

Chief Secretary that there is under the administration of the Lunacy Department a large tract of land overlooking the area in question, and as the department are now well provided with all the land likely to be needed by them in the future, this tract might be released and thrown open for selection. Then the settlers whose blocks are gradually being crept over by the water could remove themselves to the tract referred to, which is safe from floods, and yet of equal agricultural value with their present holdings. From the proposal there would be some financial gain to the Government, whilst the local governing body concerned, the Fremantle Road Board, would be relieved of a large area of dead land, of which they have too much. At present that large tract of land pays no rates although roads have to be maintained in its vicinity. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 3rd August, 1927.*

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

### SWEARING IN OF MEMBER.

The Minister for Railways (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

### QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Has he read the newspaper report which states: "18,000 electors. The State roll has them. But the Federal roll hasn't"? 2, Can he explain how it is that there is such a discrepancy? 3, Is it correct that there are large numbers of names on the Legislative Assembly rolls duplicated, being on more than one roll, also large numbers that should be cancelled? 4, Is it correct that large numbers are still unenrolled? 5, Is it proposed to do anything to bring rolls up to date?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, No. 2, According to the latest population returns and allowing for unqualified adults, it is estimated that the total number of persons eligible for Legislative Assembly enrolment is, in round figures, at least 210,000. 3, No. 4, No. 5, All rolls are undergoing daily revision. Between 22nd February and 30th June last the figures are—new names added, 8,538; alterations of address, 1,828; names struck off, 9,910. No further special action is considered necessary.

### QUESTIONS (2)—MAIN ROADS BOARD.

#### *Road Vehicles.*

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the number of motor cars and trucks, respectively, purchased by the Main Roads Board since it came into operation? 2, What number of sulkies, if any, was purchased by the Main Roads Board during December, 1926, and January and February, 1927? 3, How many of them are in commission, and how many of them are at the Government Stores? 4, Were the sulkies obtained and purchased through the Tender Board? 5, If not, why not? 6, Does the Main Roads Board obtain all its equipment through the Tender Board? 7, If not, why not?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, Cars 15, trucks 24. 2, December, nil; January, 3; February, 2; total 5. 3, Four in commission, 1 at Government Stores. 4, Yes. 5, See 4. 6, Yes. 7, See 6.

*Chairman's Absence.*

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Works: 1, Under whose instructions is the chairman of the Main Roads Board absent from the State? 2, If on departmental duty, what parts of the world is he visiting, and for what purposes? 3, On what date did he leave the State, and on what date is he expected to return?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, The Government. 2, Italy, France, England, United States of America, and possibly Canada; his duty being to study the methods employed in constructing the various classes of roads, and to give particular attention to plant and equipment used to provide for economical and efficient work being done. 3, 17th January, 1927, is the date on which he left the State, and he is due to return about the end of November.

**QUESTION—GOVERNMENT MOTOR CARS.**

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the number of Government motor cars that have been sold or otherwise disposed of for the six months ended 30th June, 1927? 2, What was the total amount obtained from such sales?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, Seven, 2, £131.

**QUESTION—VERMIN FENCE, STANDARD.**

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it a fact that the standard of vermin fence fixed for the State is considerably above that which is set out in Part I. of the second schedule of the Vermin Act, 1919? 2, If so, on whose authority was such a high standard fixed? 3, Will he see that the Act is administered so that certificates may issue as provided for by Section 104 of the Act of 1919?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: 1, No; excepting when a settler applies for exemption from payment of rates under Section 100a. 2, Subsection (1) of Section 100a, provides that owner of holding shall not be liable for rate if his holding is enclosed with

a fence to the satisfaction of the chief inspector. 3, The Act is being administered in accordance with Parliament's decision.

**QUESTION—LABOUR BUREAU AND GOVERNMENT WORK.**

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Premier: 1, Is it the policy of the Government that all men picked up for Government work must be picked up through the Labour Bureau? 2, If so, will he have instructions issued to departmental heads so that this course will be followed in the future? 3, If not, will he make a statement to that effect, so that the men following up at the bureau will know the true position?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, This is a standing instruction. 3, Answered by No. 2.

**QUESTION—GROUP SETTLEMENT, INSPECTION.**

Mr. ANGELO asked the Premier: 1, In view of the large sums already expended on group settlements and the certainty that this House will shortly be asked to vote more money for the same purpose, will he arrange for honourable members, accompanied by responsible officers, to visit the various settlements, including the Peel Estate, have the various schemes fully explained to them, and give them an opportunity to see for themselves what progress has been made and obtain some idea as to the ultimate success of the undertakings? 2, If so, will he arrange for the inspections to be made before any further debate on group settlements takes place in this Chamber and before the Estimates are considered?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Ample opportunity has been afforded to members to visit the groups. Portion of these are situated near the metropolitan area, and members desirous of so doing can inspect these and arrive at their own conclusions. 2, Answered by No. 1.

**QUESTION—METROPOLITAN PUBLIC MARKET.**

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Will he advise: (a) The proposed location of the metropolitan public market, as authorised by Parliament in the 1926 session? (b) The probable date of the

completion of the construction? (c) The personnel of the trust?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: (a), (b), (c). The matter is under consideration.

### COMMITTEES FOR SESSION.

On motion by the PREMIER, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:

Library Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Angelo, and Mr. Corboy.

Standing Orders Committee—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. George, Mr. E. B. Johnston, and Mr. Marshall.

House Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chesson, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Stubbs, and Mr. Thomson.

Printing Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. J. MacCallum Smith, and Mr. Panton.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Third Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. GRIFFITHS** (Avon) [4.42]: It was not my intention to speak thus early in the debate, but owing to the absence of the Leader of the Country Party, who is in the South-West touring the groups with Mr. Paterson, the Federal Minister for Markets and Migration—

Mr. J. H. Smith: Which groups are they inspecting?

