

The Minister for Mines: Have you not had enough during the last 24 days?

Mr. McLARTY: This month has been all right. Thousands of acres have had to be taken out of the irrigation area because of a shortage of water. Many of the settlers were looking forward to irrigating their holdings and preparing for it. The position represents a very serious loss to the people concerned. I am sorry the Minister for Country Water Supplies is not present this evening. At the first opportunity I intend to bring this matter under his notice and hope he will make a statement concerning it. I could have dealt with other matters of local interest, but do not intend to do so. I will bring them under the notice of the Minister concerned when the opportunity arises.

On motion by Mr. Boyle, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Council.

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

House adjourned at 1.33 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 26th August, 1936.

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

QUESTION—STATE INSURANCE OFFICE.

Mr. WATTS asked the Treasurer: 1, What was the revenue received by the State Insurance Office for premiums on workers' compensation insurance of all kinds during the financial years 1933-34, 1934-35, and 1935-36? 2, During the same periods, what was paid out in respect of workers' compensation claims of all kinds? 3, During the same periods what was the cost of administration apportioned to such insurance and settlement of claims?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Treasurer) replied: 1, 1933-34, £128,335; 1934-35, £174,419; 1935-36, £242,096. 2, 1933-34, £111,407; 1934-35, £148,033; 1935-36, £173,022. 3, 1933-34, £2,636; 1934-35, £3,148; 1935-36, £3,796.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

Medical Examination of Employees.

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that any new employee of the Commissioner of Railways at the Loco. Workshops, Midland Junction, has to undergo a medical examination before being engaged? 2, What is the reason or necessity for such examination? 3, How much is such employee charged for the examination? 4, Is the fee charged retained by the examining doctor, or is it placed into a special fund under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, Yes. 2, To ensure that any appointee is physically fit. 3, Five shillings, provided he is accepted for appointment. 4, It is paid to Railway reserve.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [4.35]: At the outset of my remarks, I would like to add my quota to the stream of congratulations that have flown towards you, Mr. Speaker. I have been the recipient of many acts of consideration and kindness from you, and I take this opportunity to express my appreciation. The financial position of the State, as announced by the Government, shows that for the first time in many years there has been a surplus, £88,378 being the amount. Whether we can congratulate ourselves upon that surplus in connection with the public accounts while deplorable conditions exist in many important sections of industry within the State, is a matter of opinion. The surplus was accomplished by means of a regrettable increase in indirect taxation, especially in that crude method of income tax known as the financial emergency tax. Last year, that tax returned £827,119 against £684,980 for the financial year 1934-35, or an increase in 12 months in that particular form of taxation of £142,139. The Federal grant was increased and under that heading the State received £800,000. The income taxation paid within the State represented £274,794, and the dividend duties, including those arising from the mining industry, £361,367, or a total derived from those avenues of direct taxation, including the Commonwealth grant, of over £2,000,000, which the Government had at their disposal during the financial year that has just closed. The item that struck me most particularly with regard to disbursements from revenue was that out of every £100 of revenue received by the Government they paid no less than £40 away to the moneylender in interest. How long can the State continue to pay £40 out of every £100 of revenue to the moneylender? That is to me symbolical of a rake's progress. The financial relationship between the States and the Commonwealth is due for overhaul. We cannot continue under the conditions that obtain to-day as between the State and the Commonwealth.

Mr. Raphael: We are a bit with you on that, you know.

Mr. BOYLE: The hon. member should be with me all the way. Dealing with that phase, I shall quote some remarks made by Mr. Menzies, the Federal Attorney General.

He is, I believe, an authority on the Constitution. Certainly, he is an authority because he can argue with equal facility on either side.

The Minister for Lands: He can defend the side whose case he does not believe in.

Mr. BOYLE: In a speech delivered at the Constitutional Conference that was attended by Commonwealth and State Ministers in Melbourne, the Federal Attorney General, on the 16th February, 1934, made the following statement:—

The High Court decision on the Financial Agreement Enforcement Act undoubtedly increases from year to year the difficulties of the States, because it has tended to place the State as an organisation and the subjects within its boundaries in the position of being altogether responsible to Commonwealth demands.

Further on he said:—

I believe that it is demonstrably true that the obligations of States, failing some Constitutional amendments, will keep growing from year to year and that the financial resources of the States will keep failing from year to year. The Financial Agreement will not only produce a sliding scale of injustice of the States, but will also produce for the smaller States an acute problem. The Commonwealth has its exclusive jurisdiction over the most lucrative and elastic sources of revenue. That means that the State Treasurer, although this may not be an accurate metaphor, is merely a residuary legatee, and more and more is he experiencing what many a residuary legatee is experiencing to his cost.

On the 15th August, 1936, Mr. Forgan Smith—I quote that gentleman's opinion because he is the head of a Labour Government in Queensland and, of course, Mr. Menzies is the Attorney General in a composite Government at Canberra—stated:—

The States are being bled to death under the present dual taxation system in which the Commonwealth has invaded State fields of revenue. The Commonwealth must come to the aid of the States, either by sharing the cost of health and education services, or by increased payments to the States from Federal revenue.

