding there was in those days. Many statements have been made about croakers with regard to the wheat belt. The Opposition Leader said that if I had been asked to report on the wheat belt in 1910, I would have condemned it. As it happens, in 1910 I had 1,450 bags of wheat stored at Wyalcatchem siding, waiting for the Government to take over the railway from the contractor. I was not likely to condemn the wheat belt then, and have had no inclination to condemn it since. I have spoken on the subject with the Opposition Leader, and he knows my views. Therefore I think he might at least have omitted me from that statement of his. The first special settlement in my district was that at Yorkrakine, within two or three miles of my own property. The settlement was established in 1908. It was due to the unemployed difficulty. The present Minister for Lands had something to do with it, and the present Opposition Leader deserves credit for the action he took at the time. That settlement did not altogether dispose of the difficulty; there were still many unemployed in the State, and men were put on ringbarking and clearing

country further east. Later on, the civil service settlement was established because there had to be retrenchment, in the absence of work, and in the absence of money to pay civil servants. Many of us were on the wheat belt before any civil service settlement took place there. I remember when you, Mr. Speaker, selected land alongside mine. Although you were legally entitled to that land, a mistake occurred, and some other settler claimed it. You then agreed to surrender your block provided you were given an area elsewhere. I know something of the civil service settlement. I had the contract for sinking the dams there in 1909, before any civil servants were on it. I met the first wagon load of them coming out. They were bogged, and wanted me to pull them out. I said, "Yes, but take out your team first, because they will not pull the hat off my head." The team was taken out, and I pulled the civil servants out. This was in 1909, and the first crop these people got was in 1911. Our troubles started in that particular season, 1911, not because the rainfall was not sufficient, but because our farming methods were not suited to the rainfall. To-day we who are farming our land properly, would get good crops on such a rainfall. That is where I differ from the gentlemen who claim to have settled the wheat belt. I say it was settled with a multitude of mistakes, which had to be rectified. If the Government have to pay the piper, they should call the tune. Before embarking on an expenditure of millions of pounds in land settlement, they should know the best way to farm the land that is to be settled, and should only finance those farmers who farm in the approved way. My troubles started in 1911. I was one of the fortunate few who got something—four and a half bushels. That was another occasion when I applied to the Government for assistance. The Seed Wheat Board was inaugurated in that year, and I read in the Press that the board were lending money at 5 per cent. I had met a bank manager in 1910, when I owed the Agricultural Bank £165 and they would not give me anything more. The bank manager asked me, "How much do you want?" I said, "£1,000." He said, "You have got it." I never went back to the Agricultural Bank afterwards. The Agricultural Bank were binding me down, while giving me a few shillings, about half the value of the actual work; and I had to go down to Perth to see the bank officials

on several occasions. The other people simply said, "The money is there." However, I saw that advertisement about 5 per cent. on seed wheat stored in one's barn. I happened to have some seed wheat stored in my barn, and I thought I would have the 5 per cent. money, and I wrote a letter to the board accordingly. I was sent a form, which I filled in. Then I did not get a reply for a month, and I wrote again. Thereupon the board sent me a cheque. The next thing was that they lodged a caveat against my holding and sent me for signature a bill of sale over all my property and chattels. I saw my banker about it, and he supplied me with the necessary funds, and I wound up my business with the Seed Wheat Board. In the statement furnished to me by the board I was charged 2d. per bushel for office expenses. In the actual result I found that I was paying 13½ per cent., instead of 5 per cent. as advertised. I paid and got out, and have never been back to the Government since. That is my experience as a pioneer settler financed by the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is spoon feeding.

Mr. LINDSAY: Now I have got as far as 1911. I agree that 1912 was a dry year, though most of us did get fair crops. In the far eastern district, however, the rainfall was light; and owing to the methods used the crops were in many cases a failure. Then 1913 was a little better, but 1914 was an absolute drought, and the trouble on the wheat belt started. Up to that time the Government had been advancing money to clear forest country, but it had been noticed that the light lands were producing good crops in dry years. The Agricultural Bank then had a brain wave, and decided to start the farmers on clearing the light land, leaving the heavy land alone. The farmers cleared not only the light land, but many thousands of acres of wodgil country, which afterwards a Royal Commission reported to be worthless. Although the Government did reduce the price of wodgil land, the fact remains that many of those men lost years of their lives on it, and while struggling with the wodgil land acquired a load of debt which they could never get rid of. The next four years were the wettest years in the wheat belt, and for that reason, and because the farmers in those days used the same methods on light land as on heavy forest land, and also be-

cause they were not supplied with their requirements at the right time, and again because they did not get enough manure, the farmers got back further and further, year by year. In some cases the properties were abandoned and the men left the land. Had we known in the early days how to settle that country, the failures that occurred would not have occurred. The failures on the wheat belt have been on light land, and on light land alone. Now I want to deal with the question of light lands and methods of settlement, because the Government have just recently classified about 1,500,000 acres of light lands, the greater part being in my electorate. There is no railway through those lands, and a railway will have to be built before they can be settled. Personally I believe that in the past we have settled our lands in areas that were too large. I am quite prepared to admit that a good many of my friends do not agree with me, but I hold that 1,000 acres of land in the wheat belt is quite enough for any man, not merely to enable him to make a living, but to enable him to obtain a competency for his old age. The Government should never finance a man to become a capitalist, but only to put him in a position where he can have a reasonable sized holding. In the area in question the Government will have to be very careful indeed, or we shall have bigger failures there than even the failures in the older settled areas, these latter having a better rainfall. Before the new areas are settled, the Government should, through the Agricultural Department, lay down a policy of farming, and the settler should be financed to farm in that way and no other. The Government should see that the farmer carries out the job as it ought to be carried out. If that is done, I am satisfied the results will be successful. It is generally thought that what saved the wheat belt was the war, that during the war wheat growers got very high prices. I have heard a Federal member say from the platform to a crowd of wheat growers that they got many millions of pounds more than world's parity for their wheat, owing to the fact that the Government sold the wheat for them. I asked him how much the wheat growers had got, and his reply was, 'Five shillings.' I happened to have the actual figure about me. The amount actually received by the farmers was such as to justify the statement that the wheat belt did