The Premier: Those in the Nelson electorate.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: He and the Federal Minister are in the South-West.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They are not visiting groups. That is a lie.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member can easily find out by looking up the itinerary published in the newspaper, showing where the party is at present.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They are not visiting groups, that is wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: They are getting in already for the next elections.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have already taken action with a view to the next elections, in the questions I have asked of the Minister for Justice to-day. I suppose we are all more or less on the qui vive in matters

of this kind. If the hon. member feels that anything is being done against him, I suppose it is due to the general conditions prevailing amongst us.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I do not believe in misleading the House.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I should like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the high and honourable position that you filled so capably during the past three years. I offer you my congratulations from the personal point of view. I have also heard general expressions of opinion throughout the House to the effect that your having been unanimously elected without a dissentient voice showed that you possessed the entire confidence of the House and that all members appreciated the manner in which you had discharged your duties during the past three years. In common with your other friends in the House, Sir, I hope that you will enjoy better health than has been your experience during recent months. I do not know who is responsible for the comfortable surroundings we enjoy to-day, but whether it be the Government, or the House Committee working in conjunction with the Government, I should like to express my appreciation of the improvements that have been carried out. I think the comfortable seating accommodation will have its effect upon keeping members in the House and causing them to listen to the debates.

Mr. Wilson: Wait a bit.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Some so-called smart papers have referred to the accommodation as being comfortable quarters to sleep in. They have had their little joke.

Mr. Corboy: That must have been the "Slimy Producers."

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Or the "Southern Cross Times."

Mr. Corboy: Does that go in for politics?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member had a nasty knock from it a little while ago. That paper was inquiring as to the whereabouts of the member for Yilgarn. It said he was last seen somewhere in the precincts of Parliament House.

Mr. Corboy: That is only sour grapes because you could not unseat me.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I did not want to unseat the hon. member.

Mr. Corboy: You were too busy keeping your own seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! These personal interruptions must cease.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Having disposed of that little breeze I will now turn to the Address-in-reply. I wish to congratulate the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) upon the very moderate tone he adopted in the speech he delivered last Thursday afternoon. I have listened to speeches of his in the past, and have read them, and could not class them altogether on the moderate side.

Mr. Panton: They were too deep for you.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We who come into the House with rather extreme views find, when we have to carry the responsibilities attached to a member representing a large constituency, that our views become modified, and the tone in which we express ourselves becomes more moderate.

Mr. Sampson: And we age, too.

The Premier: It is the influence of years.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We are radical when we are young, but probably as we get older we advance more towards the Tory stage, and our views become broader.

Mr. Kenneally: You must be fairly old.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes. I try to keep an open mind, and I hope the hon. member will do the same, and endeavour to learn from others as he goes on.

Mr. Maley: Sometimes members become frail.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I suggest that the hon. member should follow the example of the Minister for Works. At one time that hon. gentleman was looked upon as one holding very extreme views when he expressed them outside the Chamber. As time has gone on, and he has had the responsibilities of a Minister of the Crown, his views have somewhat modified, and his sentiments have been toned down.

Mr. J. H. Smith: He stands for Musso-  
lini.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Mount Margaret told us a little tale about the member for Murchison, and I hope I shall not have to apply that to the member for Nelson.

Mr. Marshall: Let sleeping dogs lie.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am always prepared to give expression to my views, and sleeping dogs do not worry me. I rather like them.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Be sure of your facts first.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am always sure of them.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Did you read the Minister's itinerary before you began to speak?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We are here to interpret the spirit of the people we represent. In most Australians there is the strong instinct of commonsense. They expect us to apply common sense to the legislation we pass. More than that I have nothing to say concerning the member for East Perth, except that I congratulate him upon the moderate speech he made.

Mr. Richardson: He was warned about that.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: He painted a picture of the Collier Government in rather rosy colours.

Mr. Maley: It was not too mild.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: One would naturally expect that from a supporter of the Government. My object will be to paint the picture in somewhat different colours. I do not know that my colours will be quite so brilliant.

The Premier: There will be a great variety about them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That was a good one coming from the Premier. I can always appreciate a little joke, if there is anything in it, even if it is against me. I hope the Premier will accept what I have to say in a fair spirit, and will know that there is no venom in my remarks. It is a matter for congratulation that, on paper at all events, we have a surplus.

Mr. Panton: Do not spoil it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Even if it is not as good as the Premier has demonstrated to us, it shows that we are turning the corner.

Mr. Richardson: It may be a right about turn.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Last evening the Leader of the Opposition said certain things that would cause us to pause. I do not propose to go fully into those matters. We shall have an explanation from the Premier as to where the £57,000 is, and as to the £60,000 or £70,000 which has been collected by means of the petrol tax.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The Premier admitted that.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We shall also hear what has been done with regard to honouring our obligations to the loan trustees, and as to reimbursements and so on. I will not deal with those questions now. We hope that the picture we have had placed before us as to the satisfactory financial position will

turn out to be as depicted. No one honestly wishes that the surplus quoted by the Premier should be other than a fact.

Mr. Pantou: There are many doubting Thomases.

Mr. Lutey: Do you doubt it?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Leader of the Opposition has said certain things which should cause us to pause. Until the Premier has explained the true position to us, it is not for me to comment upon it, and I have no more to say about it. We must wait until the Premier has had his say before we can credit him with a surplus.

Mr. Richardson: We know there is not one.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I hope the Leader of the Opposition is mistaken. The member for East Perth said there was an occasion when the surplus that was set down on paper had to be looked for with a microscope. I hope the same thing will not be said of this surplus.

Mr. Richardson: You would not find it with a microscope if you looked properly for it.

The Minister for Railways: I should like to have it myself.

Mr. Richardson: I would not like to have to live upon it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Whether we had a surplus or not, we would naturally expect to be close up to turning the corner and to be in a position to have a surplus. Since the days of the late Lord Forrest I do not think any Government have been so fortunate as the Collier Government. The Premier has had the luck of the political position, and I congratulate him. Good luck to him, for it is all the better for the State. It does not matter very much who is on the Government side of the House, so long as they conduct the affairs of State properly, and give us value for the money spent.

Mr. Withers: You admit there is a surplus?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I admit nothing. I think I shall be able to paint a picture that is not quite so rosy as that which has been presented to us.

The Premier: No rosy picture has been painted.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Speech states that there has been a tremendous increase in primary production, and that this is having a beneficent effect upon trade and indus-

try generally. The record wheat harvest yielded 30,041,783 bushels; the record wool production yielded 50,182,045 lbs.; there has been a record fruit production, with high prices due to shortage on the London market and of other countries' supplies; there has been a record railway revenue showing a profit of £34,556, due mainly to the exceptional harvest; and the Speech states that all these things should be reflected in the State's balance-sheet. The Commissioner of Railways states that the profit on the railways is mainly attributable to the harvest and the prosperity prevailing throughout the State. Whether we have a surplus or not, is it at all extraordinary that we should be getting round the corner? I am sure members hope that we are doing so. At the end of the financial year I believe that 2½ million bushels of wheat extra were carried on the railways. At 4d. a bushel, even on one million bushels of extra railway freight, the revenue would be £16,666 13s. 4d. Two and a half million bushels mean in extra railway freight £41,666 13s. 4d.

