

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 26th October, 1938.

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

QUESTION—AGENT GENERAL.

To Replace by Trade Commissioner.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Will the Government, when selecting a new London representative, give consideration to the appointment of a Trade Commissioner instead of an Agent General? 2, If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, and 2, The matter generally will receive consideration.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE BRIDGE.

As to Timber, Filling, etc.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What is the total length and width of the timber construction and the estimated cost of the same in the new bridge over the Swan River at Fremantle? 2, What is the estimated quantity of filling required for the approaches to the timber structure and the estimated cost per cubic yard?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Length 721 feet, width 46 feet including 6 feet footway. Estimated cost of timber construction £50,000. 2, 45,000 cubic yards: 2s. 6d. per cubic yard.

QUESTION—WIRELESS BROADCASTING.

Control and Revenue.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What is the total revenue collected in Western Australia by the Postal

Department for—(a) B-class broadcasting stations; (b) listeners' licenses? 2, What proportion of this revenue does the State receive? 3, Has the point ever been raised with the Federal Government that the State should have some control of wireless, and receive a portion of the revenue that is collected within its boundaries?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) Nil. (b) For the year ended 30th June, 1938, £74,161 10s. 2, Nil. 3, So far as is known, the answer is in the negative.

QUESTION—LIFE ASSURANCE.

As to Suicide Clause.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has any life assurance company operating in Western Australia requested the Government to introduce and pass legislation this session validating the suicide clause in life assurance policies, recently rendered invalid by the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords by its decision in the Rowlandson appeal case? 2, If so requested, has the Government agreed to do so? 3, If not so requested, will the Government, of its own volition, follow the example set by the New South Wales Government, and ask Parliament, this session, to agree to a validating Bill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, There is no record of any such request. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, If a request is received, consideration will be given to the matter.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Marketing of Eggs.
Introduced by Hon. G. B. Wood.
2. Racecourse (Regulation).
Introduced by Hon. J. Cornell.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £1,200,000.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of the

Bill is to grant the Government further supply pending the passing of the Estimates. Supply was granted under the previous Bill for £2,500,000, apportioned as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	1,700,000
General Loan Fund	500,000
Treasurer's Advance	300,000
	<hr/>
	£2,500,000

This Bill seeks to grant supply amounting to £1,200,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. During the three months ended the 30th September, expenditure out of supply granted, exclusive of special Acts, was as follows:—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	1,734,193
General Loan Fund	223,801
	<hr/>
	£1,957,994

There is still a balance under the Supply Act (No. 1) estimated as sufficient to cover the expenditure for the next two months from the General Loan Fund. Expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, including special Acts, for the first three months of the financial year was as follows:—

	£	
Special Acts ..	1,075,631	+34,940
Governmental ..	763,699	—20,121
Public utilities ..	970,494	+25,961
	<hr/>	
	£2,809,824	+40,790

(+ increase; — decrease.)

Interest and sinking fund payments included under special Acts amounted to £978,031. Governmental expenditure included an amount of £166,499, representing exchange on remittances abroad. The total expenditure increased by £40,780. Expenditure under special Acts recorded an increase of £34,940, due entirely to heavier interest and sinking fund payments. The increase of £25,961 in public utilities expenditure was mainly attributable to increased activity and basic wage increases. There was a decrease of £20,121 in respect of governmental expenditure. Drought relief payments from the revenue fund decreased by £16,556. Unemployment relief also recorded a decrease of £6,974. Other departmental items showed small increases.

Revenue for the three months ended the 30th September totalled £2,471,846, comprising—

	£	
Taxation	614,131	+79,125
Territorial	101,129	— 6,899
Commonwealth grants	260,859	— 1,250
Business undertakings	1,285,604	+95,840
Other	210,123	+ 604
	<hr/>	
	£2,471,846	+167,420

(+ increase; — decrease.)

At this level, revenue collections represented an increase of £167,420 compared with the corresponding figures for last year. An advance of £79,125 was recorded in respect of taxation, all items showing substantial increases with the exception of land tax and licenses. The principal increases were—Income and dividend taxation, £35,646; financial emergency tax, £10,181; and gold mining profits tax, £17,319. The last-mentioned increase represented chiefly the payment of arrears. The decrease of £6,899 in respect of territorial was mainly due to the decline in revenue from sandalwood.

Revenue from business undertakings increased by £95,840, the principal items being—

	£
Fremantle Harbour Trust	15,410
Railways (increased haulage of wheat)	52,897
Tramways	4,726

The last mentioned represents mainly increased earnings consequent upon the installation of the new trolley bus routes. Other earnings showed an increase of £604. Commonwealth grants decreased by £1,250, representing one-fourth of the total decrease in the grant for the year, which is £570,000, compared with the amount of £575,000 granted for 1937-38. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.46]: I crave the indulgence of the House in order to offer a few remarks at this juncture. I refrained from speaking during the Address-in-reply debate, but there are some matters that concern one of the departments administered by the Chief Secretary, to which I desire to refer. Before doing so, I wish to make one or two general observations. The first relates to a matter that is practically no concern of members of this House, but I appeal to the Government to give con-

sideration to the compulsory provisions in the Electoral Act before the next Assembly elections. When Mr. Baxter introduced the Bill that dealt with compulsory voting, I told him then, and I repeat now, that insufficient consideration had been given to the subject.

The natural corollary of compulsory voting for the Assembly is to follow as closely as possible the system adopted for the Commonwealth elections. When we made it compulsory for electors to attend polling booths on election day, we omitted to provide for essential facilities to be made available. The Act merely prescribes that voting shall be compulsory, and does not embrace a provision similar to that in the Commonwealth Act under which an elector may vote at practically any polling booth within the Commonwealth. Since the Electoral Act was amended, two by-elections have been held under the compulsory voting conditions. They were for the Sussex and Hannans seats. The people in the Hannans electorate voted under a misconception, for they thought the compulsory voting provisions followed the lines of the Commonwealth Act. As a result, some of those electors were prosecuted. Since voting has been made compulsory, it is the duty of Parliament to extend all possible facilities to the electors to cast their votes. This matter does not concern the Council, but it does concern the great body of electors and the political parties in another place.

To-day I questioned the Chief Secretary about the suicide clause in life assurance policies. I have written to New South Wales, where the Government has just passed a measure restoring the position of the insured before the recent decision in the case taken to the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords. I have a policy dating back to 1913, but anyone that is insured knows there is a suicide clause that is inoperative until the insured person has been covered for a specified period. I understand that the Parliament of New South Wales has rectified the matter, but the position here is that unless validating legislation is passed, the beneficiaries would not be able to recover, no matter what circumstances attended the suicide. The Legislature should step in and take action whether the companies request it or not. There is some talk of the Commonwealth Parliament passing a measure. I understand that the com-

panies cannot pay on such policies, even though they wish to do so.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is that so?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I understand that is the position.

Hon. H. Seddon: To pay in the present circumstances would be illegal.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is so. Insured persons, or their beneficiaries, are entitled to what is provided in the contract, and Parliament should pass legislation to ensure that they get it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The companies paid previous to the House of Lords' decision?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: After the lapse of a certain period.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But the companies cannot now pay in view of the House of Lords' decision.

I wish to refer to the need for amending our licensing laws. Nearly 20 years have elapsed since the Act was passed, and without indulging in any exaggeration, I can claim that we have made wonderful progress during that time. There has been a complete change in conditions as compared with those that prevailed in the liquor trade 20 years ago. I wish particularly to deal with the Sunday trading that occurs in the goldfields districts, and for that matter in the metropolitan area also. The position on the goldfields is ludicrous. The law provides that the hotels shall close on Sunday, but the Administration says that they may open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The law also provides that goldfields hotels shall not be opened before 9 a.m. and shall close at 11 p.m., but in the metropolitan area the hours of trading are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. On the goldfields a hotelkeeper may be fined for opening before 9 a.m. and for not closing at 11 p.m. There is no law, however, providing for Sunday trading. A farcical position has been created and it is time we faced the situation. Goldfields licensees have told me—and I think this applies generally throughout the State—that if the law provided for opening for two hours on Sunday morning and two hours on Sunday afternoon, they would be perfectly satisfied. They are not at all enamoured of the 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. trading on Sunday. The trouble is that if one licensee keeps his premises open, the others have to do likewise. If the law provided for two hours of trading in the morning and afternoon, and

those hours were rigidly adhered to, licensees would be quite satisfied. The Sunday trading hours at Kalgoorlie, Boulder and on other goldfields, are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. This also applies to Norseman, but there is only one hotel at Norseman, and the publican laid down clearly that he would open for only two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. Those hours are being observed at Norseman.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What, on Sunday?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Against the law of the land?

Hon. J. CORNELL: On other goldfields the hotels keep open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They do it quite openly.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is so, but I am pointing out how ludicrous the situation has become. The liquor trade would welcome set hours for opening on Sunday and I think 95 per cent. of the community would do likewise.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You approve of the miners being able to get a pot on Sunday?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. CORNELL: Consider now the metropolitan area. The only people in the metropolitan area who cannot get a drink on Sunday are the workers in essential services.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is right; the poor cannot.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The men who are carrying on essential services—tram-men, loco drivers and firemen—cannot do so, but the man who owns a motor car or can afford to hire a taxi may travel to Mundaring, Sawyer's Valley or Rockingham and get all the drink he wants.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He can get all the drink he wants in some of the hotels in the city.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I propose to deal with that point. Under the law as administered, we are penalising the man who is carrying on essential services. I am given to understand that if a city policeman wishes to get a transfer to the country, all he has to do is to catch somebody drinking in a hotel on Sunday.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about the number of accidents recorded in Monday's Press?

Hon. J. CORNELL: We should face up to the situation and exercise a certain amount of common sense. We should bear in mind that circumstances have altered, that the facilities for travelling have altered, and that the tastes and requirements of the people have altered. All I am saying is in agreement with the opinion of the great bulk of the community and of the liquor trade.

The Honorary Minister: You would be up against the wowsers.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think the wowsers, like the prohibitionists, have almost ceased to exist. There is another point of peculiar interest to the North-East, South and Central Provinces and, to some extent, North Province. I refer to illicit gold dealing.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Oh, Lord!