not recover as quickly as it should have because the farmers, owing to Government action, did not get in their returns quickly enough to enable them to pay their accounts, their interest, and possibly something off their indebtedness. In the year 1915-16 the total amount we received for our wheat was 4s. 5d., and a few decimals, less freight; but this is how it was paid: The first advance was made on the 7th January, 1916, and was 3s. per bushel. In October we got another dividend of 6d. Taking that year as an example, it is not to be supposed that 3s. per bushel was sufficient to enable the farmers to pay their way, let alone meeting interest on their accumulated debts, of which they all had a lot at that particular time. The consequence was that interest was added to capital, and so the debt grew. I quite acknowledge that the farmers continued to get dividends out of that pool, but the final dividend was not paid until 1922, six years later. We had to pay our expenses meantime, or get someone else to pay them for us, and be charged by him for the service. However, things improved. In 1916-17 we got 4s. 1½d. per bushel, less freight. That was equivalent to 3s. 9½d. per bushel at the siding. If we had got the amount in a lump sum, we might have paid some of our debts, or at least met the interest on them. However, on the 13th January, 1917, we received the first payment of 2s. 6d.; on the 4th August of that year we got 6d.; and the final payment under that pool was made on the 5th November, 1920. The total payment for that year was 3s. 9½d. per bushel, and not, as stated, 5s. In the third year's pool there was an improvement. On the 21st January we got 3s. a bushel, and on the 15th August we got 3d.; in September we got another 9d., and the final payment from that pool was made in November of 1920. The total amount was 4s. 5d. per bushel. As a wheat grower, I can assure the House that in those three years the money received was not sufficient to enable the farmers to pay their debts. They were hanging over us and delayed to a great extent the recovery of the wheat belt, which would otherwise have been quicker. From that time on prices rose, and then we were able to pay back the money that we owed. In 1918-19 we received for our wheat 5s. 1d., in 1919-20 we received 9s., in 1920-21 we received 6s. 11d., and in the subsequent year 4s. 1d. We think it is advisable to mention these matters here because

while there has been expansion in the wheat belt, the progress has not been what might have been. All who took up land did not have the intention to farm. A lot of those who took up land in the agricultural districts did so merely for the purpose of speculation. Some certainly did go on with operations, but the number of genuine settlers was small. One who is now a member of another place had an area in my district and stuck to it until 1911, when he dropped his bundle and got out. We have been told that we got good prices for our wheat, and there has been a great amount of controversy on that subject. We, however, have not been very much concerned as to whether we got too much or too little. We knew that there were many difficulties in existence. But I wish to show what the price of wheat was in other countries during the periods that I have already referred to. In 1917 the guaranteed price of wheat in America was 2 dollars a bushel. That was the minimum price. In the next year it was 2 dollars 20 cents at Chicago; in 1919 it was 2 dollars 31 cents at Chicago; in 1920 it was 2 dollars 58 cents; and in 1921 the price dropped to 90 cents per bushel. I stress this for the reason that the question has often cropped up as to whether it would be advisable for this country to spend more money in further developing the wheat belt. So far as wheat is concerned, we can compete profitably with any country in the world. I have already told the House that there are 6,600,000 acres in my electorate, and there has not been a reduction of a bushel to the acre in the output. That electorate has produced a big quantity of wheat already, but in the next 10 or 20 years it will yield 20,000,000 instead of 5,000,000, which is the output of today. That is, provided we get facilities that the Government must provide. Last session a motion was submitted for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the water supplies for the wheat belt. An amendment was submitted by the member for William-Narrogin in favour of the personnel of that Commission being the engineers of the department. That amendment was carried, and I wish to compliment the Government on having acted on the decision of Parliament. The Commission carried out its investigations and prepared certain schemes, one of which happens to be in my electorate. The Minister for Water Supply, and Mr. O'Brien, the engineer, were out there a little while ago and produced plans and specifications in con-

nection with that scheme, the purpose of which is to supply an area of 500,000 acres. There are to be three dams in my electorate and the cost is estimated at £270,000. Last session, when I was dealing with this matter, the member for Guildford—he has more sense now since I have been associated with him for many months of late—said that the State could not afford to spend so much money on water supplies. The suggested scheme has been discussed by the people interested and they are perfectly satisfied to pay interest on the cost of the work. At the same time they are of opinion that they will be charged too much, although they cannot do without it. When we talk about water supply for agricultural areas, certain members seem to think that we are entering on an innovation. In order to find out what has been done elsewhere, I wrote to the Minister for Works in South Australia and he supplied me with a good deal of information on the subject of agricultural water supplies in that State. I have a plan here which displays everything that has been done in the adjoining State, and all the water supplies are marked in colours on that plan. It shows that there are also no less than 14,000,000 acres of country served. The amount of interest actually received in South Australia is a little over 3 per cent. In other words, in that State it is evidently their idea that water supplies are required in wheat and sheep districts, not so much for the purpose of deriving revenue, but more because of the development of that class of country depends primarily upon sheep and wheat. The total capital cost of the South Australian scheme runs into 19 millions sterling. One alone serves an area of no less than 6,000,000 acres. We in Western Australia are asking for nothing like that. The biggest area we have to serve is 270,000 acres. Hon. members may declare that South Australia has been able to carry out her works much cheaper than we can manage to do ours, but their schemes are as costly as the one in Western Australia to which I have referred. The one that more closely approached the proposal suggested for the district I represent is the Cowell scheme in South Australia, the total capital cost of which is £291,460, and the number of acres served 527,936. I understand it is the intention of the Minister for Water Supply to bring in an amendment of the Act to permit of an increase in the rate levied in the district. The rate at the present time is 5d., which is the limit, and in order to pay