Mr. Lindsay: The average rate is 4¼d.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am giving the Government the benefit of the doubt. I know that a considerable extra quantity of wheat was carried on the railways during the period coincident with the past year. Here again I am giving figures which I used during my election campaign. If my figures are not right, I stand to be corrected here to-day. The Premier should not ask for more than that. I make no secret of what I say when I am around electioneering. The disabilities grant, an oft-told story amounted to £353,000 for 1925-26, and amounted to £212,000 for 1926-27, a total of £565,000. It has been stated that about £25,000 was saved in interest by the receipt of that money. If I am wrong, the Premier will correct me in his reply. At the time I was electioneering the road grant ran to £384,000. Later figures published in the Government's monthly report of Western Australian activities show the amount to be £638,000, including the main road grant of £500,000, the £100,000 under the migration agreement, and £38,000 from State funds for the making of roads on the Peel Estate. Under the migration agreement £2,250,000 was borrowed at 1 per cent., representing a saving of £95,000 in interest. In respect of the

goldfields water supply there is an annual saving of £37,500 in interest. The Premier will probably take up these figures, and possibly he may show that some of them are wrong. I am a neophyte in finance but at the same time I want to know. The sandalwood royalty comes to about £50,000, and I understand the amount was taken into revenue. The petrol tax, which operated nine months, accounts for approximately £70,000. When that tax was mentioned here last evening, surprise was expressed at the largeness of the figure, and I interjected that for the last three months of the operation of the State tax, before the Federal tax came into operation, the collection was £30,000 or more. However, I was mistaken; the collection was £24,310 for the last three months of the period during which our tax operated. It is estimated that something in the neighbourhood of £70,000 was collected through the State petrol tax. Then there is the entertainments tax, which by the way taxes the lowest-priced entertainments, those patronised by workers and others who cannot afford to visit more expensive shows. The exact figures as to that tax are not available, but the results from it have made possible certain humanitarian activities on the part of the Government, at the same time relieving the Government to some extent from the necessity of calling upon other funds. Now as regards soldier settlement. At the time of my electioneering it was stated that £796,000 was the figure involved, and it was also stated that the saving in interest upon that item alone amounted to approximately £50,000. The increased land tax of 1½d. in the pound was estimated to produce £35,000.

Mr. Lindsay: I think the amount is £40,000.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The figure I gave when electioneering was £35,000, and so I was on the conservative side. Here is one matter upon which I desire information. It has been stated—if the statement is incorrect a denial should be given—that interest has been paid from loan funds on works under construction to the extent of £47,000. If there is a surplus, if we have turned the financial corner, that fact is due principally to the good season we have had and to the energy and enterprise of our settlers. That is the position unless the Premier can claim that he was responsible

for the good season, having entered into an arrangement with the Almighty for it. If such an arrangement did exist, it was excellent, and I hope the Premier will be able to continue it for the next three or four months.

Mr. Panton: That is already fixed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I shall not say more on that aspect until we have heard the Premier's statement. I feel quite sure the hon. gentleman will be able to clear away any mists in our minds as to these things. I wish now for a few brief minutes to consider the proposed financial arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States. Recently I saw a calculation that under the proposed arrangement New South Wales will receive a matter of £2,600,000 per annum, a total during the 58 years' currency of the agreement of no less than £162,000,000. Victoria, I believe, is to receive £2,300,000 per annum, or a total for the 58 years of £132,000,000. Western Australia, I suppose, is one of those outlandish places that really do not come into the picture. I do not know how the thing works out comparatively, but it has been stated that the annual contribution to this State will be £475,000, a total for the 58 years of £27,550,000.

The Minister for Railways: You got that from the "Sunday Times."

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes. No doubt we shall be able to discuss the matter more fully when the agreement is before us. I feel quite sure that the Premier and the House will watch the matter carefully. The proposal is not one which will trouble many of us 58 years hence, but it is of the most serious importance to those who will follow us. I repeat, I have not the slightest doubt that the proposed agreement will be carefully considered by the Chamber. I am not so egotistical as to believe that I am the only one who is giving thought to the matter. Mr. Bruce I regard as a well-wisher of Western Australia, but Mr. Bruce is in the same position as our Premier, and is not always able to do as he would like to do. The possibility is that while in Mr. Bruce we have a friend, he may be to some extent tied down. An item of the utmost importance in the Governor's Speech is that referring to group settlement. It is stated that a reclassification of group settlement areas is proceeding. I take it that really implies a sort of general stock-

taking of the position of the settlers, with the idea of so arranging matters that the settlers will be enabled to make a living. A second sentence in the Governor's Speech states that a board is to be appointed for the purpose of effectively dealing with group settlement and adjudicating on the complaints of settlers. At this juncture let me say that the abandonment or the merging or whatever is being done in the matter of the 500 blocks referred to, involving an estimated loss of half a million, calls for the exhibition on our part of common sense and courage. I am glad that the Minister for Lands has returned to the Chamber, because I wish to congratulate him upon his courage in tackling the group settlement question. I am not going to take up the stupid attitude of saying, "I told you so," but I do wish to emphasise the fact that in season and out of season the Country Party have advocated that something should be done in the nature of a general stocktaking or rearrangement of the groups, with a view to ascertaining whether there is any probability of the settlers being able to make good at the end of five years. Further, the Country Party have in season and out advocated the establishment of the board now proposed. It has been stated publicly over and over again that a board of practical men with statutory powers and responsible to the Minister should be appointed to control group settlement. Those two things are given prominence to in this session's Speech, and they are a practical vindication of what we on these cross benches have consistently advocated. A deliberate lie has been broadcasted to the effect that the Country Party are opposed to group settlement. I give any such statement a full and complete denial. As far back as 1915 we as an association affirmed the principle of group settlement. Mr. Pickering, who at one time occupied a seat in this Chamber, secured the carrying of the following resolution at a conference attended by some 400 delegates:—

That this Conference affirms the principle of improved farms in group areas in the South-West Division, and that it declares its policy to be to give practical effect thereto by providing sufficient loan funds on a long-dated principle.