Hon. J. CORNELL: That matter comes under the administration of the Chief Secretary. So far as my memory serves me and my reading and research have carried me, there is in effect only one place where prosecutions for illicit gold dealing are brought—in and around Kalgoorlie and Boulder. If many years ago there was need for a Royal Commission to inquire into that phase, there is much greater need for it to-day. If a Royal Commission was appointed to-day, it should be directed to inquire, not how much gold may be pinched, but how the police charged with the duty of catching offenders carry out that job. As I know the position and other members know it, men have been in durance vile repeatedly over the years, and some are in prison at the present time, for having been caught in possession of gold-bearing ore, sometimes very small quantities. For that they have been sent to Fremantle Gaol for six months, without the option of a fine. On the other hand, of men who have been in that game for years, and according to common gossip, getting away with the big stuff, no notice whatever is taken. In order that the gold stealing detection staff may show what they are doing, they drop on the little fellows, who may be caught three or four times. What does the little fellow take gold-bearing ore away for? He gets about 1 per cent. of the value, and the other fellow gets the other 99 per cent. It is the little fellow who goes to Fremantle. One knows of a policeman who not long ago was sacked from the gold stealing detection staff and

who recently bought motor cars and staged parties which the pay of such officers usually does not warrant.

Whilst I do not condone illicit dealing in gold, I cannot shut my eyes and ears to what 40 years of association with the goldfields have caused me to realise to the full. Invariably detectives are sent up from Perth to "pinch" men and plants that probably are being used by other men also. That is what occurs. The truth of these things is accepted by the great majority of the goldfields people. Those people do not stand for illicit trafficking in gold, but they do stand for all-round impartial administration of the law. The chap who is getting rid of the big stuff is the one who should be put out; but he is not caught. If a Royal Commission is needed, it is needed to inquire into that aspect. I know mining pretty well, and I say that while there may be anything from a dozen to 40 mining centres where there is some dishonesty, the only locality where prosecutions take place is around Kalgoorlie and Boulder. We understand that the Chamber of Mines pays half the cost of the illicit gold dealing staff. I want to know why the Chamber pays it. I know diggers who have gone to Fremantle for six months for illicit gold-dealing. If there is one thing to the credit of the chap who does take a little bit of gold, it is that if he gets caught, he keeps his mouth shut and does not put anyone away. That, however, is not to say that he does not tell the whole story to someone else; and the whole story is generally a true story.

Yesterday we were informed by the Chief Secretary that according to the Commissioner of Police there are only 14 starting-price betting shops in Kalgoorlie and only seven in Boulder—not a total of 60, as I had said. The admission is an extraordinary one to come from the Commissioner of Police. If he knows of the existence of those shops, his obvious duty is to go after them and close them up. The Police Act Amendment Act of 1893 was the same in 1897 as it is to-day. If members will carry back their minds to that period—Mr. Holmes, Mr. Bolton, and Mr. Franklin can, I think—they will recall that next to the Criterion Hotel in Perth, there was a betting shop kept by a fellow named Charlie Cuthbert.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Three doors away.

Hon. J. CORNELL: All the paraphernalia that can to-day be seen in the betting shops of Kalgoorlie and Boulder and Perth was in evidence then. Next door to Tattersall's Hotel, as Mr. Williams knows, the late Jack Cosson had an establishment similar to those operating to-day. But at that time the administration of the law was different. Cuthbert was raided time after time, and anyone caught in his place was run into durance vile. All persons caught were prosecuted, and all the paraphernalia was confiscated. To-day the position is that such establishments are allowed to flourish like the green bay tree, no action whatever being taken against them. Let me give one illustration from Boulder. The establishment exists now. It is a starting-price betting shop, equipped with all conceivable betting paraphernalia, and run by the brother of a sergeant of police. The tenant of another shop who had occupied it for 17 years was recently turned out to make room for the same starting-price bookmaker, who offered almost a fabulous rent. A digger whom you, Mr. President, know and whom Mr. Williams and Mr. Hall know has been associated with Boulder for 40-odd years, running a small tobacconist and hairdressing shop.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He is a good fellow, too!

Hon. J. CORNELL: All this digger did down the years was to run a sixpenny or shilling double for his customers. And the police walked in on him and he was fined £50! That is one instance. The man is one of the most reputable citizens of Western Australia. He had no gambling paraphernalia whatever. All he did was to run this little book of a sixpenny or shilling double every Saturday. The occupier of the other shop I mentioned has never been prosecuted. I venture to say that if there has been a raid on his premises, it was when some unsophisticated young chap had been put in there for the day.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Two men were sent up from Perth to get the other fellow.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, one of the most reputable citizens in Boulder. When the police get down to that kind of thing, it is about time for decent men to kick up a row. If there is one section of the community that I claim to stand for, it is the decent, law-abiding section. Yet it is men

belonging to that section who seem to be singled out for prosecution.

Hon. A. Thomson: They are the mugs.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If Mr. Williams and I started a betting shop to-morrow—

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not on your life!

Hon. J. CORNELL: —we would be the first gone after. Why would we be the first gone after? Because we had not been in the game long enough. It would be an application of what obtains in the case of the gold detection staff—the big chaps who can pay their way do not go in, but the little fellows do.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Last on, first off!

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes. Another extraordinary statement of the Commissioner of Police was that if the starting-price betting shops were closed up, the bookmakers would go out on the street and the local authorities would not take proceedings against them. I ask the Chief Secretary, was not a man fined £40 in Boulder last Monday for street betting?

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I venture to say that no man in Western Australia has a greater admiration for our police force than I have. Taking our police force by and large, we have as fine a body of men as can be found in the Commonwealth. If they were given a free hand, they would do their job. They did their job by me one time; I was run in for being found in a gambling school.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Doubtless you were getting information!

Hon. J. CORNELL: The discretionary power that was given to the police years ago does not obtain now. We have reached the state of affairs that has been reached in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, when, as Jack Lang said, there is need to start on the tall poppies. Our police force is sound at the core, in comparison with records elsewhere. Policemen generally are anxious to do what is right. If left to themselves, they will do so; and certain people, who have axes to grind, should not be allowed to get between the policemen and their duty. If that is permitted, we shall have an unbearable situation. Why are the police so assiduous in raiding two-up schools and fan tan schools? They run in all the participants in those schools.

Hon. A. Thomson: They run all the poor "Chinks" in.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The men are charged with being "in and upon" a gaming house. But when it comes to big interests, men who run five or six betting shops, we have a different story altogether. Yet both are governed by the same law. Is it logical to run in a few "Chinks" for playing fan tan and not proceed against other persons conducting common gaming houses?

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you want that done at Kalgoorlie?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Transgressors of the law should be treated alike. If proceedings are taken against a few Chinese for playing fan tan, or against some lumpers who toss a few pennies, then proceedings should be taken against the proprietors of common gaming houses. It is common property that for years a two-up school has been in existence between Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Anyone starting in opposition to that school generally lands in the court. Even the Soldiers' Institute was raided.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is there a vested interest in that two-up school?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Yes, it has been in existence for 20 odd years.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It has never been interfered with. A distinguished visitor from the Eastern States to Kalgoorlie was met by a distinguished resident of Kalgoorlie, a reputable citizen, who did all he could to show the visitor around the town. The visitor then said, "I am grateful for all you have done for me. I suppose there is no other place you can show me?" The Kalgoorlie resident said, "Yes, there is one place more. Come out with me." He took the visitor to the two-up school. After the visitor had looked on for a while, the Kalgoorlie resident asked, "Are you surprised at whom you see here?" The visitor replied, "No. What I am surprised at is who is not here."

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: He wrote an article in the "West Australian."

Hon. J. CORNELL: My argument is aimed at the impartial administration of the law. No man should be made a scapegoat. Another matter to which I desire to refer is the sale of lottery tickets. I can safely say there are 21 shops the Commissioner knows of that sell lottery tickets, and another 30 he does not know of.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you mean to say he does not know all of them?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am sure of that. Mr. Williams will bear me out in the statement that in Kalgoorlie and Boulder and elsewhere every s.p. shop is an agency for the Lotteries Commission. In Boulder, there are only three shops at which a person can get a shave or a haircut. A hairdresser who had been in business at Boulder for 17 years was forced out and a young fellow, his apprentice, started next door to an s.p. shop in Burt-street, Boulder. He started as a legitimate hairdresser and applied to the Lotteries Commission for permission to sell lottery tickets. He was told, however, that sufficient agencies already existed. The proprietor of the s.p. shop thereupon supplied the young man with some tickets and the two halved the commission on sales between them. The member for Boulder put the gun into the Commission over that business.

Several deserving people desirous of running a small business have tried to secure the right to sell lottery tickets, but without success. I mention one particular person, a returned soldier policeman. Mr. Williams and I both know him. He was removed from Boulder because of eyesight trouble; and unfortunately fell down the steps at the Perth Police Barracks and was rendered unfit for further police service. He obtained a gratuity from the police force and decided to set up a small business. Mr. Williams and other persons and I tried to get him the right to sell lottery tickets, but we were informed that sufficient agencies existed. Yet men are making a living by selling lottery tickets only. All the s.p. shops in the State have the right to sell lottery tickets. That I think places a premium on gambling. I do not know what the Lotteries Commission thinks of it, but I have my opinion.

I now touch on another point. I do not know whether I am rightly informed, but Mr. Williams will correct me if I am wrong. The men who participated in the recent trouble at Lancefield were fined in the Police Court, and I understand no attempt has been made to collect those fines.

Hon. A. Thomson: What about the Collic coal trouble?

Hon. C. B. Williams: I am very grateful to hear Mr. Cornell say that. It was a contributing factor towards getting the men back to work.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not hold with prosecuting men who kick over the traces in the industrial world. I have always fought for the right for men, in a final show-down,

to declare their independence and say, "We will not go on with the job."