what is asked by the Government the rate will have to be increased to 1s. In South Australia nothing so high is charged. As a matter of fact the highest rate imposed is 4d. per acre, and in some districts the charge is as low as 2d. per acre.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Are they gravitation schemes in South Australia?

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, I have all the details here; the hon. member may see them. The length of mains is 4,490 miles 74 chains. The mains were of concrete and wood, but reports showed that white ants had eaten the wood, whilst the collars around the concrete mains were breaking and they were being replaced by others of cast iron. In order to cover the cost in this State of £45 per 1,000 acres, the interest rate has been fixed at 7½ per cent. I recognise, of course, that interest and sinking fund must be paid, but I do not consider it fair, in the early stages of settlement, to impose such a big handicap on the farming community. Certainly they should not be asked to pay sinking fund. In South Australia the average interest on the money borrowed is £4 16s. per cent., and on some of the schemes no interest whatever is paid by farmers. One of the reasons for that is that there is not sufficient mileage of mains laid. There is not one scheme that pays the full rate of interest. I plead to the Government to leave the sinking fund payments out of the question here, and impose only a levy which will represent the actual interest on the money borrowed. If the interest rate were reduced to 5 per cent., it would mean that on 1,000 acres the cost would be a little under £30. Particularly in the more lately settled areas, which must have a permanent water supply, it is advisable that the Government should seriously consider the suggestion for the abandonment of the payment of a sinking fund, at any rate for a time, or until those who are on the land have become established. In the eastern wheat belt the water problem is a serious one. The last three years have been exceptionally dry. There were places in which isolated thunderstorms occurred. Without these it was almost impossible to fill our dams until the winter rains came. In the big flat forest country that lies in the far eastern belt, the ground is very porous and absorbs moisture as fast as it falls during the ordinary rainfalls, and again it is impossible to get the dams filled. The problem of keeping sheep, which is becoming more pressing, can only be solved by secur-

ing outside water supplies. It has often seemed to me that nature has provided us with the places in which to get water supplies. In these outside areas we find huge granite outcrops every 10 miles or so apart, that have evidently been placed by nature for the provision of water supplies for the surrounding country. It is right we should make use of them. The only way that land can be settled there is by using the rock catchments to provide the farmers with extra supplies of water. In speaking upon the question of opening up the million and a half acres of land that has been classified, I mentioned that I thought 1,000 acres of land was sufficient for a man whom the Government were financing. I have gone thoroughly into the question, and am satisfied that a great many of our mistakes in the past, not only of the individual, but of the Government, were due to allowing a settler too much land. Many more men went bankrupt in the wheat belt through having too much land than because they had too little. A man may improve 1,000 acres in 15 years and be a good man for doing so. Until the land is improved he has to pay land rents and road board rates, and the land represents a breeding ground for vermin for himself and his neighbour. After a man has spent 15 years slopping, as he has to do, to make a success, he has done enough, and has quite a comfortable living, and so far as the finances of the country go, that is as far as the Government should help him. People have said that this area is too small. I have referred to the land settlement in other countries. The United States is a large wheat producer. We are also under the impression, which is not correct, that there is a very big yield per acre in that country. They also talk about the big bonanza farms in America. I have here some information from the Year Book of Agriculture to show that this is not so. In America the four biggest wheat-producing States are North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The best spring wheat district is North Dakota. The acreage under crop in North Dakota is 8,252,000 acres, and the average acreage per farm is 466 acres. The yield for the years 1917 to 1921 was 9.2 bushels per acre. In the winter wheat States, of which Kansas is the largest, the acreage under crop is 11,500,000, the average acreage per farm is 274.8, whilst the yield per acre for those years was 13.5 bushels. One advantage we possess in com-