I emphasise that the present relationship between the States and the Commonwealth must be adjusted if the States are to survive, failing which, of course, the States will be driven into unification. I stated that the conditions under which Western Australia is labouring are unsatisfactory. We now find that the conditions of the workers and the farmers in Western Australia are somewhat akin. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) mentioned in the course of his speech on the

question before the House that the workers found no security in the midst of plenty. I can add that neither do the farmers, who produce that plenty, find security themselves. Mr. Glasson is well known to me, and I believe he is the secretary of the Dock, River and Harbour Employees' Union. When speaking as a member of a deputation to the Minister for Labour, Mr. Glasson made the following statement:—

Discontent is rising very fast among union members. The Government have to thank the union executive for keeping their members from creating any disturbance, but if part-time work goes on much longer we will be powerless. My executive would like a direct answer. The depression has not lifted in Fremantle, where we are still in the same rut as five or six years ago. Union members are saying, "Put the other party back and let us have a go at them"—

It looks as though that is coming about—.

—If the Government do not soon make a start, the rank and file think they should get out of office and give the other party a go.

That assertion comes from a man I know to be most honourable, and I think I am right in saying that he is one of the staunchest Labourites in Fremantle to-day. In the course of his reply, the Minister gave some official figures, and said that out of 6,198 married men in employment on the particular works under discussion, only 1,760 were on full-time work, or 28.4 per cent. It is obvious, therefore, that 72 per cent. of those married men were not in receipt of full-time work, and that emphasises the deplorable conditions that exist.

Mr. Fox: How will you better their condition?

Mr. Tonkin: Give us your suggestion.

Mr. BOYLE: Wait till we take charge of the Treasury bench.

Mr. Raphael: When you were on this side of the House, your Government would not give the men more than £3 a week.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Raphael: You made a nice mess of things.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BOYLE: When I read those figures, I noted with grave concern the fact that on the goldfields water supply operations, out of 416 married men only 135 were on full-time work, or practically 32 per cent. That is a deplorable condition of affairs.

Mr. Raphael interjected.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why do not you make a speech by standing up?

Mr. Marshall: You couldn't make one if you did stand up.

Mr. BOYLE: The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) yesterday twitted us on this side with being inactive in regard to the monetary system. As to the reform of the monetary system, which is inevitable if we are to continue to exist, no mention has been made since the general election of the previous activities of members on this side of the House, except that the hon. member spoke of our attending an abolition-of-poverty meeting in the Town Hall. Certainly I attended that meeting, and I found myself sitting next to the Anglican Archbishop of Perth; so we had at least an odour of sanctity there. I think that every other church was represented also. But I should like to remind the hon. member that when, from this side of the House I moved a motion last session for a committee to inquire into the monetary system, or rather to assist the Federal Banking Commission, the hon. member himself voted against it. So it seems to be inconsistent in him now to accuse us of not saying anything about the monetary system since the election, although he previously refused to assist me in the setting up of a committee which would have made the Federal Banking Commission when over here, fruitful in result, rather than its coming to Western Australia and examining witnesses most of whom, I say without hesitation, were merely cranks. Possibly we can all plead guilty to being more or less cranks, but some of the arguments put up before that Commission, as coming from Western Australia, were puerility itself. I still feel resentful that the House did not adopt my motion, and that the member for North-East Fremantle did not accept the responsibility of agreeing to the motion.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Was it not because you went the wrong way about it?

Mr. BOYLE: All I wanted was a committee that would present evidence before that Commission, a committee appointed with the full authority of the State.

The Minister for Lands: Did you appear before the Federal Banking Commission when it was here?

Mr. BOYLE: No, because, as I have said, I thought the evidence should have been given only by responsible persons, not by mere individuals.

Mr. Cross: Are you not a responsible person?

Mr. BOYLE: I think I am. But it all depends upon what the hon. member would term responsible. Of course it is purely a matter of perspective. It may not be the opinion of everybody, but I suppose that normally I would pass as a responsible person.

Mr. Raphael: Well, why did not you give evidence?

Mr. BOYLE: Because I thought that evidence should not be given by individuals, but only by responsible and fully accredited persons. I have said that the member for North-East Fremantle accused us yesterday of using the monetary question as a stalking-horse; and that, when he had opposed my motion. In reference to Government hospitals, the position is most unsatisfactory. The Minister will remember that at the opening of the Merredin hospital I told him I would bring before him and before the House, a plan for the settling of this question once for all.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

Mr. BOYLE: No, the settling of the question of providing hospital relief for the State. At present that most humane work is nobody's business, and there is a most unseemly squabble going on in the metropolitan area between the Lord Mayor of Perth and the Mayor of somewhere else. I notice that one official taking part in the squabble called the Lord Mayor of Perth "a damned autocrat."

Mr. Raphael: And he was not far off, anyhow.