This was seven years before Sir James Mitchell went Home at the invitation of the Imperial Government to fix up the migration agreement, and it shows that the Country Party, so far from being opposed to

group settlement, were in complete sympathy with it. Certainly we have criticised various features of group settlement. We have said things that were not very palatable to the late Minister for Lands. That gentleman had his opinions, while we had just as strong opinions the other way. We could not agree with him on certain points, and in consequence it was stated that we were opposed to group settlement. Once and for all I say that that statement is a deliberate untruth. We were the first to propose that group settlement should be undertaken and our suggestions have been ably followed up by Sir James Mitchell. While certain capital has been made out of the contention that a better arrangement was made by a subsequent Premier, we must give Sir James Mitchell the credit for having gone thoroughly into the whole question and for having secured an agreement such as did not exist between the British Government and any other Australian State prior to that date. The Government could, with advantage, when dealing with certain matters of this description, take the advice of members of the Country Party, because who is better qualified than each of the seven Country Party members who "sit in beauty side by side" on the cross-benches?

Mr. Latham: Why, not one of them represents a group settlement area!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am talking about agriculture generally. I congratulate the Minister for Lands upon his courage in tackling this proposition. I know he has a hard row to hoe, but we are into this scheme up to our necks.

Mr. Latham: If you make dairying attractive, it will be successful.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Minister for Lands intimated that the course decided upon will involve the total abandonment of some of the group holdings, and the linking up of others, covering something like 500 locations. I found something to reassure me in the Minister's statement, for he said that some of the settlers might be transferred to new holdings, or to other holdings, but in no case would any settlers be placed upon a block of an experimental description.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Thank God we did not listen to all the criticism.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Leader of the Opposition encountered a lot of criticism in respect of the wheat belt, and has come in for a lot of criticism regarding the group

settlement as well. No man who did anything in this world ever escaped criticism!

Mr. Maley: And the criticism against him came from Country Party members more than from any other section.

The Minister for Justice: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not think so. There were some things with which the Country Party members could not agree.

Mr. Maley: What I state is a fact, and you know it!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At times members of the Country Party have criticised the scheme in respect of methods employed, but to say that we have been opposed to group settlement is wrong.

Mr. Maley: You know you have been opposed to it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Country Party members have not been opposed to it.

Mr. Maley: Too right, they have!

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Individual members of the Country Party have been opposed to it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Irwin (Mr. Maley) will break the ice soon, and make a speech!

Mr. Maley: If I could not make a better speech than you, I would sit down.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Irwin is comical.

Mr. Maley: Your statements are comical indeed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Reference was made in the Governor's Speech to the visit of the members of the British Parliamentary Association headed by the Marquis of Salisbury and the Hon. Arthur Henderson, one of the leaders of the Labour Party in the House of Commons, and appreciation expressed of the attitude adopted by those members on their return to England.

Mr. Maley: Why not express your own views instead of those of someone else?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Since their return to England, members of the party have been speaking about our land settlement and migration policy, and the common sense manner in which we have been handling our problems. I have seen articles written by Mr. Lumley, M.P., for East Hull, and by others who visited Western Australia with that delegation, in which similar sentiments were expressed. At a dinner given to our new Agent General, Hon. W. C. Angwin, upon his arrival in London, fine speeches of commendatory character were made by a

number of people who had visited Western Australia, and excellent reports of the speeches appeared in the Press. During recent years we have been favoured with visits of a notable delegation of Empire pressmen under the leadership of Lord Burnham, and more recently a prominent Labour member, representing the Motherwell division in Scotland, visited the State as well. In fact, we have had a string of men of note, men who have done things elsewhere, passing through Western Australia and pausing to examine our land settlement and migration scheme. I am sure Western Australia is the better for the visits of such people. Our immense country, our difficulties, our successes, and our problems will be better understood in consequence, and as time goes on we shall reap the benefit to be derived from visits such as those paid by people of the calibre I have referred to. Western Australia can reap nothing but good from the visits of such people. So long as we have men of the calibre of our new Agent General, Hon. W. C. Angwin, and of our late Agent General, Sir Hal Colebatch, representing us in England, the interests of Western Australia will be kept in the forefront and conserved in every way possible. On the 10th April a motion dealing with migration was debated in the House of Commons, preceded by a preliminary address delivered by our Agent General, Hon. W. C. Angwin. It appears that our astute Agent General, immediately on his arrival on British soil, got into touch with Sir Howard d'Egville, the secretary of the British Parliamentary Association, who appropriately arranged for an address to be delivered by Mr. Angwin prior to the commencement of the debate in the House. That debate arose on a motion in the name of Captain Eden, who visited Australia with the Empire Press Union delegation. Members of that party visited Western Australia some time ago. The address delivered by Mr. Angwin had a marked effect upon those who listened to it, and that is evident from the reports that appeared in the British Press. Mr. Mackinder, who caused some amusement in this Chamber when giving us his ideas regarding some of the people on the group settlements, Mr. Lumley and Dr. Drummond Shiels, all spoke in fine terms regarding Western Australia and their experiences here. It has to be remembered that we have £4,680,534 expended in connection with group settlement affairs, and, in consequence, we should take notice of the opinions



of people who have been through the group settlement areas in the South-West and have been able to form independent opinions. The motion tabled by Captain Eden and moved by him in the House of Commons was couched in the following terms:—

That this House observes that over a period of widespread depression in trade, the proportion of our trade with the Empire has increased and continues to increase, and is of opinion that, in order to benefit the people of this country by developing our best and most productive markets, and in order to assist those Dominions which so desire it, further to increase the British population within its territories, no effort should be spared, in co-operation with the Governments of the Dominions, to initiate new proposals and to increase the existing facilities for settlement in the Empire overseas.

Mr. Lumley, M.P. for East Hull, one of the recent visiting Parliamentarians, who seconded the motion, showed by statistics the importance to Britain of trade with the overseas Dominions, quoting such exports to Australia and New Zealand as Axminster carpets, 61 per cent., newsprint, 92 per cent., and the good percentages of steel girders, writing paper, electric wires, etc., and concluded by putting in a strong plea for more Imperial expenditure to assist migration to and settlement in British Dominions in these words—

Is our credit never to be used for the Empire? I would point to Western Australia, where there is, I think, a completely unanimous desire to proceed as swiftly and as strongly as possible in a policy of development of that State, but how long can that State, with its very limited resources, bear the burden of a great scheme like that which they are undertaking in their group settlement area? Is not the time already approaching when they will be unable to continue that scheme? I would ask, cannot the Treasury have some vision in this matter, and at any rate help that State? Can they not at least consider whether it would not be possible to make a 50-50 rule under the Empire Settlement Act?