parison with the United States, so far as the spring wheat States are concerned, is that in the wheat belt we have a fine pasture all the year round for the grazing of sheep, whereas they cannot raise stock outside for more than six months of the year, and have to house and hand feed the animals for the rest of the year. I am satisfied that no country in the world offers such opportunities for the production of wheat as does our wheat belt. Western Australia offers great opportunities for increasing the areas under wheat, and can produce wheat as cheaply as it can be produced in America. It is stated that America is very close to the Home market. We must understand that a great deal of the wheat in America is railed about 1,000 miles, and it costs a lot of money to send it to a seaport. On the average it costs more to deliver wheat from the farm in America to Liverpool than it does to deliver wheat from our State to London. We have a vast area in this State that is only partially settled, and some of it is not settled, and it behoves us to make some attempt to settle it. For that reason railways are necessary. I have mentioned one or two railways which affect my district, and the extension of a third is necessary to settle the area in question. A large area of country has been classified by the Government north of Bullfinch, comprising a million and a half acres of land. Some of this land is in a dry district. To me it appears that the rainfall is sufficient provided correct methods are used. In order to convince myself that the rainfall is sufficient I have collected some figures showing the rainfall for that district and also for South Australia. Cowell, on Eyre's Peninsula, has an average rainfall of 11.79 inches, and the average for the six growing winter months is 7.62 inches. The rainfall at Bullfinch is 1,147 points, or about 20 points less than Cowell, and the rainfall for the six growing months is 734 points, or 18 points less than Cowell. The question arises as to whether Cowell is a safe wheat growing district. I have written to the Commonwealth Meteorologist to get some further rainfall figures. The rainfall figures I have are from the port near Cowell, and the average wheat yield is for the surrounding area of nearly 1,000,000 acres. It must be presumed that the rainfall of the far inland areas of this district must be lighter than at Cowell. Assuming that it is the same, we can say that if Cowell is a safe

wheat district, that district of which Bullfinch is the centre will also be safe. I have received some figures covering the 1923-24 season for the Cowell district. The area under wheat was 104,850 acres, the number of bushels produced was 1,123,000, and the average yield per acre was 10.71. The average yield is not very high, but I do not know what the rainfall was for the year. In these dry districts the rainfall varies, and until one knows what it is it is impossible to say whether the district is safe or not.

Mr. Davy: Is the rainfall as regular at Bullfinch as at other places?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have the rainfall for Bullfinch. Some figures have been given to me from the Merredin State Farm, showing the average yields from 1916 to 1921. Wheat sown after fallow shows an average yield of 22 bushels 43 lbs., and wheat grown without fallow was 10 bushels 47 lbs. Unfortunately, a great deal of the land has been farmed on the principle of non-fallowing. In the case of the State farm the yield was twice as great from fallow as from cultivated land. In 1919 the rainfall for the six growing months of the year was 748 points, or just about the average rainfall for Bullfinch, and the yield per acre was 26 bushels 16 lbs. The rainfall on my farm in 1922 was 1,050 points, and the rainfall for the six growing months was 703 points, and the average yield from fallow was 21 bushels to the acre. It is not so much a question of how much rain we get as to when it falls, and the methods employed to make the best use of it. I believe we could greatly extend the wheat belt into the drier districts if we used sound farming methods such as are necessary to get decent averages in those areas. Last year I spoke about education. It seems to me that more than half of our population is engaged in producing from the soil. Our education system, however, is made in the city and is not suitable for the children of country people. In a country like this, which depends so much upon primary production, we should take steps to educate our children in all kinds of rural problems. A great many of our children in the outer districts are getting no education at all. Owing to the scattered nature of our settlements, and the distance that the various schools are apart, many children in the wheat belt have to go without education, or wait until their parents

can afford to take them to town or send them to a boarding school. When the children do go to the town for their education they are not taught those things which induce them to go back to country life. The whole of our education system has been built up by men in the city to make lawyers, doctors, typistes, or shorthand writers of the children, and not to encourage them to engage in rural occupations and increase the production of the State. Although education is costing us a great deal per head of the population, it is costing less than in other countries. We cannot afford to have our country children growing up uneducated, or to have them taught along such lines as encourage them to leave the country districts as soon as they can. Because of this system we are losing the cream and having the skimmed milk left behind. I was appointed a member of the Royal Commission on group settlement, with other gentlemen, for the collection of evidence, and for the submission of a report upon that evidence. We have reported on that evidence, and many people have criticised us without ever having seen the evidence. Some of the critics are land owners in the South-West, and I may state for their information, since they talk about the wonderful potentialities of the south-western land, that I have seen some of their farms, and consider that the owners have taken a long time to prove the potentialities of the South-West. On the other hand, when I speak about the wheat belt and say what should be done there and what should be produced there, I at least have done it and have produced it. My wheat yield in the competition last year was the highest average yield in Western Australia. When these people criticise me I say to them "Why have you not done those things with your land if they can be done?" I except the Leader of the Opposition, because he has a farm in my district, and is a big producer. A few years ago, when I was chairman of the Dowerin Vermin Board, the rabbit inspector reported that the Opposition Leader had more rabbits on his farm than any other land owner had. In conclusion, I shall bring my intelligence, if I have any, to bear on matters before the House. I belong to a party, but I am not one of those who consider that the duty of an Opposition is to oppose every measure. No doubt I shall

oppose many Bills brought down by the Government, but as regards Bills not affecting my party's platform I may probably be found voting with my friends opposite.

MR. KENNEDY (Greenough) [9.4] I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. KENNEDY: I endorse the sentiments expressed by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) on the unemployment question. It is a deplorable state of affairs when able-bodied men have to travel the country to seek employment. It has been suggested that married men should be given preference of employment, but there are also able-bodied young men prowling around the country looking for work and, when they do not find it, yielding to temptation. We frequently have the spectacle of young fellows who have been unable to find employment being brought up for stealing motor cars and other vehicles. They have travelled through the country in those cars or vehicles, and after doing possibly a considerable amount of damage to them have abandoned them. Then the police have taken action. My own view is that before an immigration policy is inaugurated our own local unemployed should be absorbed. We can bring migrants here when there is employment to absorb the surplus population of other countries. It is pleasing to note the era of prosperity which the State is enjoying, due largely to the success of the land settlement policy. However, there are still large tracts of unalienated land in this State. In the Greenough electorate there is an estate of 33,000 acres, called the Mends Estate, which the Minister for Lands is having inspected by the Lands Purchase Board with a view to closer settlement. In the Northampton district there are large estates of first-class quality, though rainfall statistics are not available, by reason of there having been no settlement in that neighbourhood in former years. Several pioneer settlers, however, are there now, with the stout hearts and strong hands mentioned by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay). That hon. member compared settlers with engine-drivers, and I may point out to him that in the industrial arena there are men with strong hands and stout hearts just as there are in the agricultural arena. The hon. member, having pioneered a farm for years, can now