Mr. BOYLE: What led me to the taking up of this attitude with the Minister was the fact that one of my first acts on entering the House was to prevent the overloading of the taxpayers of the Merredin district for the provision of a local public hospital. I was the means of preventing the board from carrying out certain proposals to raise a certain amount which I knew the taxpaying farmers could not pay. With the aid of the Lotteries Commission I succeeded in reducing the amount, thereby saving the taxpayers over the period of the loan £4,000. Still that does not make the thing right. Why should country taxpayers have to provide hospitals, any more than city taxpayers? I am not by any means raising the question of city versus country, but I

say that hospital relief is incidental taxation that should not press with more severity on one class of the community than on another. In the metropolitan area there is no question of taxing the taxpayers in order to provide hospitals, but when a hospital is required in the country the first point advanced is that the local people shall receive only a pound for pound subsidy, and must therefore raise money themselves.

The Minister for Health: Nobody gets a £2 for pound subsidy.

Mr. BOYLE: I propose that a hospital building trust Act should be enacted. That statute would be within the four corners of the Constitution, and would not outrage the Financial Agreement, because there is power given for local authorities to raise money. There was distributed by the Lotteries Commission for the year ended the 31st December, 1935, no less an amount than £86,500. That was the profit from the Commission. Whether or not we like this form of raising money, I say it has come to stay. Most members will agree that that form of lottery control has come to stay, and is now of a permanent nature. If that be so, my scheme permits the borrowing on a five-year plan of £500,000 without a tax on the local authorities at all. That sum could bear interest at the rate of 4 per cent., and carry a sinking fund of 3 per cent., which would liquidate the loan in 25 years. The payment of interest and sinking fund should be made a charge against the Lotteries Commission of £35,000 per annum, which would cover the interest and sinking fund and provide £500,000 for the building of hospitals in this State. The provision of a new general hospital in Perth could be effected by a sum of £150,000. A maternity hospital could be erected for £80,000. At this stage, may I pause to pay a tribute to that remarkable woman, Matron Walsh, who is in charge of the King Edward Maternity Hospital. She is doing more in Western Australia than any other single person in providing for the health and security of those people who come under her care. An infectious diseases hospital could be erected for £20,000, because it need not necessarily be a large hospital. My plan would mean £250,000 for the metropolitan area, and £250,000 for country and for goldfields hospitals. In congratulating the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) on his able speech on the Address-in-reply, I sympathise with him in his having such

a wretched collection of hospital buildings in Kalgoorlie. In Merredin it was the same at one time, and many a good man and good woman went out in Merredin in those days, simply because they could not on account of the lack of accommodation have the care and attention that they would have got had they been in the metropolitan area. The administration of this money would be by a trust appointed with power to deal with the repayment of sums borrowed. The Lotteries Commission would provide the £35,000 annually required as interest and sinking fund, and in addition there would be the 3 per cent. payments coming in all the time. The hospital tax is charged against all incomes at the rate of 1½d. in the pound. It is growing immensely, as such taxes do grow. Last year the hospital tax returned £206,539, or £24,900 more than in the previous year.

The Minister for Health: It shows there was much more prosperity in the State.

Mr. BOYLE: I say the tax should be used for the maintenance of hospitals, not for the erection of hospital buildings, as it is to-day. Over £15,000 was taken out of that fund last year for hospital buildings, and it is to the avoidance of that sort of thing that my remarks are directed to-day. Undoubtedly the hospital tax was imposed for the maintenance of hospitals. Since 1933-34 it has grown from £158,000 to £206,000, yet we had the spectacle in Kellerberrin of one hospital having to beg for assistance. It ought to be remembered that the hospital tax is for maintenance alone. In Kellerberrin to-day the road board has refused to raise a loan for extra buildings there, and I find I cannot get any money for improvements to that hospital, which is now too small for the work it is expected to do; no money can be found unless the local authority pledges itself to raise from one-third to one-half the necessary amount. That is not fair. To-day the Kellerberrin Road Board is in the happy position of not owing a penny of loan money; it has never floated a loan. Yet although it has given hundreds of pounds to the hospital, there is to-day the implied demand on the board that it must raise a loan for hospital buildings.

The Minister for Lands: That is just what they are doing in the back-country.

Mr. BOYLE: There should be no differentiation between the city and the country in this regard. The Farmers' Debts Ad-

justment Act has been in the melting pot during the last 12 months, owing to the passing of the Rural Relief Act. I do not join in any condemnation of the working of the Rural Relief Act; I have watched it closely, and have had the privilege of examining the Acts operating in New South Wales, in Victoria and in South Australia. One thing on which I sympathise with the Government in regard to this Act, is that they should be required to find the whole of the administrative charges under the Act, which amounted to £11,000 last year, and will amount to £25,000 when the Act comes into full operation. When the Federal Government made a gift of that money to the State, I think they should have been generous enough to allow the administrative charges and relieve the farmer of the necessity for paying fees. To-day the farmer who comes under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act has to pay £5 for the privilege of enabling his creditors to get a composition. This is of no great use to the farmer himself, save that it relieves him of the load of debt he has to face. What is a fundamental necessity under the Act, and what has not been provided in Western Australia, is an amount of money to function the Act. The parent Act provides for a suspension only of secured debts. That is one thing from which the Federal Government ran away. They were not going to antagonise their friends.

The Minister for Lands: Mr. Abbott supported the deletion.