Mr. Mackinder, M.P. for Shipley in Yorkshire, another of our visitors, also spoke at considerable length referring to Mr. Angwin's address, the cost of settling men on the groups and the training they received at Catterick. Another of our parliamentary visitors, Dr. Drummond Shiels, M.P. for Edinburgh East, gave utterance to the following:—

I am convinced that it is only in Queensland and Western Australia that a migrant without capital has really any chance of success at all. It is, however, quite ridiculous to send people, as we have done, out to Western Aus-

tralia to these group settlements, which are all for dairy farming, and some of these unfortunate people do not know one end of a cow from the other. This is a very tragic situation when you have got to milk a cow, and there are many other points like that which make the lot of these people very difficult. It is a terrible tragedy that since the war Britain has spent £380,000,000 in public relief largely for unemployment, and yet we have nothing to show for it. If we spent that money now in a big scheme of this kind both at Home and abroad, it would be a real asset not only to our country but to the Empire.

Other speakers were Major Astor, Lieut.-Col. Gault and Miss Bondfield. Col. L. C. Amery, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, closed the debate in a very able and informative speech, remarking, *inter alia*—

To-night's debate has, to me at any rate, been full of encouragement. It has been on a high level and on a practical note throughout; a debate, not a disputation, but of co-operation in which everyone has contributed his share of knowledge and ideas towards the moulding of a great policy which is entirely above party and which we all feel to be vital to the life of the nation.

The motion was put and carried without a dissentient voice. These people have expressed their confidence in us and it behoves every man, irrespective of party, to do everything possible to make the group settlement scheme a success. I am convinced that it can be made successful. I listened with interest to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition last night, in which he referred to what had been done with regard to the introduction of new plants and in finding new uses for various types of land in Western Australia. I can take hon. members to various places in the wheat belt where, until a few years ago, land was said to be useless but where today, because of the adoption of proper methods, there are quite reasonably good properties. Of course they are not equal to forest country.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is a good point to make. Land that was deserted a few years ago is now turned to profitable use.

Mr. Lindsay: But it was not the fault of the land.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, the price of wheat had a good deal to do with it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Undoubtedly that influenced the position a good deal. Having dealt with the Parliamentary Association let me refer to the remarks made by the

member for Northam last night. I knew Mr. Walter Gale fairly well before he left this State, and had met him on several occasions since. He has now passed away. Although I am not a Western Australian by birth, I can quite understand the feeling that prompted the member for Northam to speak of Mr. Gale's death. That gentleman was a faithful servant of this House for ten years and for the last 26 or 27 years carried out similar duties in the Federal House. Something like 47 of our 80 members are members of the Parliamentary Association. All of them should be members, as I understand all the Federal Parliamentarians are. Mr. Gale was secretary for Australia of the Parliamentary Association and it would be fitting if we expressed sympathy with his relatives. I hope the member for Northam will move in that direction. Let me now refer to the Federal aid roads grant. I gather from the Government monthly report that £500,000 has been expended from the grant, £100,000 under the migration agreement and £38,000 of State funds for the Peel Estate. One matter about which I am concerned and which should not be regarded from a party standpoint is whether for this great expenditure on roads we are getting value. To illustrate my point let me give one instance of many that have been brought under my notice. In other electorates, I believe, road work has been done in a more glaringly wasteful fashion than in the instance I am about to mention. Some years ago I stated in this House that a road had been cleared from North Baandee to Kununoppin, a distance of 30 odd miles, by the local authorities, and that a Government party then came along—men who had been unemployed—and put in a duplicate road.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They let the contract; the department did the work and then the contractor came along and cleared a second road.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Baandee seems unfortunate. A thousand pounds was provided for a stretch of road south of Baandee and, without warning the local authorities or calling for tenders, a gang of men were put on to the work and the thousand pounds was spent. The local road board's engineer measured up the work and estimated that the board could have constructed the road for £600, and I believe

that amount would have provided for a road three feet or four feet wider.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: On the same specification?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, and properly gravelled. The road constructed by the gang was not properly gravelled or constructed and would not have been passed by the local engineer. There are big sums involved in our programme of road construction. We are getting these large sums of money pretty easily, and it is the duty of Parliament to see that the money is properly used.

The Minister for Mines: I do not know about its being got easily. We are finding half.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Federal Government are providing £1 to our 15s.

The Minister for Mines: And it costs something for administration.

Mr. Mann: What, 25 per cent. for administration!

Mr. Corboy: No.

Mr. Clydesdale: The Main Roads Board are doing good work.

The Minister for Justice: Who said that administration costs 25 per cent.?

Mr. Sampson: The Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: I did not. If you like to tell untruths, you can.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Minister should withdraw that remark.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Minister for Mines: I shall not withdraw it. He should not put words into my mouth.

Mr. Sampson: You should not acknowledge it.

The Minister for Mines: You were asleep when I made the interjection.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not intend to dwell on the subject of roads at any greater length, though I believe the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) can give other instances.

The Premier: You should not give away his speech.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have discussed the matter with him. I think the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) also knows something of a duplicate road in his district that ends nowhere.

Mr. Corboy: If you know about it, go on.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is in your constituency.

Mr. Corboy: You are displaying an absolute ignorance of the whole of the facts.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am guided by what Mr. Bamber said.

Mr. Corboy: If you rely on him, you would rely on anything.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I cannot speak as to that, but I know it was in the Press. The Main Roads Board admit that they got into a lot of trouble over that road.

Mr. Corboy: That is perfectly true.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Well, what is wrong?

The SPEAKER: The member for Avon must address the Chair.

Mr. Corboy: Find out what you are talking about.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am not talking about it at all. Members laugh, but the member for Yilgarn can tell us about that road.

Mr. Corboy: Of course I can, but you cannot. Why bring it up if you do not want to talk about it?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am not concerned about the road; I merely referred to the hon. member.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair or resume his seat.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I must commend the Minister for Agriculture upon his attitude to experimental work. Experimental farms are being established in what have been regarded as risky areas, but I believe they will be proved to be less risky than is generally thought.