sit back; but one does not find engine-drivers and other employees sitting back on their £4 a week. They are hurried away to the Old Men's Home. I have known engine-drivers and other railway employees take up land and make as much a success of it as the member for Toodyay. Another question pertaining to land settlement is the Industries Assistance Board. No doubt that board when inaugurated served a highly useful purpose, but it has outlived its usefulness. At present many I.A.B. clients are practically on a dole system. They sell their wheat illicitly as a consequence, and then are hauled before the courts. Several such cases have occurred recently. The I.A.B. system now merely tends to make criminals of our farmers. The board should be modified, or brought under the Agricultural Bank; or else the clients should be placed under the system of private banking. It is also pleasing to note that the railways are in a paying position, due largely to the bountiful harvest. However, there are many ways in which economy could be practised on the railway system. Last year 142,000 tons of super were despatched from Fremantle and Guildford, most of the quantity passing through what is called the bottle neck. With the exception of the small quantity going down the South-Western line, the whole of the 142,000 tons had to go through the narrow neck from Midland Junction to Spencer's Brook. If private enterprise does not construct super works in Geraldton, the time has arrived when the State should do so. The trucks conveying super to the Geraldton district have to run from Fremantle and Guildford to Geraldton, Ajana, and Yuna, 380 miles, and when released have to run back empty to the wheat belt to pick up wheat. If there were super works in Geraldton, the trucks would go out to the farmers loaded with super, and would return to the seaboard loaded with wheat. After discharging the wheat into the steamer, the trucks would run back loaded with super again. We are told that there is a shortage of rolling stock, especially owing to increase of land under cultivation, and generally to increase of products. Another matter I desire to mention for the information of the Minister for Railways is firewood haulage. At present the cost of firewood is very high; in the towns it may be described as enormous—one gets practically a barrow load for ten shillings.

Fifty or sixty miles out, there is plenty of firewood, which a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton in the firewood rate would render available to consumers in the towns. That reduction would, indeed, be payable to the Railway Department, because under present conditions the trucks lie idle five or six months of the year for want of traffic. The proposed reduction in freight would render fuel cheaper in the towns and cities, and at the same time increase the Railway Department's revenue. Last year firewood traffic fell off by approximately 20,000 tons. Farmers cut down huge belts of timber, and instead of using the wood, just put a fire stick into it and let it go. If trucks were available, and if the freight were reduced as I have suggested, all that firewood could be transported to the metropolitan area. I am pleased to be able to say that mining in the Northampton belt is in a good position. Last year the Northampton field produced 10,672 tons of copper, valued at £34,955. The production of lead was 36,750 tons, valued at £101,219, an increase of 15,115 in tonnage and of £42,025 in value as compared with the previous year. Recently we have had a Royal Commission investigating the mining industry in this State. That Commission's report mentions a small link of railway required to connect the existing system with the town of Galena, and recommends the construction of that link. The consequent reduction in cost of transport, by that short distance of 11 miles, would mean more to the Galena mines than the 300 odd miles of railway from Ajana to the smelter at Fremantle. Last year I mentioned that this important mining field had no water supply except from the Murchison River when there were floods. I am pleased to state, however, that the Government have agreed to place on the Estimates an amount for the construction of a dam. I am disappointed that the Government have failed to effect the purchase of the Midland Railway, though of course one did not expect them to pay an exorbitant price. My personal view is that there were other ways of obtaining the amount of money required. The purchase of the Midland Railway is a burning question among the settlers along the Midland line, and also in the town of Geraldton. Possibly the company will at an early date be able to offer terms that will be acceptable to the Government. There is a great deal of dis-

content throughout the State with regard to the Traffic Act. Doubtless the Minister, when introducing the measure last session, overlooked the fact that the fees on horse-drawn vehicles were very high. That fact has since been emphasised by deputations both in the towns and in the country. Unquestionably the rate bears very hardly on owners of horse-drawn vehicles. I hope amending legislation will be introduced this session to relieve them of that burden. I wish to refer to the Constitution. I watched Ministers during last session; they look fresh enough now, but after they have been at work in Parliament for about three months they become a bit weary and discontented; they get a bit irritable when requests are placed before them to visit various centres, or to do things. Western Australia is a vast State with a small population, and when we ask Ministers to visit different parts of the country they say they have no time that permits them to get away from the city. If that is so it is time more Ministers were appointed. Responsible Ministers should be able to traverse the State and see for themselves the requirements of the different districts. It is useless sitting practically the whole time in a city office acting as a rubber stamp. It is essential that Ministers should get out and learn for themselves what is necessary. They must do that if the State is to progress. There will be further opportunities of dealing with other matters to which I desire to draw attention and I shall defer consideration of these matters until another occasion.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [9.17]: It was not my intention to speak to-night, but evidently the Government wish to keep the debate going. Personally I have no particular complaints against the administration of the Government so far. To a certain extent I feel more friendly disposed towards them than I did when I spoke during my first session. At the same time I have a few complaints; it would not be natural if I had not. I regret the necessity that gave rise to the entry of the member for Forrest (Miss Holman), but I congratulate her upon her elevation to this House. I hope her experience will prove of benefit to members here, and more particularly to the cause of the womenfolk of Western Australia. During the course of her speech in moving the motion now under discussion, I was particularly struck with

her references to the trials and tribulations of the timber workers. She mentioned the dilapidated condition of their homes. I sympathise with her in her remarks, but I wish to bring under her notice the fact that those timber workers are engaged in work of a temporary nature, and in the course of a few years they may be gone. There have been many farmers with their wives and children who have struggled under conditions a great deal worse than she outlined in connection with the timber workers.