Mr. BOYLE: I thought he was the only man who stood to his guns.

The Minister for Lands: Read Federal "Hansard" and you will see that what I say is correct.

Mr. BOYLE: In Victoria the funds placed behind the Act amount to £700,000 and the successful working of the Act in that State—I might say phenomenally successful working—is due to the fact, I presume, that there is a Country Party Government behind the trustees, and that the Act is being administered more in the spirit than in the letter of the Federal statute. In New South Wales there is a sum of £750,000 which was provided by the Flour and Wheat Acquisition Act. There is a lot of misunderstanding regarding the administration of the New South

Wales Act. We are told that there is a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest charge, but the trustees in New South Wales are buying secured debts, as high as £11,000 in one instance, and charging only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the money advanced for that purpose. That the Act is not working more freely there is due to the fact that it is not as elastic as is our Act. With the provision of £250,000 to function the Act in Western Australia, we could impose the suspension clause against secured creditors. Is it not obvious that if a bank or financial house finds it has to suspend part, or the whole of a debt, and has to accept an interest rate lower than that covenanted for—which it is possible for the trustees to impose—it savours of cheek to demand that the creditor should carry on the mortgagor in his farming operations? The banks take the attitude that if their debts are suspended, they will not do that, and no farmer is game to run counter to the financial authority. I told the House last year that that would be the experience, and so it has proved. If we could place, as I think we could, say, £250,000 behind the trustees to function the Act, they would be in a position to give the individual farmer facilities to carry on his farm during the cropping season. To-day the farmer is dependent entirely upon the financial house that is carrying him, and the financial houses cannot be unduly blamed if, in having to accept the suspension and the lower interest, they refuse to find working capital to enable the farmer to carry on. The Act, to that extent, is practically inoperative in this State. In my opinion the trustees are doing a very good job. They have received 1,700 applications under the Act and have dealt with 670 cases.

The Minister for Lands: They have shown wonderful expedition.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, they are doing a good job, and I resent much of the cheap criticism levelled at them. I have criticised many things, but have had good reason for so doing. As compared with what the Eastern States are doing, I say that our trustees are doing a very good job, but there is danger looming ahead for them. This danger lies in the fact that the funds have not been coming to hand as the Federal Government promised. The trustees

are advancing an average of £300 per farmer to compound unsecured debts. An average of £300 will permit of finance being provided for 5,000 farmers in this State. That will absorb the sum of £1,500,000. There are 20,000 farmers in Western Australia who are eligible to come under the scheme. Yet, when 5,000 farmers have been dealt with, there will be 15,000 who will be automatically placed outside the pale of the Act unless more money is found. So far the trustees have compounded over £600,000 of debts at the rate of 6s. 8d. in the pound. That is an average rate of one-third, which is quite a good job. The trustees, however, have commitments for £212,000 and they have been advanced only £150,000. To enable the Act to function with any degree of financial safety, it is necessary that £500,000 per year should come to hand from the Federal Treasurer without any lag. The trustees have been warned, I believe, that the £500,000 for this year will probably be cut down to £250,000. With the lag of £70,000 to-day deducted from the £250,000, only £180,000 will be available during the next 12 months to function the Rural Relief Fund Act in this State. If we are to receive 40 applications a week over the whole period, it will mean providing for 2,000 farmers this year, and it is quite on the cards that unless the money is forthcoming, four months will see the end of the operations of the trustees under the Act. It seems to be an absolute breach of faith and trust on the part of the Federal Government in not sending the money forward as it should be sent. Another matter of moment is that of educational facilities in this State. I say the country schools to-day are absolutely starved for funds. I have received requests from one end of my electorate to the other for what in the metropolitan area would be considered commonplace requirements. For instance, at one small school the teacher was running concerts in order to raise funds to floor the porch and approach to the school, where the children were in danger of breaking limbs when passing in and out. I compliment the Minister on the efficiency of the administrative staff, even if I cannot compliment the Treasury for starving the department. I have received nothing but courtesy and help from the officials of the Education Department, and I feel quite

sure that my appeal will not fall on deaf ears. Let me instance the case of a growing boy at a country school. It has to do with the tossed-out desks from the metropolitan area that are sent to country schools. The boys in the country districts grow fast. One of them I met on his way to school carrying a petrol case. I asked him what he intended to do with the case. He replied, "I cannot sit at the desk provided, and so I am taking a petrol case to sit on." Some of the country children travel miles to attend school, and the bicycle is the most favoured mode of conveyance, it having been found that accidents are more frequent when children travel by vehicle. The department provide a meagre 6d. a week when children use bicycles as a means of transport. I have been informed that the department have no power under the regulations to grant a higher allowance. Sixpence per week to provide for a child's transport to school is very poor contribution by the State to the child's education.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is it 6d. per week or per day?