Hon. A. Thomson: They should obey the law.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Nevertheless, the men can be indicted. It is the Government of the day that puts the law into motion.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The men could have hung up the mines for another week.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Government had no right to put the law into motion as a bluff or a means of intimidating the men. An obligation devolves upon the Government to carry out the law. I do not blame the men for not paying the fines. The error lies with the powers-that-be who authorised the prosecution. As I say, I am against such prosecutions. Over 30 years ago I said it would be impossible to gaol all industrialists.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I understand the Chamber of Mines, not the Government launched that prosecution. The Chamber of Mines was asked to take proceedings, but when it ascertained the cost, dropped the matter.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Even so, our laws are framed by Parliament. Who would receive the fines, if paid? The amount would go into Consolidated Revenue. I myself would not pay a fine of that description. Has any attempt been made to collect the fines?

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Give notice of a question. You might be told.

Hon. C. B. Williams: If the men were forced to pay the fines, they would stop work again.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If a law is obsolete the obvious duty of the Legislature is to repeal or amend it. Failure impartially to administer the law brings the law into contempt. Incidentally, it also brings into contempt parliamentarians themselves. I do not marvel at the expressions of the public about parliamentarians, who appear to be more concerned about votes at election time than with what is right or wrong.

The Honorary Minister: Speak for your self.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I think the hon member is speaking for most of us. It is hard to get upset at election time.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The gospel of right should prevail, not the gospel of political expediency and who shall occupy the Treasury benches. If my reading or research of recent years has taught me anything, it has taught me that failure to administer the

law and the contempt in which the average citizen holds the law have been responsible for the dictatorships of Hitler and Mussolini.

The Honorary Minister: I think you are wrong.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is said that a British community will not stand for a dictatorship, but I fear we are nearer some drastic action in that direction than many people think we are. The obvious duty of the Government, departmental officers and parliamentarians is to administer the law impartially and fairly. Should they find instances where the law is not so administered, they should have the backbone to stand up and say so. That is what has prompted me to make these remarks.

I am jealous for our young people. No one has a more profound respect for our young people than have I, but if there is one thing our young people do want, it is a little discipline, and they need to be directed as to what is right and wrong by the proper enforcement of our laws. I will give one illustration to indicate where we are heading. The position with regard to elections to-day is that 70 per cent. of the people of the community do not care a hang whether they vote or not. They do vote because voting is compulsory, and if they fail to record a vote they might be fined £2. As for their knowledge, I venture to suggest that 30 or 40 per cent. of the electors went to the last Federal poll without knowing, until they received the ballot paper, who were the Senate candidates. That condition of affairs has been brought about because things have been made so easy. I can remember the time, 40 or 45 years ago, when men rode 200 miles in order to vote.

Hon. A. Thomson: They valued the franchise then.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They valued a privilege which meant something to them and for which they had had to fight. If our laws are allowed to drift in the way they are drifting and to be treated in a shilly-shally fashion, and if thereby no good example of proper administration is afforded our people, a bad effect will be produced on the youth of this country. I apologise for having spoken at length, but those that know me best realise that, when I have something to say, I say it.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.32]: I should like to make one remark concerning the contribution of the previous speaker. No greater proof of the moral degeneration of the community exists than the manner in which definite and emphatic statements such as Mr. Cornell made are received by the people. He was only voicing the opinion of many citizens in this State. The general attitude of the public in Western Australia is that the law is something to be sneered at because of the obvious misapplication of its provisions and the obvious disregard of the law by those charged with its administration. I have no need to say any more in that connection because I have expressed similar views previously.

With regard to the Bill before the House, the Chief Secretary has a great advantage inasmuch as the figures he was able to quote have not yet been placed in the hands of members. Those figures indicate to a very large extent the tendency that has been followed with regard to finance generally. The figures relating to the financial emergency tax show an increase of £10,000 for the quarter. The increase in the income tax figures, I think, was £35,000 and that in respect of the gold profits tax, £31,000. A point that should be stressed, and one that has cropped up before and been explained very carefully in the report of the Auditor General, is that our interest payments are increasing and that an increase has taken place in overseas exchange.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why should there be an increase in the exchange overseas?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I intend to refer to that later. The report of the Auditor General is a big improvement on last year's report, and last year's report was an improvement on that of the previous year. The position relating to the unfunded and the unproductive debt has been repeatedly pointed out to members. In the report of the Auditor General it is set out clearly in a manner that prevents misunderstanding or misrepresentation. On page 17 of the report he points out that of a total debt of £93,000,000 odd, no less than 44 per cent. or £41,000,000 represents unproductive debt. When we learn that of the total debt some £12,000,000 represents deficits, funded and unfunded, we realise, as we have been repeatedly told, how steadily the State has drifted to the bad, and the absolute

necessity for balancing our budgets. Although there has been a big improvement in this respect, we are still budgeting for deficits. This constitutes a very heavy burden on the community: yet we are contentedly continuing further to increase that burden and, as the Auditor General points out, the amount paid into our sinking fund has been very largely absorbed—about two-thirds of it, in fact—by deficits that have been incurred during the years. An interesting point about the sinking fund is that whereas under the Financial Agreement, when stock is redeemed or cancelled, the Government has to pay $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on that redeemed stock into the sinking fund, if it goes on to the open market and floats a loan, it pays only $3\frac{1}{4}$ or $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.; consequently more is being paid on redeemed stock than on new money.

The cost of exchange on overseas debts, the Auditor General points out, is still rising. On page 14 of the report is a table setting out the exchange on interest payments overseas. The table shows that in 1937 the exchange was £430,886. In 1938 it was £437,154, or an increase of £6,268. The Auditor General indicates that this increase has been incurred because interest rates on loans raised on the Australian market during the last two or three years have remained fairly constant at slightly less than 4 per cent., but he also points out that the increase in the rate on money which was borrowed previously for migration purposes has been reflected in the increased exchange payments that are being incurred in remitting that money overseas. He goes on to say that while there was a considerable saving in interest payments by the conversion loans that were floated during the depression, we cannot hope in future to effect such big savings, because we have now got down to what is recognised as the market rate for money overseas. We can therefore look forward to an increase proportionate to the amount of our increased debt each year that we continue borrowing. Fortunately our borrowing overseas was restricted, and I hope that restriction will continue and that overseas financial authorities will see to it that no money is made available for us; because there is not the slightest doubt that many of the difficulties we experienced during the depression were due to the fact that we had to make such heavy payments outside the

State. The cost of exchange has been 25 per cent., and I cannot perceive any chance of its being diminished, especially in view of the large importations Australia has made in recent years.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is more likely to increase.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The tendency will be, as the hon. member points out, for the rate to increase, especially in view of the statement made recently by the Premier of New South Wales—he advocated a policy of what practically amounts to inflation—which cannot but be reflected in our relationships overseas. On that account those in charge of the sinking fund would find it a sound policy to devote the whole of the proceeds to the redemption of our overseas commitments. Although that would entail additional exchange payments, we would be relieved of that amount of debt. Failing that, we may find that if we have in the future to make the same interest payments as we are making to-day, the cost will be greater because of the increased exchange. To discharge our overseas commitments would be to place the State in a much more solid position than it occupies to-day.

Regarding the public debt that was redeemed during the last financial year, the Auditor General says, on page 22 of his report, that £850,061 was redeemed. Of that sum, £347,471 was redeemed overseas and £510,590 in Australia. Thus, about three-eighths of the redemptions were effected overseas and five-eighths in Australia.

Another point to which I wish to make reference concerns the State Insurance Office, and I would emphasise the disability under which we laboured when the State Government Insurance Office Bill was under discussion in not having before us the Auditor General's report. On page 41 of the report members will find reference to the revenue that has been received by the State Insurance Office in respect of workers' compensation and employers' liability premiums. In previous reports the revenue from those two sources has been separately tabled. If members consult last year's report they will discover that the premium income and the amounts paid in claims for industrial diseases were proportionate to those of previous years. Comparing the income from accident premiums with the payments we find that a heavy loss occurred last year. In the year just closed those two premiums were com-

bined, and the result is that we have a statement showing the total premium income from those two sources. We cannot therefore ascertain what was received in respect of industrial diseases and what was the income from accident insurance premiums. We are justified, however, in concluding that the experience of last year was repeated, and that by combining those two sums, the loss being sustained by the accident section is being smothered by the balance in the industrial section. We know that in the diseases section the revenue is much larger than the claims, and the balance amounts to reserves for contingent liabilities. Seeing that we are going to discuss the question of the validation of the State Insurance Office, we should have an assurance from the Minister—and we would be wise to embody it in the Bill—that in future these funds shall be kept separate, first, for the purpose of comparison with the experience of previous years, and, further, for the purpose of revising the position from time to time as a result of the experience regarding claims. In the statement of assets and liabilities, on the 30th June, 1938, we find on page 42 that premiums outstanding totalled £70,730. That figure requires some explanation.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member is not going too deeply into the question of the Bill that will be before the House presently. Incidental reference may be made to it, but to discuss a Bill that is not before the House would be going too far.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I appreciate the position; I am making these quotations because that will give the Minister an opportunity to answer them.

The PRESIDENT: So long as the hon. member's references are merely incidental, he may proceed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: We are dealing with the question of supply.

The PRESIDENT: That is why I have given the hon. member so much freedom.

Hon. H. SEDDON: In the future these accounts should be kept as they have been kept in the past. In the best interests of the State, I consider that the sinking fund should be applied entirely to overseas debts. Objection may be raised that the change will constitute a heavy premium on the interest payments, since the effect will be to raise the interest rate from 4 to 5 per cent. The fact remains, however, that by redeeming overseas debts we are stabilising our position because we are reducing our commitments

there. Before very long, if the propaganda that is taking place now is continued, and if the advocates of repudiation by the depreciation of our currency get their way, I think the financiers overseas will be sufficiently wide awake to realise the need for exercising caution. On that account I should like to know whether any solid reasons can be advanced by the Treasurer as to why we should not concentrate the whole of our sinking fund payments on our overseas debts.