Miss Holman: But the farmers have been building homes for themselves.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, but in struggling to make a home for themselves they were pioneering the country and building up something that is an asset to the State. When the member for Forrest travels around the country more, she will entertain much more sympathy for the women on the land. I was not present when the vote was taken on the amendment expressing no confidence in the Government, but I was in Perth for a week during the progress of the strike of hotel and restaurant employees and I agree with the Premier in his statement, for I saw no act of lawlessness. At the same time I do not hold with the principle that governed the situation. The Government should have enough backbone to say we must have law and order preserved.

Mr. Marshall: You say there was no lawlessness, and how could that be if law and order were not being maintained?

Mr. BROWN: At one time, if I met a lady friend and spoke to her in the street, I was moved on by the policeman. During the strike mobs collected and they were allowed to remain on the footpath. They were not told to move on. When I came down I did not know where I could get a meal. Even if I was able to get some cake and biscuits, I could not get a drink.

Mr. Sleeman: You should have followed the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale).

Mr. Clydesdale: There was plenty of water about.

Mr. BROWN: Why should the people be made to suffer simply because the police allowed the strikers to take charge? Dealing with the Governor's Speech, I am glad to see that the finances are in a flourishing condition. I believe that the Government will, during the present financial year, again enjoy a buoyant revenue because big prices are available for wheat and wool. That will

affect the revenue returns. The deficit decreased to something like £59,000 but I am not satisfied that that position was in the best interests of the State. Together with many other members, I have made requests for small amounts such as £40 or £50 and the answer we received was that the finances would not permit of even such small amounts being granted. If our requests had been provided, it would have meant greater convenience for the people.

Mr. Clydesdale: You are not alone in your suffering.

Mr. Marshall: We have all suffered from the same disease.

Mr. BROWN: I do not know that it is in the best interests of the country that we have not been able to obtain these small amounts from Ministers. Dealing with migration, we have been told that there are 2,000 unemployed in the State. It should not be so. If it be so, it makes one wonder if it is desirable—this question should receive serious consideration—to bring people out from the Old Land only to spoon-feed them from the time they come here. To-day young men reared in Western Australia from their earliest childhood days cannot secure land. If a block of Crown land is thrown open for selection there are 50 or 60 applicants for it. I have introduced several good men to the authorities, men who would be able to make a success on the land, yet they cannot secure holdings. In Eastern Australia I believe there are thousands of men who would be only too eager to come to Western Australia if representations were made to them. Why not have an agent stationed in the Eastern States who could tell those requiring land of our potentialities, of the land we have for selection, and the returns that are obtained? If that were done we would have first-class people coming across to take up the land.

Mr. Sleeman: Why not give our own people the first chance?

Mr. Panton: But the hon. member said there was no land available.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, there is. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) has told the Horse of the vast areas of land capable of growing good crops, but those taking up the land do not receive any encouragement from the Agricultural Bank. If an inspector were to go round he would say there was not sufficient first class land on the block, and that being so he could not make advances.

On the other hand, I have seen 20 bushels to the acre taken off that class of land and yet the farmer was refused a loan.

Mr. Panton: Why should he want a loan if he can do that?

Mr. BROWN: We have millions of acres of second and third class land available, and with the application of proper methods and sympathetic assistance from the authorities, those areas would be developed. In fact we must turn our attention to those parts because the eyes of the country are rapidly being picked out, more particularly in the assured rainfall areas. These second class lands, given proper treatment, will give fair returns. It is pleasing to note that the production of the State is increasing by leaps and bounds. I look forward to the time when Western Australia will be the biggest wheat-producing State in the Commonwealth. I am pleased to see that attention is being paid to the production of cotton. I believe that the North-West will prove suitable for that industry and every encouragement possible should be rendered to those engaged in the undertaking. The Government must realise, however, that while this new industry may not be a payable proposition for some little time, there is little doubt that Western Australia, should the venture prove successful, will be able to produce cotton equal to that grown in Queensland.

Mr. Coverley: The crop would be payable within two seasons.

Mr. BROWN: I hope that is so, and that should induce the Government to extend every encouragement to the growers. I am glad that the Government intend to assist the mining areas. Western Australia even now is producing more gold than any other country in the world. I know nothing about mining myself but according to reports we have millions of tons of low grade ore that should be worked. If the Government assist the industry to an extent enabling the low grade ores to be worked, employment will be given to thousands of people. Whether the gold bonus is the best means of encouraging the industry, I cannot say, but I believe it will prove beneficial. The question of railway construction is important. I do not know that the system followed by Parliament of authorising the construction of railways year after year, and allowing them to stand over for a considerable time, is in the best interests of the State. As settlement proceeds further eastward, the settlers will agitate for