Mr. BOYLE: Sixpence per day! If they received 6d. per day they would think they were in clover. We do not ask for 6d. per day. If the amount were 6d. per day, I would buy a bicycle myself and return to school. Another matter of educational facilities with which I dealt previous to the general election is the utter lack of high school facilities in the wheat belt. It will be urged, as it has been urged by the department to me, that there are no facilities at Geraldton, but that there is a high school at Northam. That does not alter the position at all. High school facilities are provided in Perth, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Albany. When a child in my electorate wins a scholarship or desires to obtain high-school education, it has to leave home and travel to Northam, which means the provision of board and lodging by parents who to-day are not in a position to supply it. The children in the country are just as much entitled to high-school education as are children in other parts of the State, and I cannot see that the reply that there are no high-school facilities in Geraldton has anything to do with the matter. The Agricultural Bank Act is one in the general condemnation of which I do not join. I think it is a good Act. We on this side of the House have prepared amend-

ments which will be submitted at the proper time and place. The Act was founded on the report of a Royal Commission. The Royal Commission consisted of good men, every one of them. The report was a good one. What object would such men have in condemning the Agricultural Bank or the administration of the old Act if it were not justified? I know positively that the Commission did a good job and that their findings were based on the facts. I do not blame the trustees who operated under the old Act. They were trying to administer an Act that could not be administered with any degree of success. The chairman of the Commission was Mr. Harry Hale, a trained solicitor, a man who had been 40 years in the profession; and he told me during my evidence that the Act was like a rubber contraction; when you pulled a clause here, you pulled one out of place somewhere else. There was urgent necessity for a new Act, and the Act of 1934 is a good one, though that statement is subject to qualification. The old spirit lives in the new Act and in the administration of the Act, and that old spirit is that every client of the Agricultural Bank is a potential rogue and thief. I do not subscribe to that. The sooner that spirit is dispersed, the better. It has been remarked to me that the Act is making rogues of honest men, and I believe it. I refer to the dragnet provision in Section 51. Against that provision I protested at the time as leader of an important organisation. I circularised every member of the Legislative Council because I realised from the trend of the debate in this House that there would be very little chance of securing any amendments here. I put up a plea on behalf of that particular organisation, of which I had the honour to be the leader. It was dated November 1934. It referred to Clause 50, or 51 as it is now. I wrote the circular letter to members of the Legislative Council, and said:—

This gives far too much power to the Commissioners—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are speaking of the first Bill that was introduced; not the last one.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You helped to pass the last one.

Mr. BOYLE: I am saying that I look upon the Act as a good one, provided it is amended. I am not shirking any responsibility. The Royal Commissioners were quite

right in saying that it was not possible to administer the old Act as it was with any degree of success. I said in my circular letter to the Legislative Council:—

Clause 51 gives far too much power to the Commissioners under its drag-net provision. The inclusion of farmers' side lines (which are almost invariably the efforts of the farmer's wife and family to assist) in the attachable proceeds under this clause will cause heart-burnings and resentment throughout the farming area of the State. The same provision was included in the South Australian Act and had rendered the working of that Act extremely difficult. To guard against the pre-supposed double dealing of the farmer it is proposed in this clause to knock all incentive to the production of side lines on the head. There is no protection for the farmer in the provision of his living allowance in the Bill, and the grabbing by the Commissioners of the whole of the farm proceeds will be strenuously fought by my organisation. We consider the Agricultural Bank Bill an honest attempt to improve the conditions under which farmers exist, but we appeal to you to use your vote and influence to amend the Bill to prevent a grave injustice being done to the one person above all who has kept the farmer on the land for the past four years, and that person is the farmer's wife.

I am pleased to say that the party with which I am associated is making provision to throw upon the Government the responsibility of refusing to make the Act a workable one. I do not join with others in a general condemnation of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners. They have a very hard job ahead of them. One reads that in this State the farmers owe the bank to-day £16,000,000, compared with £14,000,000 that was owing in 1931 as shown before the Farmers' Disabilities Commission. To say that everything is going right with the State, when in that period the Agricultural Bank has dropped behind to the extent of an extra £2,000,000, is stretching the point. In this State 2,791 farms have been abandoned, and the debt owing upon them is £4,024,000. It is a disgrace that an industry which means so much to Western Australia, and will be flourishing when gold is forgotten in this State, has received such treatment. I do not decry the gold-mining industry. It was a perfect god-send to us in enabling us to deal so well with the unemployed difficulty. It is its lack of permanency that I stress. How can we call a country flourishing when nearly 3,000 farmers have been driven off the land? These men are not wasters. I have heard that cheap jibe thrown at men who have abandoned their farms. I have