Mr. Corboy: You yourself said they would produce only a bushel to the acre.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Did I?

Mr. Corboy: Yes.

The Premier: That was in the paper, too, so it must be right.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The information came from the Statistician.

Mr. Corboy: I saw a letter over your own signature in which you made that statement.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There is no doubt that other countries are adopting a very definite attitude towards the scientific aspect of farming. Western Australia is forging ahead and is now adopting a proper attitude to the question of scientific agriculture. Dr. Richardson, of South Australia, is engaged on a campaign to increase the wheat production of that State to a minimum of 50,000,000 bushels. He says it is possible to increase the average yield per acre by three to five

bushels. In Victoria attention is being given to the important question of increasing the acreage yield and in the Wimmera district, where the farmers talk of bags and not bushels, the average of nine bushels 20 years ago has been increased to nine bags. Mr. Sutton has assured us that there is no reason why we should not obtain a 15 bushel average and what a splendid future that would open up for Western Australia. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking last night I made an interjection in reply to his statement about old land becoming worked out. When the ex-Agent General, Sir Hal Colebatch, recently returned from Europe, he spoke of the remarkable change that had come over Italy. He was reported as follows:—

He spoke of his visits to Italy on his return journey to Australia, and of the intense production carried on there in order to meet the requirements of the increasing population. Italy, indeed, furnished a wonderful example of what was possible in the way of increasing wheat production. In July, 1925, a committee was set up to see to it that Italy produced the grain that she consumed. The purpose was to make each hectare grow more grain by (1) better seed selection, (2) improved fertilisers and technical equipment, and (3) fixity of prices. The result of Italy's effort has been described by an English writer as follows:—"The whole rural community set to work to check the importations of cereals which, Mussolini said, constituted the most voracious gnawing maggots of the country's economy, for Italy's adverse trade balance was half due to these importations. The extraordinary thing is that under intensive propaganda and consequent work, within a year the crop was enormously increased. Indeed, more than half the necessary extra production has been achieved to avoid grain importation. If the Permanent Grain Commission continues with the same educational vigor for another 10 years, Italy will not be dependent on foreign grain at all."

No record is available of the average yield in Italy prior to the campaign and since it was undertaken. Sir Hal said that the land of Italy generally was not as good as that of Australia. When we study the results of the cropping competition in this State, there is no reason why Mr. Sutton's ambition should not be realised.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Our land is practically all new. There is not much old land.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, in that respect we are all right. The results of the cropping competitions fully demonstrated the value of those competitions. The

winner in No. 1 zone was J. D. Hammond, of Kellerberrin, who cropped 567 acres in 1904 for a yield of 23 bushels 9 lbs. per acre; in 1925, 489 acres 22 bushels 26 lbs. per acre; and in 1926, 781 acres 20 bushels 43 lbs. per acre. Now I am again going to refer to my friend the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) who came second in these cropping competitions. He cropped 390 acres, 380 acres and 472 acres in the three respective years and his average yields were 26 bushels, 35 lbs.; 23 bushels, 24 lbs.; and 19 bushels, 35 lbs. It will thus be seen that the increasing of the wheat average to the stage that Mr. Sutton is hoping for, is not, after all, such a far-fetched proposition as it would appear to be. The average yield in Western Australia is affected by the great area of new land that is coming into cultivation; that tends to reduce the average. The competitions, however, are being fostered and supported by the Agricultural Department and the Agricultural Society, and I believe the departments are actively concerned in trying to bring about that increased production we all desire to see. I desire to make some reference to experimental farms and to offer a suggestion that may appeal to the Minister. Some little time ago I had a conversation with a member who sits on the Ministerial side of the House, on the subject of Muresk College and the Narrogin Farm School. He expressed the view—and the same view was uttered by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo)—that the students at Muresk should be given the opportunity to spend a few days at the Merredin State Farm. It was argued, and I think quite rightly, that the students are in a somewhat damp area, and that at Merredin they would see things in a different light, which would be very good for them. The proposal, if carried into effect, would not cost very much. The member for Gascoyne made a similar suggestion when speaking at Merredin on the occasion of the Merredin field day, and he stated that the lads could be camped at the Merredin farm. I am sure the boys would enjoy the outing and they would see how the operations were conducted at that State farm. The Minister for Agriculture at that time did not express any opinion about the proposal; at the same time I commend the idea to him because I consider it will be in the interests of the students to take them there, principally because of the fact that it will add to their general knowledge. If it did nothing else, the visit

would foster a spirit of inquiry. I notice that in the legislative programme of the Government it is proposed to submit Bills to deal with closer settlement, public hospitals, local Government, an amendment of the Constitution, the Public Service, workers' compensation, the regulation of mines and the electoral laws. I read in the "West Australian" that the Government are to be asked to bring forward a Bill to constitute a development commission, the idea being that that commission should precede town planning legislation. The municipal council also consider that there should be local control of central services, such as water supplies, sewerage and transportation other than the railways. We in this House have often expressed the opinion that the public utilities in the metropolitan area should be controlled by a trust or a board, as is the case in the Eastern capitals, and in other parts of the world. Evidently the City Council hold the view that the time is ripe when action of some such description should be taken. It is interesting to note the extent to which in the city the civic sense appears to be growing. In the "West Australian" of a few days ago I read an article on the town planners' vision of the city in 25 years' time. Let me say that that vision may not be so imaginative as would appear at the first blush. We must not forget that an airship base is to be established in the vicinity of Perth in the not distant future, and it has been definitely stated that we shall be able to travel from here to Great Britain in 11 days. When we realise also the changes that are taking place in regard to many activities, such as wireless, we must not be surprised at the progress that will come about in the near years to come. We know that it is now possible to communicate with England from Melbourne almost instantaneously, whilst the growth in many other directions, being as rapid as it is, is tending towards the realisation of the vision of our city in 25 years' time. Another matter that should not escape attention is the celebration of the centenary of the State. We understand from the Press that the question is being given consideration, but I think the time is ripe when a programme should take something like definite shape. Reverting to the Perth municipal authorities—and it is satisfactory to know that there is a live mayor in control—the proposals that they have made in respect of the control of the various metropolitan activities, other than

the railways, are worthy of the attention of the Government. I asked a question to-day regarding the electoral rolls, but I would like it understood that I have no serious complaint to make in respect of the electorate I represent, though I know that there have been complaints from other electorates. I believe the reply the Minister gave was that everything connected with the State rolls was all right, that they were not unduly inflated. At any rate, the Minister will probably be able to satisfy himself that the position is not as has been stated. What I wish to draw the Minister's attention to is the hours at which the polls, State and Federal, close, one being at 7 o'clock and the other at 8 o'clock. This is responsible for a good deal of confusion. Of course we know that the electors should be aware of the position, but the fact remains that many people are under the impression that the State polls closed at 8 o'clock and consequently failed to record their votes.