railway facilities, although some of the earlier authorised railways will not have been started. The Government should construct all authorised railways as soon as possible. It has been the custom for each member to speak particularly of his own electorate and its requirements, including its railway needs. In my electorate people have been agitating for the Brookton-Armadale railway for the past 17 years. They have some 26½ miles authorised, but I do not think they are going to get even that length, or not for some considerable time. When the railway does go through, no doubt every inch of the land will be made productive. Further out we have the Kalgarin area. According to the Lands Department it is only there that virgin land is available. Selectors are going out 65 miles east of Kalgarin. How can we expect those people to succeed out there without a railway? The policy of the Agricultural Bank is not to advance on any land beyond 12½ miles from a railway. But in respect of that district the rule has been varied, and many a man has a loan on his land although considerably over 20 miles from a railway. We must turn attention to that district, for it is the only place where virgin land is still available. I am pleased to know that the Minister for Lands is having all that country classified. There is no doubt the areas east of Kondinin will become the greatest wheat producing areas in the State. But how can the people out there get along without a railway? Some of the people, finding there was no chance of getting a railway, formed themselves into a motor transport company, and carted in 25,000 bags of wheat before other districts adjacent to a railway had finished with their wagons. But it is impossible for those people to go on paying hundreds of pounds into a motor company when they are not in a position to meet their ordinary liabilities. Some inducement must be given if that motor transport company is to be kept in existence. That company is not competing against the railways, but is actually feeding the railways with extra freight to be carried all the way round Spencer's Brook. However, unless something be done for the people out there, they will have to go off their holdings.

The Premier: We build our railways the longest way round so that we shall get the extra freight.

Mr. BROWN: That is one reason why I am advocating a railway into Kondinin and across to Corrigin, thence to Brookton and

from Brookton to Armadale. That railway will save 100 miles of freight.

The Premier: But how much will it cost?

Mr. BROWN: It is all flat country. You had experience of flat country with the Lake Grace railway, which, I am told, cost only £2,000 per mile. When you build this proposed railway, it will prove one of the greatest assets the State has.

Mr. Clydesdale: There will not be much money left for trams if you get all you want.

Mr. BROWN: It has been contended that our party is not properly represented on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I do not know much about that, but I do know that Fremantle is the natural port for nearly the whole of the wheat belt, the great bulk of which lies direct east of Fremantle. It is all very well to talk decentralisation, but we must have one really good port in the State. I am convinced that in the near future the Fremantle Harbour will have to be enlarged. If the railway bridge is in a dangerous condition the Government will have to remove it to another site, and so allow for harbour extension. To-day we have a 24,000,000 bushel harvest, and before very long it will be 50,000,000 bushels, provided we give encouragement to the right class of settler, of whom we have plenty in Australia, without having to go overseas. I am pleased to know that the Government intend to give outlying districts ample water supply. In my electorate a scheme is about to be put in hand to pump water from a rock catchment on to a high hill and reticulate it as far as it will go by gravitation. I understand it is intended to charge £50 for every 1,000 acres through which the water passes. It is heavy rating, but the settlers will not grudge it for an ample supply. I believe other dry districts are to be similarly treated. I may say that the men outback agree that the Government are trying to do their best for the agriculturists.

Mr. Clydesdale: Come over here!

Mr. BROWN: No, for I wish now to say a word about taxation. When the land tax was doubled we were told that it was to be returned to the man on the land by way of reduced railway freights. What has happened? High class freights have been reduced 5s. per ton. If on a ton of general merchandise paying a freight of, say, 100s. there is a reduction of 5s., who is to get the benefit of it? It is impossible for the storekeeper to reduce his goods accordingly, and

so the farmer paying the double land tax reaps no benefit.

Mr. Marshall: The retailer never hesitated to increase prices on the slightest increase of railway freight.

Mr. BROWN: But they say that has to be. If a storekeeper has a ton of sugar and happens to know that next week the price will be raised by £1 per ton, it is not quite honest in him to increase the price immediately. Still all traders do these things. When speaking on the Arbitration Bill last session, I said that if an award of the court went against the workers they could resort to direct action. The member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) said it was impossible, that the workers would not do it. But what has happened recently in Perth? The tearoom employees, dissatisfied with their award, resorted to direct action.

Mr. Sleeman: What about an employer?

Mr. BROWN: If an employer employing labour cannot make his business pay he must go to the wall.

Mr. Lambert: Would you be prepared to compel a farmer to sell his wheat at a price fixed by Parliament?

Mr. BROWN: No. the Country Party are not asking for that. But the farmer has a perfect right to go to the Government and say, "We want you to fix a guarantee that will—"

Mr. Lambert: You are married to a guarantee.

Mr. BROWN: The farmer has to sell his produce in the markets of the world.

Mr. Sleeman: Does not the worker have to study the cost of living?

Mr. BROWN: That is the crux of the whole question. The cost of living goes up, and the worker asks for an increase of pay. So he is increasing the cost of production, instead of decreasing it. So long as the workers insist upon higher wages, it stands to reason the cost of production must go up, and that cost is passed on right through to the man on the land who, of course, cannot pass it any further.

Mr. Lambert: What does labour cost per bushel of wheat produced?

Mr. BROWN: That depends upon the conditions under which it is produced.

Mr. Lambert: What is the average?

Mr. BROWN: In the olden days I could make wheat growing pay at 3s. a bushel, but I am told that it is impossible to make it pay now at less than 5s. 6d.

Mr. Lambert: Would it surprise you to know that the real cost of labour is about 3d. per bushel?

Mr. BROWN: Why, it costs more than 6d. per bushel to put the wheat in the bags. Last year some bags cost 2s. and a bag holds only three bushels. The cost of machinery also is great.