been too much amongst them in the past five or six years to admit the truth of a loose charge of that sort. I have seen broken men who have fought hard to establish themselves, but by force of circumstances have been driven off the land. The suspension clause in the Federal Act was adopted by Western Australia, but not brought into operation. We find there is a sum of between £9,000,000 and £11,000,000 owing to the banks in this State. This is not touched, cannot be attached, and must be borne until the Act is amended. We are told there is a rise in wheat prices, that wool is better in value, and that everything is all right. Everything is not all right. It is now that the men, who have stood by their farms for the past five years, will begin to suffer afresh. It is now that the creditors will begin to press them, and they will do so in no uncertain way. The farmers have almost as little protection now as they had five years ago with the exception of the unsecured debts. The Agricultural Bank will lose £4,000,000 in abandoned farms. Had £2,000,000 been advanced at the right time, the whole industry would probably have been saved. There was no money, and we are told there is still no money. We are in a state of depression. Any wild-cat show on the eastern goldfields would, however, be over-subscribed, and money in plenty would roll in, but not any money to save the main industry of the State. To-day in this State a better attitude is being adopted towards the farming industry. Even the many creditors of the farmers are more tractable to-day, and more inclined to wait for their money. I do not say that is on account of the rise in value of farm products, but there is a better realisation concerning what the preservation of the industry means to the State. Victoria is a particularly conservative State. The relief board in Victoria is engaged in writing off, during the ensuing three years, no less than £20,000,000 owing to the Rural Bank there. The board claims to be reducing the indebtedness of the farmers in the North-West and central districts of Victoria by £20,000,000 within that period. I am not defending the administration of the Agricultural Bank. I have letters to prove that the administration in many respects is crude, harsh and unconscionable. These

are hard words to use, but in the case of individuals I can prove that they are correct. I am not reflecting upon the Commissioners, but, I take it, it is a reflection on those who are charged with the detailed administration of the Act. I take full responsibility for making this statement. People are too much inclined to regard the farmer as a rogue in being. It is said, "if you take your eye off him he will do something wrong or steal something." For five years these men have existed below the bread line, yet their standard of honesty and morality is as high as is found in any other section of the community in Australia. Marketing Acts are of vital importance to us and to producers generally. I admit that the decision of the Privy Council is a knock-out for the Federal marketing control organisation. The voluntary pools, I regret to say, have not filled the bill. The only voluntary pool in Australia that seems to have been a success is the W.A. Wheat Pool. A little while ago I made a conversational statement that was published, and I take this opportunity to correct it. The information I am going to give I obtained from the Wheat Pool of Western Australia. It deals with voluntary pools. I find that in Victoria the Wheat Corporation in 1932-33 handled 37 per cent. of the wheat of that State, and that the Western Australian Pool handled 33 per cent. of our wheat. In 1933-34 the figure in Victoria went down to 18 per cent., but in Western Australia it increased by four per cent. to 37 per cent. In 1934-35 the Victorian corporation handled only 4 per cent. of the wheat marketed in that State, and the Western Australian pool handled 30 per cent. This year the tragedy is that the Victorian corporation handled only 5 per cent., and the Western Australian Pool handled only 17 per cent.

The Minister for Lands: I suppose you know the reason for that.

Mr. BOYLE: One reason was the pressure brought to bear upon the farmer by his creditors, forcing him to realise on his wheat at any price he could get for it.

The Minister for Lands: When wheat fetched 3s. 2d. for cash, the farmer grabbed it.

Mr. BOYLE: There was not so much grabbing about it. I know the pressure

which has been placed by farmers' trustees and others on people whose wheat they held.

The Minister for Lands: I grabbed it.

Mr. BOYLE: The Minister may have been in a position to do so. Many of our farmers were in the hands of trustees and third parties and were forced to sell. These people do not want dividends. They kept the pressure up until the wheat was sold, with resultant loss to the voluntary pool. A compulsory pool is the only way to get over that particular marketing difficulty. There is considered to be another way out. I do not intend to mistake the shadow for the substance. I am afraid that the idea of compulsory pools in Australia is out of action for some years because of the decision of the Privy Council. But we have another way to obtain relief for the farmers of Australia, particularly the wheatgrowers. Under the Paterson butter scheme and the butter excise, the dairy farmer in Australia receives £5,000,000 per annum from the consuming public of Australia over and above the parity price of butter in the Old Country. Sugar is in the happy position of receiving £7,000,000. Under the Customs Act of Australia, 1s. 1d. per bushel is the protection that we are afforded against foreign wheat. In the United States the duty is 1s. 9d. a bushel, or 42 cents. We are entitled to come under the excise provisions of the new protection afforded to the primary producers of Australia. We have to buy in markets which Royal Commissions have proved are worked on a system which places an added cost of 1s. a bushel on the production of wheat. The protection against imported wheat is 1s. 1d. per bushel. It is beyond the bounds of reason that any wheat from abroad should come into Australia. We are, therefore, entitled to the protection afforded by the new protection plan on the home price. If we had an excise tax of 1s. 1d. placed on the 38,000,000 bushels, which is the wheat consumption of Australia, the industry would very greatly benefit. I am opposed to a flour tax. This affects only the human consumption portion of wheat. We are entitled to an excise tax on all wheat consumed in Australia by whatever means. Such a tax would yield £1,860,000 a year, but would give us only an extra 3d. a bushel on all wheat produced in Australia, for home consumption and export, which is 138,000,000 bushels. I do not intend to throw away the substance for the shadow, but to use every influence I have to

see that an excise tax protection is afforded to wheat as well as to dried fruits, butter and no less than 35 other primary commodities. The member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) last night referred to the position the English farmers were in and criticised the land settlement schemes in Australia. I think she suggested the creation of some form of committee. We have had enough experience of that sort of thing.