I presume that the figures made available by the Chief Secretary will be published in the "Government Gazette," and we shall then be able to make the necessary comparisons that many of us like to make to ascertain what progress is taking place in respect of the State's finances. I should also like to ask that the monthly statement of the finances be made a little plainer. Very frequently we find that the item regarding the financial emergency tax is so many thousands more than it was in the corresponding month of the previous year. Records are kept by some of us, and by adding the figures it is possible to get somewhere near the mark. Financial statements cannot be made too plain, especially in respect of taxation, and I suggest to the Treasurer that in the future the items be set out plainly and definitely so that we shall be able to make comparisons. My desire in speaking on the Bill was simply to deal with the questions arising from a perusal of the Auditor General's report. I commend that report to the attention of members because it contains some solid reading and sound advice. We should congratulate the Auditor General, whose statement puts the position of the State as it actually is. I support the Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.52]: It has not been my custom to speak on a Bill of this nature, but there are one or two matters on which I desire to touch that should receive the attention of the Government. Every member of the Legislature is aware of the parlous condition of the wheat-growing industry. Legislation is to be brought forward for the purpose of assisting the agriculturist. We in this State are faced not only with a very bad market but also with very bad prospects. Indeed the prospects are far worse than many people thought, due to the sparse rainfall

over the agricultural areas. I am not going to refer to the absence of seasonal rains as a drought because that would be wrong. On the occasion of a recent visit to the agricultural districts I found that in certain parts some farmers on light country would harvest from 8 to 12 bushels to the acre, while on heavier country their neighbours' prospects were as bad as they could be. So we cannot ascribe failure and fair success in areas that are practically adjoining to what is usually referred to as a drought.

What I draw attention to particularly is that whilst relief is to be afforded from the Federal standpoint, a duty devolves upon the State Government, and that duty is to meet the position of those farmers who have been practically wiped out because of the shortage of rain. In many instances, for the fourth year in succession, farmers have met with failure. This applies to a big area, and money will have to be found to enable those people to carry on. It is important that the State should endeavour to save a large proportion of those who for so long have been engaged in the wheat-growing industry and have fought on so gamely. There are, of course, people who would advise us to let the wheat industry go altogether, but I want members to visualise what would happen to Western Australia if we permitted wheat-growing even to languish. We have no secondary industries, at any rate not any of consequence, and we depend entirely upon primary production. Wheat is our main primary industry and what would happen if our wheat production fell below 20,000,000 bushels? Can members realise the serious position in which we would be placed? During the present season the main portion of our wheat will come from the inner areas, and through short freight charges the railways are going to suffer accordingly. What astounded me was that in a recent Press statement, no less a person than the Premier referred to the collaboration between the Federal and the State Governments regarding the imposition of a flour tax for the benefit of one section only.

The Honorary Minister: For the benefit of the farmers.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Did anyone ever hear such nonsense! The wheat industry benefits every man, woman and child in the State and is a wonderful industry for the production of revenue. What a slip the

Premier made when he referred to the wheatgrowers' legislation as being for the benefit of one section only! Surely, in his calmer moments he will realise the serious error he committed! Actually, he made comparisons between the wheat legislation and the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill. The latter measure affects only those who operate under it. They are very fortunate people indeed to have legislation of that kind to protect them. It gives them a comfortable position in life in connection with the duties they have to carry out.

Hon. A. Thomson: And an assured income, too.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Premier tells us that we in this House are unmindful of the interests of the workers. I repeat, the workers are very fortunate indeed to have a statute like the Industrial Arbitration Act under which to work. Parliament has laid it down that if a person breaks the law, he shall pay the penalty. Of what use is the law if it is not obeyed? When the law was not observed on the goldfields, the prosecution did not come from the Government but from the Chamber of Mines. The fines, however, were never collected. Those who work under the Industrial Arbitration Act are in a fortunate position. They are working under good conditions, with good pay, and they enjoy many luxuries. Those in the wheat industry, by contrast, on the average have not had a decent living for the past four years, and are still without any prospects for the immediate future. Notwithstanding that, the Premier refers to them as "a section."

Hon. A. Thomson: And they work slightly more than 44 hours a week.

The Honorary Minister: The workers would keep the farmers on the land.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Last Saturday I attended a meeting of 150 settlers in the large hall at Walgoolan. It was not a hot-headed gathering. Notwithstanding the many sufferings these people have endured through four years of failure, and despite the fact that their labour has gone for nothing and their wives and families have been reduced to a state of penury and cannot even obtain the necessities of life, no hot feelings were shown. These farmers have no brightness to look forward to. They met in conference throughout the afternoon and into the night, all the time preserving a calm and cool attitude. They were trying to find a way to ob-

tain sufficient money to enable them to carry on for another season and re-establish themselves.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you not pledged your party to half a million?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, and it will be needed.

Hon. J. Cornell: It would not have been too much had the hon. member done so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The settlers kept wonderfully cool throughout the meeting.

Hon. A. Thomson: Half a million would not be too much.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: A substantial amount will be required to relieve the situation. From Ghooli to Ajana the State has a great deal of money at stake. At the gathering I saw four or five bank representatives, as well as representatives of the Agricultural Bank. This business is not merely the business of a section of the community. The Government is directly interested, and must appreciate the necessity for finding relief money at once. I urge the Premier to make an announcement as early as possible on this important question. The Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank have, to the best of their ability, acted promptly and sympathetically, but they do not know how far they can go. They have stated they cannot visit the settlers in the different centres, and that those concerned must attend the district agencies of the Bank. The settlers have not the means to transport themselves to Merredin. The Commissioners, therefore, should visit other centres.

One has only to look out of the train at Walgoolan to see the enormous facilities provided for handling wheat in bulk. The same thing applies at Moorine Rock. Mukinbudin, Moorine Rock and Walgoolan in the past have yielded record crops of wheat that have been successfully handled at the railway sidings and warranted the provision made. What is to become of the assets represented by the farms? They must be protected. People ask what the Federal Government intends to do. This matter concerns the State. If the State Government can prevail upon the Federal authorities to step into the breach, I for one shall be very pleased.

The Honorary Minister: The wrong Government is in office there.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: For the past five years the State Government has had a lot

to thank the Federal Government for, and has received a tremendous amount of money on behalf of the producing interests of Western Australia. I am not sure that the Federal Government can do anything to relieve the situation. My fear is that the Eastern States' influence behind a large body of members in the House of Representatives will prevent the Federal Government from doing more than it has done. I come to this conclusion from reading the debates that have occurred when primary industries have come up for discussion. The Government has had a hard and bitter fight to secure money for the assistance of our primary industries. This duty devolves first upon the State. We should not hide our heads in the sand. The money must be found. We must save the assets of the State, even if the deficit be increased. We must also save these good people who have stuck so solidly by their properties.

There is no need to talk of giving help to this, that or the other section of the community. We must provide the wherewithal to maintain the revenues of the State and protect its investments. No Government could say to the settlers, "Get off your land. It is not a sound idea from the point of view of the taxpayers." I admit that some of the areas could be devoted to grazing. Although the land has had a run of bad seasons, it should not be condemned as fit for grazing only. It is from these districts that such enormous yields have been derived in normal seasons. We are bound to revert to normal seasons and larger returns. I asked the chairman of the meeting what his experience as a wheatgrower had been. He said that he had been in the district since 1929, and that from his property at Westonia he had in the intervening years averaged 17½ bushels of wheat to the acre. What is wrong with that?

Hon. C. B. Williams: He is probably a good farmer.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not know his property. The land only requires moisture to grow big crops.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What did he get this year?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: His prospective returns are fairly good.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He does not need assistance.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: And is not asking for it. Three of the settlers at the meeting

told me they had received their superphosphate in June. I would not sow an acre of my land after the end of May, although my property is so much nearer Perth than is Walgoolan. No wonder some of the crops I saw were so short! The Government must take a more serious view of this matter than it is doing, judging by the attitude of the Premier, as revealed in the Press. The Government must find a large sum of money to protect its own assets as well as to relieve distress in the farming areas. No doubt the banks will do what they can, but the Government must also play its part. We do not want these properties to be abandoned and to revert to Nature. I urge members to do their utmost to persuade the Government to re-establish this particular section of the agricultural areas, where the settlers have had such a trying time over so long a period.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [6.12]: I support some of the remarks made by Mr. Cornell. The charges he has levelled against the administration of the laws of the country should give the Government cause for grave concern. There is a general feeling with respect to s.p. betting that the tall poppies are escaping and that those concerned are making use of unsophisticated youths, who are allowing themselves to be charged and fined because, in the eyes of the law, they have been doing something illegal.

The Chief Secretary: That is not the inference to be drawn from Mr. Cornell's remarks.

HON. A. THOMSON: His charge was more grave than that, and I support him in what he said. It is generally believed that there is considerable laxity in the administration of our laws. If Chinamen are raided, every man on the premises is charged with being in a gaming house, and fined accordingly. Nothing like that happens in the case of s.p. betting. The whole thing has become a public scandal.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. A. THOMSON: In effect, the charges levelled by Mr. Cornell against the Police Department come under the heading of what is commonly referred to as "graft." They also indicate loose administration. I regard those charges as serious, and, in my opinion, a Royal Commission should be appointed immediately to ascertain why hotel-

keepers on the goldfields are allowed to flout the law. The position regarding starting-price betting and gold-stealing should also be investigated.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS: Perhaps there was a little bit of envy in his remarks.

HON. A. THOMSON: A Royal Commission should be appointed to ascertain who is really responsible for the breaking of the law so that those concerned may be brought to book. I refer not only to the small poppies but also to the tall ones. The charges levelled against the Government are so serious that they should be cleared up.

I now desire to turn my attention to one or two other matters. Recently I asked a series of questions, and I feel I must congratulate the officer responsible for framing the replies upon his skill in what I regard as attempts to mislead the House.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am quite sure that the hon. member does not impute any charge of that nature to the Minister?

HON. A. THOMSON: I specifically mentioned the officer who prepared the replies. I presume the Minister did not prepare them himself.

The PRESIDENT: That is how I interpreted the hon. member's remarks, but to make certain I put my question to him.