Mr. Lambert: But that has nothing to do with labour. That is capital outlay, an entirely different thing.

Mr. Lindsay: It costs nothing for labour; we supply that ourselves!

Mr. BROWN: I should like to utter a word of praise of the public service. I have had occasion to take part in a good many interviews and have received the greatest courtesy from Ministers and the heads of departments. I do not think there is a more loyal lot of civil servants than those of Western Australia.

Mr. Marshall: Ministers are not civil servants; some of them are most uncivil.

Mr. BROWN: I found it impossible to get anything out of them but in future they may be more lenient when we ask for consideration for the strugglers on the land, the people who are pioneering and making the country.

Mr. Taylor: You cannot cash courtesy, you know.

Mr. BROWN: I do not know the Government's intentions regarding new legislation. Perhaps they will spring some surprises upon us. The Main Roads Bill requires careful consideration. It will be interesting to see how the boards are to be constructed, how they are to operate, and in what direction main roads are to be formed. The Commonwealth road grant should really bear the name of State road grant. Half the money is provided by the State Government, together with the whole of the cost of administration, and it is a misnomer to call it a Federal grant. Where the work of road construction has been carried out departmentally, it has cost up to £10 per chain, and I am told it could be done by some of the road boards under contract for £4 per chain.

Mr. Withers: The cost in the South-West is £35 a chain.

Mr. BROWN: The conditions in the South-West are quite different from those in the wheat belt. Unnecessary work has been done in many instances. The other day I saw a piece of work that had been stone

pitched. This had cost a considerable amount of money and was quite unnecessary. Had it been macadamised with good gravel, nothing further would have been required. I hope to take the Minister for Works round my district in the near future and show him some of the work. If he would leave a lot of work to contract labour, a great many more miles of road would be constructed than is being done under the present system. When I spoke on the Address-in-reply last year I stated that I was not a strong party man. That is still my attitude. If we had elective ministries, we would be better off. Under the present system each Minister has so much money granted for his department. He is despotic and can spend the money as he likes. Whatever party happens to be in power has the whole administration of the finances.

Mr. Lambert: Who should spend it—the office boy?

Mr. BROWN: No, but if we had a ministry elected by the whole of the members of Parliament—I would not go so far as to say elected by the whole of the people—we would have more stable government and government that would give greater satisfaction to everybody.

Mr. Marshall: Can you suggest how we could improve on the present Ministry?

Mr. BROWN: I have the greatest admiration for the administrative ability of the present ministry. I believe they are doing their utmost, but I hope some of them will take heed of what is said by the Opposition and will meet us half way when we ask for relief from the hardships we are suffering at present. In the Department of Health I do not think we could have a more enthusiastic Minister than the present one. Although I do not agree with some of his methods, particularly his Lotteries Bill of last session, to raise funds for hospitals, still if he introduced any reasonable measure for the relief of suffering humanity, he could depend upon receiving the support of members on this side of the House.

Mr. Lambert: What do you suggest as an alternative?

Mr. BROWN: Every district has its own little hospital, and I suggest that the local road board be allowed to impose a tax so that the people of the district would have to support their own hospital. I am told it is intended to make the rich man pay for the upkeep of the hospitals.

Mr. Lambert: He is the only man who can pay.

Mr. BROWN: But the man in fairly affluent circumstances does not use the public hospitals.

Mr. Lambert: You do not suggest that the inmates of the Old Men's Home should pay for the upkeep of hospitals.

Mr. BROWN: No, but the man who has acquired property through thrift and self-denial has to pay for the maintenance of the inmates of the Old Men's Home. If a man is trying to make a home for himself, he is perhaps considered mean when he denies himself many little luxuries, but he is doing the right thing by trying to build up a competency for old age. Any new taxation introduced falls upon the thrifty. Any measure that the Government introduce for the welfare of the people of the State generally I shall do my best to support, and I hope that Western Australia will continue to prosper.

On motion by Mr. A. Wansbrough, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 12th August, 1925.

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

QUESTION—MINING ROYAL COMMISSION.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What fee was paid Mr. Kingsley Thomas for his services as Royal Commissioner on Mining? 2, What was the total cost of the Commission?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Fee £2,100; travelling and other expenses £419. 2, Total cost £3,342.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan leave of absence granted to Hon. J. Cornell (South) for 12 consecutive sittings of the House on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley leave of absence granted to Hon. G. W. Miles (North) for six consecutive sittings of the House on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—MINISTERS' TITLES.

On motion by Colonial Secretary, Bill introduced and read a first time.

MOTION—MINING INDUSTRY, GOLD BONUS.

Standing Orders Suspension.

HON. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.35]: In connection with the motion appearing in my name on the Notice Paper, it is provided in the Standing Orders that only formal business can be taken before the adoption of the motion for the Address-in-reply. I propose that the House should suspend the Standing Orders, under Standing Order 422, in order that the motion may be dealt with to-day, for reasons I should like to explain. I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 422 as to enable the House to deal with the motion on the Notice Paper referring to the gold bonus.

It is rather an important matter to ask the House to suspend the Standing Orders without notice, and, as Standing Order 422 should only be availed of when there are serious circumstances which warrant it, I should like to explain briefly my reasons for the urgency in asking that the matter be considered straight away. The question affects a large number of members, and a large section of the community, and is all-important to this State. I refer to the gold bonus. Last May the question of the payment by the Commonwealth of a gold bonus was submitted to a body that had then been recently constituted, namely, the