The Minister for Lands: A women's committee preferably.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not know what sort of committee she intended. I cannot agree with the hon. member's suggestion. I have given evidence before two select committees and four Royal Commissions. With the exception of the magnificent and monumental work performed by the Federal Royal Commission on wheat, I should imagine that if they had all stayed at home they would have done just as much good as they actually did. Royal Commissions are used chiefly to shelve awkward questions.

The Minister for Lands: We have not shelved ours. We acted upon it.

Mr. BOYLE: In her remarks the member for Subiaco overlooked the fact that Great Britain provides the greatest market in the world, according to the McMillan Royal Commission in 1931. The British home food markets are valued at a thousand millions of money annually, of which six hundred million pounds' worth comes from abroad to supply that market. Take the British wheatgrower to-day: under the Wheat Protective Act of Britain he gets 45s. per quarter for the wheat before he grows it. That may be a peculiar way of putting it, but the British wheatgrower is assured a return of 5s. 7½d. per bushel before marketing his wheat at all. Thus he is placed in a magnificent position. The production of English wheat, under the Act, has increased from 40,000,000 bushels to 60,000,000 bushels annually. If we in Australia were assured of a home market which would leave more than half of the requirements to be imported from abroad, we would be exactly in the position of Australian secondary industries, which export only 3 per cent. of their production while supplying a home market to the value of £360,000,000. Only by our commonsense shall we solve these problems. I do not believe we are bankrupt in that

good sound common sense—at least, not on this side of the Chamber.

The Minister for Lands: That is a nice reflection on the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver).

Mr. BOYLE: I am not reflecting on the member for Subiaco at all. I personally would welcome her assistance in solving these problems. I am not critical, but merely informative. I do not wish people to run away with the idea that all of Western Australia's land settlement schemes are failures. They are not. If there is a failure in land settlement at all, it is among the groups. Eliminate the groups, and Western Australian land settlement schemes are in the main sound and have been carried out well, with the exception of the far eastern fringes, where most of the damage and trouble is to-day. I see the Minister for Lands smiling over my reference to group settlements being a failure. In 1924 I took a decided stand myself with regard to group settlements, and I have seen no reason since to alter my opinion. I do not wish to trench on the responsibilities of the member for Nelson (Mr. Doust), but my sympathies go out to the men who were brought here under such conditions. The sympathies of this House and of the Western Australian people should be extended to those men.

The Minister for Lands: Do you mean the sheltered conditions under which they were brought out?

Mr. BOYLE: If I could not get any more shelter than they got, I would not call it shelter at all. I saw those men at work. If theirs was a bed of roses, I do not wish to share that bed. Country water supplies to-day are exercising the minds of Country Party members in particular. Those areas in the wheat belt have not been relieved to a great extent by the rainfalls we have had. It was only recently I had occasion to examine the position, which is most serious from the point of view of the farmers. The fact is not generally understood in this House that there has been a great increase in the livestock in the wheat belt. That is all to the good. It will be remembered that a little while ago, when wool went up, a great cry arose for mixed farming. The cry was, "Stock your farms!" Sheep were sent in numbers on to the farms, but no water supply was provided

for them. The result was that a suggestion was made—and seriously, too—by Mr. McCallum, the Chairman of Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank, that if rain did not come before the 8th June last year the sheep should be destroyed. I do not blame Mr. McCallum for having made that suggestion; there was no other course open to him. In fact, there was nowhere to move the sheep to; and but for the intervention of Providence the whole of the livestock in the north-eastern area would have been destroyed.

The Minister for Lands: Do you say Mr. McCallum declared that the sheep would have to be destroyed? I believe he said they were to be sold.

Mr. BOYLE: Let the Minister read the Press. I speak subject to correction, but I would not like to make that statement unless I was sure of it.

The Minister for Lands: The Government warned the people that if they could not supply the sheep with water they must shift them.

Mr. BOYLE: If I did not feel sure of the point, I would not press it. I am convinced that that statement by Mr. McCallum appeared in the Press. I do not blame him for having made it. If water was not there for the stock, they could not be preserved, being in any case too weak to be shifted. No doubt from this very seat hon. members have heard of the Yarramony railway.

Members: We have!

Mr. BOYLE: I shall continue that argument. Not that I think the line will ever come. It is not an economic proposition. I would not lend myself to advocating what I did not think would be an economic proposition; but there are many settlers in that area, Yorkrakine and Yarramony, who went there in the full expectation of that railway going through; and we should endeavour to keep faith with them by provision of water supplies and by construction of roads, so as to make their position as comfortable as possible. For the information of the House I will give an indication of how that idea is being carried out—without further comment. There are in that particular area settlers—many old goldfields men—who today find themselves in an absolutely impossible position. I have here a letter from Mr. P. H. Smith, of West Yorkrakine, who, following a letter that he had written in Octo-

ber of last year, writes me under date of the 5th August last. In the previous October he drew attention to the fact that there were no means of water supply available except from a soak in the district. His last letter reads:—

I regret to have to write this letter to inform you that we have had no luck regarding the soak on McCafferty's abandoned block, Location 22816. They say it is impossible to resume the land without paying for improvements. I wish to say that there are practically no improvements, as the land wants clearing again. The only improvement I can see is the stone we put into the soak. This place has never had one fence post put up, and no building of any sort. I doubt very much if it will be taken up, as there is too much poison growing there. If we do not get this reserve for the public, I don't know what we will do for water, as we have five empty dams and two dry wells. We were carting water from this soak right up to April, and we had to sell 200 sheep because we could not cart sufficient water for 18 horses, 600 sheep and cows.