HON. A. THOMSON: On the 29th September I asked certain questions in the House with a view to obtaining information regarding the distribution of the Federal grant of £200,000 made available to the State Governments to provide technical training for unemployed youths who, owing to the depression, have unfortunately been debarred from learning trades. I drew attention to the fact that New South Wales had received £79,000, which the State Government had subsidised to the extent of an additional £100,000. I pointed out that Victoria had received £55,000 and the State Government had supplemented that sum by an equal amount. I also showed that South Australia had received £15,000, and Tasmania £18,000, and that the Governments of those two States had subsidised their respective grants on the pound-for-pound basis. I proceeded to ask the Minister to inform the House what steps were being taken to implement the technical training of unemployed youths in Western Australia. I had previously mentioned that the Prime Minister had indicated in the House of Representatives that he was awaiting in-

formation regarding Western Australia. The reply I received was—

Extensions in the system of technical training at the Perth Technical College, Kalgoorlie and Wiluna Schools of Mines and Muresk Agricultural College have been effected and plans for further extensions are now being prepared.

In my question I asked when the Federal Government could expect the desired information regarding the proposals of the Western Australian Government, and the reply was—

Information was forwarded to the Hon. the Prime Minister on the 20th September.

Not considering those replies satisfactory, I asked a further question on the 18th October as follows:—

As New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania have subsidised by pound for pound the Federal grant to provide for technical training and securing skilled employment for youths in their respective States: 1, Does the Government intend to supplement the £14,000 granted to this State by a pound for pound subsidy? 2, How many youths have been trained for technical and skilled employment in this State? 3, How many youths have obtained employment as a result of such training? 4, What does the Government propose to do with its portion of the 1938-39 grant provided by the Federal Government for training of youths in technical tuition with a view to their obtaining skilled employment?

The reply to that question was framed, in my opinion, with the intention of misleading the House. The reply furnished through the Chief Secretary was—

1, The State Government has to finance the whole of the expenditure in connection with the maintenance of all such technical training.

That is the commencement of the reply, and I say definitely that is deliberate misrepresentation. The reply continued—

2, At present 1,100 are receiving technical training as skilled mechanics at Perth, Midland Junction and Fremantle. There are 700 being trained at Kalgoorlie and Wiluna as skilled mining men. In addition, 250 are receiving training in electric and oxy-welding, motor mechanics and aero engineering. No students are completely trained at technical schools for technical or skilled employment. They are primarily trained in workshops, but such training is supplemented at the technical schools.

3, As far as is known, those who have received such training have obtained employment.

The grant of £14,000 provided by the Federal Government was for the specific purpose of providing opportunities for the young men included in what we have referred to as

the "lost legion," to learn a trade or a profession. Seeing that I asked a definite question with a view to finding out how that money had been expended, I cannot congratulate the Government on the reply furnished to members. That reply amounts to nothing less than deliberate misrepresentation. As a matter of fact, the State Government has done absolutely nothing in the direction of finding employment or providing those young men with opportunities to learn trades or professions.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The Government appointed a Royal Commission.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, and we are told that some of the recommendations of the Royal Commission will be adopted. Other States have provided a pound-for-pound subsidy to augment the Commonwealth grant, regarding the Federal Government's action as a gesture to be met with equally commendable efforts on their own part.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Every State has done something.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Except Western Australia. All that has been done here has been to provide some buildings. The reply to my question concluded with the following:—

4, Proposals for additional buildings and equipment for the increased technical training of youths have been submitted to the Commonwealth Government for approval.

The money was not provided by the Federal Government for that purpose. The reply set out that, "as far as is known, those who have received such training have obtained employment." If the Government and those in charge of the expenditure of the Commonwealth funds were sincere in the intention to furnish information to the House, they would have been in a position to say that so many had learned trades and so many had received positions. That is not the way to treat a member of this Chamber who endeavours to find out what has been done with the money provided by the Federal Government. Many of these young fellows are now 23 or 24 years of age, and, in view of the restrictions placed upon industry by Arbitration Court awards, I cannot see any hope of their ever getting out of the rut. The Government has failed in dealing with a task that rightly belongs to it. Unlike other States, this Government has done absolutely nothing constructive. In effect, the Government say to these young fellows, "So far as we are concerned, you

can be pick and shovel men for the rest of your lives." I feel I have a duty to these young men who have been debarred from opportunities to learn trades. If any employer were to engage some of those who are 21 or 22 years of age, he would lay himself open to prosecution by a union secretary or some other individual for paying wages under the prescribed rate. The future for these young men is almost hopeless; they have little or no opportunity to learn skilled trades or professions, and so I claim that the Government has fallen down on its job. The Minister's reply showed that proposals for additional buildings and equipment for technical training have been submitted to the Commonwealth Government for approval, but that work is part and parcel of the educational functions of the State Government. Certainly the Federal Government did not make the grant available for any such purpose as the erection of buildings. The Auditor General, on page 33 of his report, indicates how the money was expended, and says—

A grant of £14,000 was received by the State from the Commonwealth during the year under Commonwealth Act No. 37 of 1937. Section 4 of the Act reads:—

The amount granted to a State by this Act is granted upon the condition that it is used by the State in such manner and subject to such conditions as the Minister approves, in providing facilities for the training for, and the placing in, employment of persons between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five years.

When I asked my questions, the Government knew what information I sought and knew the conditions under which the Commonwealth grant had been made available. Admittedly one or two classes have been started, but I should like to know how many young men who attended those classes have succeeded in obtaining employment and getting out of the ruck of unskilled workers. The replies given to my questions do not reflect any credit upon the Government because of their evasiveness.

I congratulate the Auditor General upon the excellent report he has submitted for the consideration of Parliament. Years ago when I was a member of another place, I used to delve into many questions dealt with by him and I often asked him for explanations. I frankly admit that frequently I left him feeling as wise as when I went to him. If an ordinary company submitted

its report and balance sheet in the way that Government reports and balance sheets are submitted, some of the officers responsible would have to answer for their administration in a court of law. The way the finances have been manipulated—and this applies not only to the present Government but to former Governments—

The Chief Secretary: It does not apply to an individual.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am not charging any individual; I am charging Governments over quite a number of years. The fact cannot be gainsaid that the present Administration is carrying on as far as possible the system that was in vogue when it took charge of affairs. Years ago when we were receiving allegedly cheap money—and a good deal was made of its cheapness at the time—the then Government paid a rate of only $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 per cent. interest, but the settlers, most of whom were not in a position to pay, were charged 7 per cent., and the difference was paid into revenue. That was not the intention when the cheap money was made available, but that is what occurred.

I congratulate Mr. Seddon upon the keenness with which he invariably scrutinises and analyses the finances of the State. If members looked up many of the statements made by him and Mr. Holmes about the finances of the State and the general financial administration, they would realise that each of those two members is in a position to say, "I told you so." However, their protests seem to have had no effect. Under the present Auditor General I think we are likely to get the finances placed on a better footing. I take this opportunity to congratulate that officer upon the fearless manner in which he has tackled the problem of placing the financial position fairly before the people.

One matter that I have dealt with previously, not only in this House but in another place, is the peculiar method of finance adopted in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Trust. If members refer to the Auditor General's report and also the report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners, they will find that during the years 1935-38, the Trust, after meeting all charges such as interest, sinking fund and working expenses, paid into Consolidated Revenue £274,999. In years gone by larger sums proportionately were paid into Consolidated

Revenue each year than are being paid in at present, and a considerable amount was added to the capital account of the Trust. No private individual could finance his affairs in that way. The last three years have witnessed a reduction in the capital expenditure, but despite the fact that £274,999 was paid into Consolidated Revenue in 1935-38, during the same period £33,140 was added to the loan indebtedness of the Trust. Is it any wonder, then, that our finances are drifting into a parlous position? The Auditor General, on page 79 of his report states—

The use of loan money for the purpose of meeting the cost of replacements can only be justified to the extent of the provision made for redemption of the original capital cost of the assets replaced and any other reserves which may be available to meet the cost of renewals, and then only on the assumption that it is not intended to provide assets free of debt. The replacement portion of the expenditure on reconstruction has slightly exceeded the available reserves, and the use of loan money for further replacement work will result in over-capitalisation. Questions relating to the application of the sinking fund provision towards meeting the depreciation of capital assets and the adequacy of the amount set aside for renewals have been submitted to the Treasury for consideration.

Interest, sinking fund, and surplus amounting in total to £257,412 17s. 4d. paid to Consolidated Revenue Fund, as shown in the Trust's revenue account, have been absorbed in the general transactions of that fund. The redemption of the loan liability, therefore, although provided for in the Trust's accounts, entirely depends upon the ability of the State to meet contributions to the National Debt Sinking Fund without recourse to the use of borrowed money.

That is the position, and it applies not only to the present Government but to all the Governments that have been administering the affairs of the State for years. The Government has taken earnings into revenue and has charged renewals, etc., to loan account. In one year the State Budget showed a small surplus of about £10,000, though there may be some doubt as to whether there really was a surplus. However, when we realise the enormous amount of unfunded debts that has to be met, those in charge of the financial affairs of the State, and particularly the Treasurer, must have a very worrying time, and could, with the Auditor General and others, wish that better business methods had been adopted in the past. Let us hope that since the Auditor General has placed matters fairly and squarely before us in his report, better results will be achieved.

With Mr. Baxter and other members representing country constituencies, I view the future with considerable misgivings. What is going to be done to keep our settlers on their holdings? When Mr. Baxter was speaking the Honorary Minister interjected, "Of course the workers will keep the farmers on the land." Many of our farmers would feel exceedingly happy had they been in the fortunate position of many of the workers who have permanent jobs in and about the metropolitan area and in other parts of the State. We have a considerable amount of money at stake in our rural areas, which naturally must cause the Government considerable concern, but we must concede that the farmers are not responsible for the parlous position in which they find themselves to-day. More rightly it should be ascribed to an act of God. Over a number of years they have had no crop. They have had the mortification of falling deeper into debt each year as a result of putting in crops, purchasing super and receiving no return, notwithstanding that they have worked from daylight to dark.