Mr. Sampson: The hours should certainly be uniform.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, and so should the rolls, but I suppose there are obstacles in the way of uniformity in the rolls. I suppose it is a matter of boundaries. Possibly the difficulty may be swept away when we get a Bill to amend the boundaries. I have a feeling that something of the sort is likely to come before us in the near future. If it will have the effect of doing away with duplications, the result should be very satisfactory.

Mr. Sampson: There is no indication of a Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At the last elections the votes recorded in the electorates of Menzies, Mount Margaret, Hannans, Yilgarn, and Coolgardie totalled 1,852. I represent 5,235 electors, while the members for the districts I mentioned represent 134 at Menzies, 212 at Mount Margaret, 422 at Hannans, 607 at Yilgarn and 477 at Coolgardie. Those are the votes that were actually recorded. I recorded all those put together and there were many to spare. The five seats I have mentioned have a total enrolment of 3,750 electors as against 5,235 electors enrolled for the Avon constituency. That is to say, my constituency is equal to the five seats mentioned, with 1,485 electors to spare.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: What is the difference in area?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not know that the hon. member should bring the North-West idea about areas into the question. I do not know that he can say much about the Menzies constituency, for instance. I mention these points in no carping spirit, but merely wish to draw the attention of the House to facts as they are with a view to indicating that the time is ripe for a redistribution of electoral boundaries. As a matter of fact, the redistribution should have been carried out a long time ago, and the anomalies to which I have referred should certainly receive attention. If I can be said to equal the representation of five other seats, what can be said regarding the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) who represents a constituency having 17,000 electors on the roll? Of him it may be said that he represents 15 seats. It is high time that something was done to get rid of such anomalies.

Mr. Sleeman: Would you cut the electorates up evenly?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Don't be silly!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, that is a silly interjection.

Mr. Sleeman: Of course it is when it comes to your point of view, but not for the North-West.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Another important matter relates to the amendment to the Vermin Act of 1918 and the further amendments, to which assent was given on 3rd January, 1927.

Mr. Sleeman: That was a good Act.

Mr. Latham: Yes, for the pastoralists.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: When we debated the amendments to the Vermin Act, it was estimated that the tax to be imposed would bring in for the year 1927-28, £10,600 from the pastoralists and £39,500 from the agriculturists. That tax was on the basis of 1d. in the pound for the pastoral areas and ½d. in the pound for the agricultural areas. Seeing that sheep are distributed practically on a fifty-fifty basis as between the pastoral and agricultural areas, we claim that the contributions levied under the taxing provisions of the Act should be something like on a fifty-fifty basis. Owing to the heavy valuation placed upon land in the South-Western division of the State, it was felt at the time that a tax of ½d. in the pound was excessive. Of course I know the Minister will say that that tax was asked for.

Mr. Latham: Who asked for it?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It was mentioned at certain deputations, but we need not go into that aspect now.

Mr. Latham: Who mentioned it?

The Minister for Lands: Some of your own constituents asked for it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Some of them may have done so.

The Minister for Lands: And you ran away from it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not know that I did.

The Minister for Lands: No, but the member for York did.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If the proposals I advanced had been adopted, they would have meant imposing similar taxation on the pastoralists and the agriculturists alike. The Minister assured us that if it were found that too much was raised by way of taxation on the basis fixed in the Act, the position would be reviewed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He must bring regulations before the House.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) proposed in the House that the rate of tax to be paid by the farmer should be one-eighth of a penny in the pound. That proposition was ridiculed by some hon. members but it is to the credit of the Leader of the Opposition that he supported an amendment moved by the member for Katanning to fix the rate at one-eighth of a penny in the pound. I will quote Sir James Mitchell's words, for they set out the point I wish to make. Sir James said—

I only wish the House to be fair and not say to one section, "You must pay four times more than another section." Pastoralists have told me they do not want the North to pay for the South, or the South for the North. While the agricultural land will grow in value and contribute more by way of taxation, and while a great deal more agricultural land will be selected and will pay taxation, the pastoral tax cannot be increased during the first 15 years of a lease, and there is not likely to be much pastoral land taken up to add its contribution to the fund.

It is claimed by many farmers that they are paying four times as much by way of vermin tax as they should be called upon to pay. I want to know if that is correct.

The Minister for Lands: And they need the legislation four times as much as the other section.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I tried to find out how much was credited to vermin tax payments from the pastoral and agricultural

areas respectively. In a letter I received from the Agricultural Department, in reply to a communication from me asking for the information I sought, the official statement contained the following:—

I am in receipt of yours of the 21st instant relative to rates levied under the Vermin Act Amendment Act, and beg to advise in answer to your questions: (1) My latest advice on this matter is that all the assessments have not yet been sent out, and that no records were being kept differentiating between the two classes of land rating, as no instructions had been issued to do so and that if such were to be done, the cost of collection would be considerably increased.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Separate forms are sent out, so records must be kept.

Mr. Lindsay: There is a report every year showing land tax payments so that the figures must be kept separately.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yet it is stated that the cost of collection would be considerably increased if the details were kept separately! To the man who is paying four times as much as he should be called upon to pay, it would seem that the cost of employing an extra clerk to keep the details separately would not be a serious matter. The member for York (Mr. Latham) has been asking questions regarding the dog tax under the Vermin Act. There has been a good deal of discussion amongst farmers in my constituency as to why the schedule was not included in the Act and why no definition of a vermin proof fence was included as well. On the other hand, the defining of what is an adequate dog-proof fence is left wholly with the Chief Inspector of Rabbits, Mr. C. J. Craig. I have looked carefully through the different Acts and while there is a definition of a rabbit-proof fence, and other fences, I find that those definitions would not apply to the requirements for a dingo-proof fence. I have noticed in the Press recently that the Chief Inspector of Rabbits was the real person charged with the responsibility of deciding what should be done. I understand he has fixed the height of a dingo-proof fence at 6ft.