I issue this warning that if those men and women are to be allowed to walk off their farms—and many of them have reached the stage of seriously contemplating that step—the duty of providing them with work or sustenance will devolve upon the Government. That sympathetic consideration should be extended to the settlers is obvious. Such a course would be in the interests of the whole of the people. I do not suggest the sympathetic consideration that might be summed up in the sentence, "We will advance you so much money and charge you so much interest and take a lien that will be a first charge on the proceeds of your crop in the coming season." The Government will have to take a long view of the matter and seriously consider making a grant to the producers in the shape of super and other essentials, and not charge the full amount for those requirements. I do not say that the farmers are asking for charity. Far from it. Still, if we are going to keep the settlers on the land, we must do something to maintain their morale and we must give them something to work for. I strongly support Mr. Baxter and other country representatives in urging the Government to consider the position seriously.

As Mr. Baxter said, we are not appealing for assistance for one particular class. The failure of those men in the wheat areas

would not be confined to the failure of business men in those districts and in the towns that have sprung up in those centres; it would be severely felt in the city as well. I direct the attention of the Honorary Minister to the fact that when the wheat industry is being carried on successfully, it provides an enormous amount of work and revenue for the Railway Department. It provides more work than does any other industry in the State. Railway employees, carters, and the humpers at Fremantle, whom the Honorary Minister represents, as well as the shipping interests, share in the benefits when wheat growing is profitable. I again voice my protest at the replies given to my questions regarding the youth employment funds. I commend the Auditor General for his report, and urge the Government seriously to consider the position of the settlers in the wheat areas. Many of those settlers are suffering through lack of rain for the fourth consecutive season, and are in such a parlous position that exceptionally sympathetic treatment is essential. I have no desire to oppose the second reading of the Bill. The Government must have funds with which to carry on the affairs of the State, but I regret that so much money has to be provided from loan funds instead of revenue.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [8.0]: I do not know that I would have had anything to say on the Bill were it not for the very serious statements made by Mr. Cornell this evening. That hon. member is, if not the oldest member of the House, one of the oldest. When a member of Mr. Cornell's standing makes such extremely serious statements, it is incumbent upon the Government to take some action. Who is not interested in the deplorable state of affairs which the hon. member gave us to understand exists in this community to-day? The Government should afford the hon. member, and others, an opportunity to prove before a Royal Commission the truth of the statements they have made. Yet another Royal Commission! While speaking of Royal Commissions I am reminded that in a few short months members of another place will go before the highest tribunal, their electors. I feel sure that after the general election a section of them will enter into a rest of at least three years, to which they are entitled. They are indeed weary.

Making another little diversion from Mr. Cornell's criticisms, let me say the thanks of

the House are due to Mr. Thomson for the manner in which he persistently calls attention to that serious problem confronting the whole of Australia—youth employment. The hon. member has not hesitated, even though the effort seems futile, to bring under notice time and again that most serious and important question. To-night he has stated, without any heat, that the Government of this State is the only Government in Australia that has not endeavoured to do something to improve the outlook for our youth. What a disgraceful record with which to go before its masters next March!

Mr. Cornell dealt with gold stealing, betting offences, and the liquor laws. Let me again say that I consider the Government should afford him an opportunity of proving the truth of those statements. I would be sorry to think that high officials in the departments mentioned by Mr. Cornell are not endeavouring to do their duty in the same manner as the rank and file. No Government with a proper sense of the fitness of things can afford to ignore allegations made by a member of Parliament who has the standing of Mr. Cornell. The hon. member told us of things concerning which he had personal knowledge—not things he had read in the papers.

I agree with members who have spoken about the parlous condition of many of our wheat farmers. The drought is not State-wide, but the season has been most peculiar. Members passing through Mullewa and the Central Province will know that what I am about to say is correct. Many of the farmers there are in for a very bad time indeed. Yet on the Mullewa platform only last Monday I was told of a farmer in the north who has one of the best crops he ever had, simply because patchy rain gave him 60 or 80 points just when he wanted it. The rain missed the rest of the district. And so it is all through. On the Geraldton side of Northampton and also on the Greenough flats, some beautiful crops may be seen. But in the main it is not so. I spent 24 hours, from Monday till Tuesday morning, in the train coming down for my weekly parliamentary duties: and I arrived in the city a sad man indeed. The trouble has lasted not one year, but over a series of years. Extreme hardships prevail among our farming people. If one sometimes says hard things about highly-paid civil servants, it is because one knows of the terrible situation of people who are endeavouring to wrest a living from

mother earth. They have to put up with all those grievous disadvantages of which I regret to say my portion of the State has had more than its fair share during the last few years.

In the city there appears to be no realisation of the difficulties confronting the farming community. It is no use to get up here and say, as I have heard various members say—I want them to take this kindly—that there is wilful misrepresentation. No highly-placed civil servant or Minister of the Crown would wilfully mislead, since he is bound to be found out. To do so would be silly. I am sure the Premier did not mean to say that any assistance given to the wheat industry is of a sectional character. The Premier is too sensible a man to mean that. I know he is reported to have said it, and I was amazed when I read his words. I absolve the Premier from meaning what he said. His many years in the public life of this State have made him too broad-minded a man to express so narrow a view. I am sure the people of my native town, which the Premier represents, would not believe that he intended to convey such a meaning. The Honorary Minister and the Chief Secretary may laugh. This is too serious a subject to laugh about! If I speak feelingly, it is because my feelings are aroused. As long as those two hon. gentlemen are in receipt of over a thousand a year each—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: So long as I do not make them weep, I do not mind how much they laugh. I hate to see anybody cry. I absolve the Premier of the narrow-minded view he is reported to have taken of assistance granted to the wheat industry. I plead with the Government to rise to the occasion and do its duty by people who have put up so magnificent a fight during the last few years.

I was greatly surprised to read in the Press, or else in "Hansard," recently that the Secretary to the Premier's Department had benefited by the increase in the basic wage. I wonder how the rank and file of the service, who are so seriously in need of that increase, according to evidence tendered to the Arbitration Court, will feel on learning that a man in receipt of about £1,500 a year benefits by a rise in the basic wage! I wonder if that increase will be featured next March!

Hon. C. B. Williams: Whom would you expect to feature it? The Government?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Reverting to the wheat-growing industry, as if it was not bad enough to have an indifferent season, accompanied by wool not of the best quality because of lack of feed, not forgetting the difficulty as regards feed to tide over until fresh feed comes along, and also bearing in mind the poor prices, we have to reckon with an invasion of grasshoppers. I understand that in South Africa arsenical poisoning of the pest has been attended with loss not only of stock but also of human beings. I have here the "Mullewa Mail" of the 15th October, which states—

In South Africa not a locust campaign has passed without taking one or more human lives and ruining the health or eyesight of some of the workers.

The paper further states—

Illustrative of the enormous damage that may occur in the use of arsenic sprays is a report of an action by the Oslo Land Co., Ltd., at Pretoria, against the Minister for Agriculture for £50,000. The company alleged that the spraying of its farms by the Government had caused the deaths of 324 head of cattle. Stock farming had to be discontinued, and surviving cattle sold at a loss of £9,093. The market value of the property depreciated by £38,913. The action was lost on a technicality.

I give that information for what it is worth. Doubtless our Department of Agriculture has heard of the matter. Before leaving the subject of grasshoppers I may mention that to-day I received a letter summoning a meeting to be held at Mingenew on the 5th November for the purpose of considering means to deal with this most alarming pest.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Give the hoppers another ten days' start while talking about them!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Mr. Cornell's statements reflecting on the Police Department carry my mind back to a news item I read in a Western Australian paper on the 6th September last. This is the item—

As the result of legislation introduced by an earlier Stevens Government, the Commissioner was given immensely wide powers and became answerable only to Parliament, and it now needs a very substantial majority of Parliament to dismiss the Commissioner.

Before I read the extract, I mentioned that I thought it was high time the Commissioner of Police, like the Auditor General, was made responsible to Parliament. That ex-

tract gives me some support. Both Houses of Parliament make the laws, and it is but a natural corollary that the man charged with the duty of enforcing observance of the laws, namely, the Commissioner of Police, should not be under the direction of a Minister of the Crown. I wish to make quite clear, however, that I am not casting any reflection upon the present Minister.

The Chief Secretary: I hope not.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Commissioner of Police in New South Wales has been made responsible to Parliament. If that were done here, members would not be wondering whether our Commissioner of Police was under the domination of either the Government or the Minister.

The other evening we heard a great deal about the duties of auditors. Several members referred to the improvement that has been made in the Auditor General's report. I have not yet had time to peruse the report. It was said, however, the other evening—and I am quite prepared to believe the statement—that the Auditor General, with his present staff, is unable to undertake the auditing of accounts for the Rottneest Board of Control and similar undertakings, whose accounts are audited by private auditors. If the Auditor General is unable to audit the accounts of those comparatively small boards, to expect him to audit the accounts of the State's largest trading concern, the railways, would be altogether unreasonable. What do we find in the Railway Department? There is a person designated accountant, who is in control of the accounts and audit branch of that department. The person who holds the dual position of auditor and accountant is an officer of the Commissioner: he is subordinate to the Commissioner. He audits the accounts of the Railway Department and presents his report to the Commissioner. I am not a certificated accountant, but I wonder how many members have tried to make something out of the voluminous report submitted to Parliament by the Commissioner of Railways dealing with the workings of the departments that come under his control. The Public Service List is issued to each member of Parliament yearly. I have the list for 1938, in which will be found the name of every officer employed in the Public Service of the State, no matter how humble his position may be.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I do not think you will find the name of every member of the Public Service in that list.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The hon. member should be sure. There are 1,662 public servants. All kinds of particulars are set out in the Public Service List, including allowances.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And pensions?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: No. That information is contained in another report.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Are the employees of the Railway Department included in that list?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I shall allow the hon. member to ascertain that information for himself. Much varied information is contained in the Public Service List, such as the name of the public servant, his designation, salary, date of birth, and date of first appointment. Why cannot we get similar information concerning the employees of the Railway Department? I have perused the report of the Commissioner of Railways, but cannot find anything in it to tell me who his officers are, or what their salaries are. I am referring not to men on wages, but to officers in high positions in the department. On page 30 of the report, under the item "Working Expenses," salaries are stated to be £424,529 and wages £1,519,305. Travelling allowances are also shown. I am rather interested in this item, because every week while Parliament is sitting I am gallivanting and upsetting myself in this Chamber, which is a very serious offence in the eyes of some members. I am not attending shows or buying goods for my firm or otherwise enjoying myself. I travel 700 miles per week, but do not receive one penny for travelling expenses. Neither do other country members—I am not referring to Country Party members, but to country members. We are not allowed to charge fancy travelling expenses such as are paid to Ministers of the Crown, the Commissioner of Railways and others. The travelling expenses, according to the report, amounted to £56,010, or £1,000 per week, but we are not told who drew those expenses. That item also is shown on page 30 of the report. Turning to page 55, Table No. 6, we find the total amount paid for salaries and wages, including travelling allowances in each case, in the various branches during the years ended the 30th June, 1938 and 1937. I shall deal only with the year 1938. Here the report

is a little more explicit. We find the following items:—

	£
Civil engineering	444,151
Capital, Manufacturing and Other accounts	68,138
	<hr/> £512,289

That information concerns civil engineering, mechanical, transportation and "Other." At the bottom of the table we find the item "Railway construction." My point is that the expenditure is lumped together. There is no proper segregation. On page 55, however, there is something that an ordinary man should be able to understand. We find this item:—

Commissioner's and Secretary's offices, number of salaried staff, 19.

Turning to page 86, we find a table headed "Return of Staff employed on the 30th June, 1938," which contains the following information:—

Commissioner of Railways	1
Secretary for Railways	32

This is the salaried staff; I am not dealing with the wages employees. At page 55 the staff is shown as 19; at page 86, it is shown as 32. Why the difference? Nor do we know who these officers are, what salary they are receiving or what travelling allowances they draw. About a month ago I noticed in the Press that the Commissioner of Railways and his finance officer attended a conference in the Eastern States, and I asked a question as to the travelling allowances paid to them. The reply was that the Commissioner had drawn £80 and his finance officer £60. I quote these amounts from memory. If we are to have complete particulars of the accounts of the Rottneest Board of Control and of similar boards, surely we should be furnished with better information concerning the accounts of a huge trading concern such as the Railway Department. I think it high time a little light was let into that department.

Whilst dealing with the Railway Department, I would like to know whether the Commissioner of Railways, in the many inspection trips which it is his duty to make over the railways of the State, has personally inspected the Midland Company's line, and, if so, whether he rode in the coach provided for the travelling public who are taxpayers.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You are criticising the best officer in the public service.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I would like to take notice of that interjection, although it is highly disorderly. I am not criticising that officer harshly. Even if I were, I should be doing only what I consider to be my duty, with all due respect to the hon. member who interjected. I am merely asking questions. If we wish to retain the confidence of the people whom we represent, we must not be afraid to criticise officials in high places. As long as I criticise those in high places, I shall have nothing very much of which to be afraid or ashamed. The "West Australian" has recently adopted an innovation by publishing on the left-hand side of the leader page accounts of what has been accomplished throughout the world by science and invention. Among those "World Achievement" items is one headed "Pure Water." This is of great importance to the railways of the State and to the State as a whole. It reads:—

We now have a method of making pure distilled water out of sea water.

In Geraldton, as I have said before, the Railway Department has had to instal machinery to distil pure water from sea water.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What is the cost?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The cost is set out in the report, 9s. per thousand gallons. I wonder whether it would be of any use to draw the department's attention to this very important discovery? I mentioned the article to one of our principal engineers, not a railway engineer, the other day, and he said he thought the experiment had been tried out only in the laboratory. That, however, is not right, because the article says—

Large plant is now being put down in Britain with a view to manufacturing cheap water which may be labelled pure. The process must be of special interest to the dry regions of Australia, for often when water there does well up in the wilderness, it is unsuitable for most purposes.

My interest in the matter is due to the trouble to which the department is put in obtaining pure water for railway purposes in the northern part of the State, and I suggest that possibly that trouble could be overcome by using sea water after distillation in what we call the condenser at Geraldton.

In conclusion, I ask a question that has been asked before, but has been ignored. Perhaps the Leader of the House has been too busy or too tired or too worried to take any notice of the question in the past, but I

appeal to him to reply to it on this occasion. On page 70 of the Auditor General's report are figures relating to unemployment relief. I will not deal with the amount allocated for bed tickets, meal tickets and board and lodging; but under the heading of "ration orders" a total of £34,979 18s. 1d. is shown to have been expended. I ask the Minister—I consider that I have a right to do so—whether he can and will tell the House where those ration orders were issued. My reason for asking the question is that under no circumstances can I or any other country member—of this I have been assured by other members of the House—obtain a ration order for any man in the country, apart from the 1s. ration order to which I have previously referred. I happen to know as a result of inquiry, not from the department, but from men who have obtained those orders, that the practice in the metropolitan area has been, in the event of an interval between one job and another, that men waiting to recommence employment have been able to obtain ration orders at Marquis-street, as they should be entitled to do, for the sustenance of their wives and children. That is not so at Geraldton. I have been assured and have also read a notice in the Press that the same trouble exists at Kalgoorlie, while members from other parts of the State have informed me that people in their provinces are in the same boat. Will the Chief Secretary inform us where that sum of £34,979 18s. 1d. was spent?

Cash relief to the extent of £12,429 1s. was disbursed for the unemployed. Where is such cash relief to be obtained? Is it also provided in the metropolitan area only? Ration orders and cash relief, if granted in Perth, should also be available to people in all parts of the State. I support the second reading.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [S.34]: The reason I am contributing to this debate is that I wish to reply to a matter raised during the Address-in-reply. I was somewhat surprised to hear the remarks of the Chief Secretary regarding the charges I made against the Government concerning the administration of the police force. I was also surprised to hear the reply of the Commissioner of Police. He said that no one knew better than myself how essential it was to obtain evidence before laying a charge. My experience is that, up to the last three or four years, the police employed

common informers. Quite true, they were not very reputable persons. Nevertheless, they secured the evidence; and the judges not only of our courts, but of the High Court of Judicature in England, have approved of that means of obtaining evidence of certain offences. Everyone knows the betting evil is rampant. That a great many people who bet are not prepared to give evidence is also realised, but those who think about the matter know full well that all the police have to do is what they did formerly, namely, send a recruit into one of the shops to make a bet. That was the practice adopted when a common informer was not employed. To obtain evidence is the simplest matter in the world, and should the Commissioner of Police desire to secure it, I feel quite sure that he can do so and obtain far more convictions than are obtained at present.

Personally, I do not favour the obtaining of convictions. Let us rather stamp out the evil. That is not being done, but whether we should blame the Commissioner or somebody else, I do not know. Wherever the fault lies, the Government's duty is to see that the law is enforced. I am not suggesting that the members of the Government are so blind to the knowledge we all possess as to be unaware that the betting evil is becoming rampant, and is a very grave evil indeed. Yet the Government is doing nothing at all to enforce the law against betting. Thus the duty of members of Parliament is to take the earliest opportunity to voice their opinion and to continue to do so until the evil is abated. Formerly, to abate the evil was a simple matter. I do not suggest for one moment that any Government will entirely suppress the evil, but it can be lessened. In former times, all that was necessary was that a police official should walk along to an s.p. bookmaker, and say, "This has to stop," and it would stop. That practice was adopted some years ago. Then the evil increased, and common informers and police recruits were employed to obtain evidence. It was perfectly easy to obtain the evidence and the same procedure could be adopted now.

The Commissioner of Police asked that I make public the information I had, and the names of my informants. No one knows better than he, or no one should know better, that the first principle to be observed in prosecuting for any offence is never to divulge the source of one's information. If one does so, one will not receive any information in future. The information I re-

ceived I believed to be reliable when I made my remarks. Since then, it has been increased tenfold; it has come from all classes of the community, including members of the police force. All have told me that I was perfectly correct in what I said. Not one person has told me that my statements were wrong. Surely if I, a private citizen, can get that information, the police should also be able to obtain it.

As the Government apparently does not realise the position, I shall refer to one or two matters, but I definitely refuse to mention names. I have been told, and believe, that it is the duty of a certain section of the police to deal with betting shops, and that if any other policeman pokes in his nose, he is not regarded with favour. I will not say he is dealt with, but he is not regarded with favour. That is a rather astounding statement to make. It applies also to licensed premises. A constable on a beat must not concern himself with a hotel on that beat that is open or shut, or with a man who has a betting shop on the beat. I am informed that if he puts his nose into such matters, it is not to his advantage.

Hon. J. Cornell: The same thing applies to the goldfields.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is the unfortunate position which has arisen. If the Government does not know this, I sincerely trust it will make inquiries now, and ascertain whether it is correct. The Commissioner stated—and I was somewhat surprised to find the Minister allowing the Commissioner to do so and further surprised to find him repeating the Commissioner's statement—that if Mr. Parker would make public his information and his informants, then it could be seen what justification existed for his wild statements. My wild statements! A few days afterwards in the "West Australian" appeared two columns indicating that the law was absolutely flouted in Kalgoorlie, where there were two-up schools, s.p. shops, and similar things. Yet the Commissioner talked about my wild statements! I will make some more statements and ask the Commissioner to inquire for himself. Let him walk along the street within half a mile of his office, go into every tobaccoconist's shop he comes across and find out how many shops are dummies from which it is impossible to buy a packet of cigarettes. Let him discover whether it is not easy to find out for what purpose those shops are open.

Again, is it a wild statement or a fact that the leading s.p. bookmakers pay £1,000 a year in fines? That is what the Commissioner of Police said. Is that a wild statement? I tell hon. members that it is. No fine in Perth or the metropolitan area or probably in Western Australia during the last two years, and possibly for a longer period, has exceeded £60. The Commissioner can verify that statement by walking down the steps of his office. No fine for shop betting has exceeded £60, and no man has been prosecuted more than three times. So that £180 is the maximum that any one man has paid in fines. Yet the Commissioner of Police tells us that the leading s.p. bookmakers have paid fines totalling £1,000 a year, and he tells us that to indicate that the police are doing their duty. If that is a fact, why does he not get those leading men? Why charge the labourer or the clerk? It is all a farce. Something should be done. I do not lay the blame on the Commissioner, because I do not think he has a free hand.