Mr. Lindsay: The fence has to be constructed to the satisfaction of the chief inspector.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We contend that that is handing over too much power to the chief inspector, and claim that those particulars should be specified in a schedule

included in the Act. Mr. Bruce Leake is an authority on dingoes and dingo trapping, and he favours a high fence. On the other hand, many people say they have been able to keep out the dingoes with a fence less than 6ft. in height. The problem has given rise to much argument, and if the height of a fence is fixed permanently at 6ft., I am afraid hardly any settler will be able to claim exemption from the tax after going to the expense of putting up fences 5ft. 10in. in height, fences that are absolutely dingo-proof.

Mr. Lindsay: It is necessary to have a sort of verandah on the fence as well.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes. It is necessary to have a 2ft. overlap. Mr. Bruce Leake informed me that it was the only way to keep out the dingoes. But he claimed that it was not so much the dingo that had to be kept out as the half-wild dogs. He claimed that the latter would go through places that a dingo would never tackle. There is a strong feeling in the country that farmers are contributing more than they should be asked to pay, in view of the smaller levy on the pastoralists. They do not mind paying if the tax is fixed on a fair basis. I would like some information on the point as to whether the farmers are paying four times as much as are the pastoralists. I want that information so that I can discuss the question with the people who are vitally concerned. If that is the position, something should be done to rectify it. So discontented are some of the farmers that a conference has been convened for the 19th August at Beverley to discuss among other things the "super-vermin tax" and "exemption by rabbit-proof fencing." I have been invited to attend the conference at which many road boards will be represented. For that reason I would like to have some information regarding these contributions.

Mr. Teesdale: Tell them that the pastoralists pay for two boards.

Mr. Lindsay: So do the agriculturists.

The Minister for Justice: Just for one short period, that is all.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, but these people are growling about the halfpenny!

Mr. Sampson: There is grave dissatisfaction regarding the operations of the Vermin Act.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Craig has supplied the following specifications for the construction of a dog and rabbit-proof fence—

A fence not less than 6ft. high with the top overhanging outwards at an angle of about 45 degrees. Rabbit netting 6in. in the ground and 3ft. above. Sheep netting 3ft. wide above the rabbit netting, and the final barbed wire above the netting as previously stated, not less than 6ft. high. Posts to be not more than 15ft. apart.

The Minister for Justice: That is a good fence.

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

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I had not intended to continue speaking beyond the tea interval, but before sitting down I should like to stress one phase of the agricultural industry, namely, the vital necessity for research work. All progressive countries have found by experience that research must precede education in agriculture if permanent and effective results are to be obtained. Research is an insurance against the future. Without it agriculture will stand still and the teaching of agriculture have but little meaning. I have read recently that every bushel per acre added to Australia's wheat yield means an additional £2,500,000 per annum. I mentioned earlier the objective of the Education Department in conjunction with the agricultural societies and the fertiliser people with the idea of securing a 15 bushel average in the State. When I speak of research and of what the chemists and biologists have done, I would point to the fact that every insect and fungoid pest that can be brought under control brings great wealth to the community, and in regard to stock management, every contributor to our knowledge helps to add to the prosperity of the community as a whole. I have read a good deal of late about what other countries are doing in point of agricultural research. Here is a little item of my reading. At first I thought it was scarcely fair to Australia, but when we consider what other countries have done, it may be that it is not far from the mark. It reads as follows:—

The main difference between Australia and other countries is in the national sentiment towards agriculture. Countries like the United States of America, Canada, South Africa, Denmark, and Japan, not only believe that agriculture is the basis of the country's wealth, but they translate this belief into action. These nations think in terms of Agriculture. This attitude finds practical expression in the

liberality with which agricultural research is supported by State funds and the readiness with which they are prepared to map out policies for steady continuous development over long periods.

When we come to think of what the chemists and biologists have done for agriculture we remember that it was in 1901 the late William Farrer produced his famous Federation wheat. It has been calculated that this has meant a gain to Victoria alone of £500,000 per annum for the past 15 years. Mr. Farrer during his 20 years work produced no fewer than 33 varieties of wheat. There is a long list of chemists who have done much for agriculture, and a very interesting story could be made out of it. However, I will not go into details, more than to say that Mr. William Farrer—we have a pupil of his in Mr. G. L. Sutton of this State—was a great Australian, whose influence can be seen in every ripening field of wheat in Victoria and New South Wales. There is one more subject. It concerns my own electorate. I have left it till the last because, whilst I will not deal fully with it to-night. I want the House when the motion, of which I gave notice this afternoon, comes up for discussion, to be in a position to say whether the claim I shall make is not a proper one. Under the heading of "Western Australian Activities" there appeared in a newspaper the announcement that work has been started on the Ejanding-Northwards railway with a spur of 77 miles. I asked the Premier to-night on what date the Ejanding-Northwards line was authorised and also when the Yarramony-Eastwards line was authorised. Of course the Premier knew that I already knew, but I wanted the statement from him just to show that the Ejanding-Northwards line was authorised seven or eight months ago, whereas the Yarramony-Eastwards line was authorised 3½ years ago. The people living along that stretch of country have been there for 19 years. We have nothing to indicate that that line is not to be built out of loan funds. Possibly some people may have knowledge that money obtained under the migration agreement is to be utilised. If so, of course we cannot complain, but if the line is to be built out of ordinary loan funds, I say the delay is a distinct breach of faith. I think it will be a most unfair thing if the Ejanding line is to be started before the Yarramony line. However, I

shall not dwell further upon that at present. All that I wish to say in conclusion is that whilst the Premier may take exception to some of the remarks I have made to-night—

The Premier: Not at all.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At all events if there be anything that I and my colleagues on this side can do to assist the progress of the country, we shall unhesitatingly do it.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

### BILL—SUPPLY (NO. 1)—£1,913,500.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 7.42 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 4th August, 1927.*

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

### QUESTION—GROUP SETTLEMENT.

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many locations were there on the group settlement books at 30th June, 1927? 2, How many settlers were on those locations (a) at 30th June, 1926; (b) at 31st December, 1926; (c) at 30th June, 1927? 3, How many settlers have been placed on locations left by previous holders in the periods (a) 1st July, 1926, to 31st December, 1926; (b) 1st January, 1927, to 30th June, 1927? 4, How many locations are to be (a) abandoned; (b) linked up with other holdings? 5, How many locations are