I shall again refer to the treatment of licensees of hotels. A little while ago there was quite a fuss because one particular licensee was always being prosecuted, while other licensees, not far distant, were not being interfered with. I have to rely upon what I am told, and it is that the licensee who was being prosecuted is now no longer being prosecuted, while at the same time there has been no difference in the conduct of the hotel. I was given the reason, and that reason was not that immunity had been purchased through the police; it was obtained in another way. This very vague statement, of course, will make it difficult for the Minister to give the House a reply, but I can say definitely that the statement was seriously made, though I am not prepared to say how the immunity was secured. I should like the responsible Minister to make inquiries in the hope of sifting the matter. I have no wish to go into details at the present time, but if the Minister so desires, I can give him the name of the hotel, though not the source of my information. I will give this information to the Commissioner of Police, if he desires to have it. When matters of this kind are broadcast, members of Parliament must take notice of them. I repeat that wherever we go we hear statements about

bribery and corruption. Consequently it is due to the Government to do something.

Over 12 months ago the Commissioner of Police made a report to the Government on starting-price betting. In his latest report he again returns to the attack and I may be permitted to quote what he now has to say—

The remarks made by me in my last annual report apply with even more force at the present time. They are as follows:—"It is to be hoped that steps will be taken during the present session of Parliament to legislate in regard to this matter. The folly is still rampant and despite assertions to the contrary the department is doing everything possible with the means at its command to combat it. To obtain convictions in connection with this matter it is necessary to have the evidence to support same, and whilst the betting shops throughout the State are known it will be futile to take action against them en masse without being in a position to prove the complaint." For the 12 months ended 30th June, 1938, in the Perth area fines inflicted on s.p. bookmakers in connection with shop and street betting amounted to £15,859, being an increase compared with the previous year, whilst the number of prosecutions for the period under review was 459.

It is possible to get 459 prosecutions in one week. I trust that the Bill that has been promised by the Chief Secretary will be submitted to us very soon. It is strange that a private member should have given notice some months ago of a Bill to deal with shop betting, and that it should have been reached only now, while the Government Bill, which the Commissioner of Police suggested over 12 months ago, has not yet come to light. Why is that so? That is what the people ask, and I do not like the way they put the question. A sum of £15,859 is the amount of the fines imposed in 12 months, and in spite of that, the business flourishes; in fact, it is becoming greater than ever. Who pays that £15,000? The small bettor, of course. That money certainly comes from the workers. Practically that amount or more is being paid by the workers to keep the betting shops going. High rents are paid for the shops. It is common knowledge that the gaming-house keeper pays a far higher rent than the man who occupies the shop next door. Those high rents come out of the pockets of the public. I should like to know what the public really does pay to keep the evil alive. From my knowledge of the existing law, it is ample and efficient to bring about the entire closing-up of the betting shops.

Members are aware that just previous to the present Government coming into power a bet could not possibly be secured in a shop unless a person was introduced. In some instances a disc had to be produced.

Hon. J. Cornell: Or a letter of introduction.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: One bookmaker said to me, "Even if you brought a man along and introduced him to me, I would not bet with him." The law at present is very simple, and under it the evil could be suppressed without any trouble. I admit that the evil has had great assistance from the broadcasting of the races, and in that direction I trust the Government will take steps towards the suppression of the broadcasting of racing results. I do not consider that race broadcasts are very interesting, although I am not suggesting that I do not listen-in sometimes, because I occasionally do have a bet, and like to hear how the race is being run.

Hon. J. Cornell: Have you been run in yet?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have not yet had that experience. Another matter about which I should like to seek enlightenment from the Chief Secretary relates to the trolley buses. I should be glad to know where the £70,000 for the trolley buses has been obtained. All I have been able to learn is that £31,000 was provided from loan last year, and that £42,000 is to be found from loan this year. I may be wrong, and if I am, I should like the Chief Secretary to enlighten me. What I want to know is why loan money should be required for the trolley buses when we were told that they were established from trust funds. In the report of the Commissioner of Railways it is interesting to read that although the trolley buses are such a success in respect of the numbers they carry, the earnings per mile are less this year than they were last year, while the operating costs are greater than they were last year. There has been a considerable difference in the revenue per mile since the Government put on the additional buses. I should have thought that the expense per mile, with the greater number of miles travelled, would be reduced. I shall be glad to be enlightened by the Chief Secretary.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [8.57]: I feel sure that members will not expect me to reply to-night to every point that has been raised during the debate. Several very pertinent questions have been asked, and I will endeavour to supply the necessary information at a suitable opportunity. Mr. Cornell not only asked for certain information and assurances, but he also wants the Government to introduce three more Bills in addition to the three that stand in his name on the notice paper. The hon. member made some strong statements which he may or may not be able to substantiate. In making those statements he used remarks such as, "It is common gossip," "I have been given to understand," "It is common property," "Everything he said may be true, but I think he will have extreme difficulty in supporting the statements he made. He suggested an amendment to the Electoral Act, a Bill to deal with the suicide clause in insurance policies, the licensing laws and other matters. I think, in connection with lotteries, he used a term sounding like "a premium on crime." He also used another expression, "I do not know whether I am correctly informed." He had heard something and therefore made a charge. He finished up by suggesting that members of Parliament were more concerned about votes than about what was right and proper. I hope he was speaking for himself.

Hon. J. Cornell: And for others, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: While he made some statements that will call for inquiry, I am afraid it is not possible for me now to give him all the information he sought. He made a feature of s.p. or shop betting, notwithstanding that he has a Bill on the notice paper and that the House has already been informed of the intention of the Government to bring down a measure in the near future dealing with that very question. Why the necessity for all the talk on this subject to-night? The intention of the Government is well known. Do members feel I have led them astray by telling them that the Government is bringing down this measure?

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why not enforce the existing law?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Thomson took strong exception to the reply to a question he put. The reply was supplied through me. He said there was deliberate

misrepresentation on the part of some individual. That misrepresentation must be contained in the reply given to him.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: You did not laugh at what he said.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There was no necessity to laugh. Mr. Thomson took exception to the reply showing what the Government had done for youth employment. He stated definitely that the £14,000 provided by the Commonwealth Government had been utilised by the State Government in a way that was never intended. He said the money was not intended for buildings and facilities. I recollect saying in the House on a previous occasion that the money was provided by the Commonwealth, and that one of the conditions was that it should be used for buildings and facilities. The hon. member read from the Auditor General's report the conditions under which that money was granted, and the only construction that could be put upon the report is that the money was for buildings and equipment. He also contradicted himself. When he says that this is the only Government in Australia that has done nothing for youth employment, I give him the lie direct.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Leader of the House must withdraw that remark.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I withdraw the remark, and will say that the statement was certainly incorrect.

Hon. A. Thomson: What about the pound-for-pound subsidy, another condition?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It will be found that the State Government has given more than the pound-for-pound subsidy. Too much information was given in my reply, so much information that the hon. member misconstrued it.

Hon. A. Thomson: I did not misconstrue anything.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member went on to speak about the manipulation of State accounts. He did not blame any Government or individual, but said that for years the State accounts had been manipulated in a manner that would not be tolerated by private individuals or private enterprise.

Hon. A. Thomson: I repeat that statement.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the accounts have been manipulated, it has been left to this Government to bring about a very radical change in the way they are pre-

sented to Parliament. I hope the hon. member did not use the term "manipulation" to mean what the dictionary says it means.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Commonwealth Government insisted on that system being adopted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This was done without any insistence from the Commonwealth Government. The present Government has brought about a radical change in the presentation of the accounts of the State.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Commonwealth Government lent the State money on condition that we did that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. E. H. Hall supported Mr. Thomson's remarks about youth employment.

Hon. A. Thomson: I do not withdraw one statement I made.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member contradicted himself when he quoted the Auditor General's report, showing that the money was provided for buildings and facilities.

Hon. A. Thomson: It does not say anything of the sort.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The Auditor General said the Prime Minister approved of the money for buildings.

Hon. A. Thomson: That was not then the primary object of giving the money.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was a condition on which the money was granted to the State. Mr. Hall talked about someone being subservient to the Minister. I do not know what he meant. Ministers of the Crown must necessarily be in control of State departments.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Of most departments.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: When a Minister controls a department, the permanent head must be subject to the control of the Minister. I hope the hon. member, in using the term subservient, did not attach to it the dictionary meaning. Mr. Parker gave prominence to remarks made by him on the Address-in-reply. I wondered whether we were going to have another Address-in-reply debate. He spoke about the administration of the Police Department, and took exception to something the Commissioner of Police said in a report, that I was good enough to allow members to peruse. The hon. member seemed to think there was something wrong in the

Commissioner's expressing an opinion to me and in my allowing the House to know what that opinion was. He also made some strong statements that will not be overlooked. I do not know whether he suggested there was anything wrong about myself as a Minister. Definite inquiries will be made into some of the statements he made to-night, and I shall be pleased to have from him the information he said he was prepared to give me.

This Bill is required to enable the Government to continue functioning. It is the prerogative of members when discussing a Supply Bill to talk about anything under the sun, and one or two have exercised that prerogative. I do not complain of that, but think some of them might have chosen language to express their thoughts less strong than that which they actually used. I am prepared at all times to give members the information they require, provided I can obtain it. If a member raises a personal question, I am ready to furnish him with all the information I can get. My wish is to do all I can in that direction, and to give members the satisfaction they have the right to expect in this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILLS (6)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Marketing of Onions (Hon. E. H. Gray in charge).
- 2, Bureau of Industry and Economic Research.
- 3, Sailors and Soldiers' Scholarship Fund.
- 4, Land Tax and Income Tax.
- 5, Basil Murray Co-operative Memorial Scholarship Fund.
- 6, Auctioneers Act Amendment.
Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 9.23 p.m.