North of Bungulla I have sat at midnight beside the little standpipe there, 12 miles to the north, while eight settlers were bringing in teams from all over the Yorkrakine area and waiting for water to flow through the one-inch pipe. They told me it would be eight or nine o'clock in the morning before they would get home. Now the department have received a requisition from 15 settlers around that abandoned block stating that they will have to abandon their holdings unless they get a supply of water. Yet the Agricultural Bank insist on all improvements being paid for and the Bank itself indemnified. Mr. Smith, in a heart-broken letter, encloses a communication from Mr. Munt, the Under Secretary for Water Supplies.

The Minister for Lands: You said the abandoned block had never had any improvements on it and yet the Bank advanced money on it for improvements.

Mr. BOYLE: The Bank undoubtedly did advance money.

The Minister for Lands: Then the farmer must have taken the Bank down.

Mr. BOYLE: We say there is a soak which affords the only water supply in the area. If the previous holder abandoned the block in question, he did so for reasons which to himself seemed good and sufficient. The soak is on that block, and the department now refuse to pass over the block to the Government committee for a water supply. In consequence, 15 settlers in that area are now faced with the possibility of having to leave

their blocks. Mr. Munt wrote, under date of the 25th July last:—

I regret to have to inform you that after months of correspondence with the Agricultural Bank and the Lands Department it has been found impossible to resume the soak and make it a public water supply without the necessity of having to acquire the whole holding and pay for all improvements thereon.

That is a splendid piece of administration, to want to save the improvements on one block and to lose the improvements on 15 holdings around it! I wish to stress one of the problems with which we are faced. I am greatly afraid it will mean a resettlement problem for a considerable portion of the wheat belt. Recently I was out in the Nungarin district by the rabbit-proof fence, and there I found that in 20 miles two farmers only were left. A farm valued at £6,000 had been abandoned and is a breeding ground for grasshoppers and the dreaded African locust. The Minister realises the seriousness of that danger, and has taken action already. I regard the matter in a most serious light, as I have seen a grasshopper plague in South Australia. These abandoned farms are forming excellent breeding grounds for the new pest. The farmers have had to fight the emu and the rabbit, and they are now up against the worst threat of all in the locust, because he leaves nothing behind him when he flies away, and one cannot get at him unless one stops him beforehand. Machine guns could not be used against grasshoppers; the problem would require too much military skill. In the Kununoppin road board district 40,000 acres have been abandoned. On the miners' settlement about 30 men are left out of the original number of 82. At Goomarin out of 25 original settlers six remain. These are tragedies. Every one of those settlers represents a human tragedy. It is our business to prevent such tragedies in future. In the North Mt. Marshall area 40,000 acres have been abandoned and six settlers are left. They are under the impression that in order to safeguard their holdings against the locust pest, they will have to clear the pest from the abandoned area of 40,000 acres. In this matter there is need for both Federal and State co-operation. I do not think the cost of combating these pests should fall upon the farmers, because, after all, the Federal Government benefit from most of the taxes raised. In ten years the wheat industry has sent abroad £230,000,000 worth of its

product to pay for interest on money borrowed. Two millions of our money are annually represented by £1,700,000 interest and £337,000 exchange for London. Those £2,000,000, going to London, provide a good deal of ease and security for the people of Australia. I conclude by appealing to the Government to try to stop the wholesale abandonment of farms in Western Australia, and to assist in making the lot of the man on the land more endurable. We must get a better understanding of the position. As I told hon. members previously, this is not a party question. I appeal to the House not to make the comfort and security of the people of the wheat belt a party question. Land settlement in Western Australia is not a party question.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [5.45]: It is not my intention to delay the House, but one feels he is obliged, more particularly at a period like this, to make some contribution to the debate on the Address-in-reply. The member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) being a new member, did not appreciate perhaps the few chances one has of voicing his grievances as it were, or making further suggestions and recommendations to the Government of the day in connection with things in general. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) who has just sat down has dealt extensively with the question of the Agricultural Bank and its clients, particularly in the area he represents. He mentioned the question of the group settlements, and endeavoured to stress the fact that they had been a failure. I think that the member for Nelson (Mr. Doust) when he speaks in this debate will give the House a little enlightenment which will combat what the member for Avon has just said. I have studied this question pretty closely for a considerable time, although I have not been directly concerned with very many group settlers. As a matter of fact, they do not like the use of the term "group settlers," because of the fact that they have been handed over to the Agricultural Bank, and are therefore Agricultural Bank clients. In the "West Australian" to-day is given the report of the Agricultural Bank, in which it is stated that we have lost over £7,000,000 in group settlements, that is, on loan expenditure and interest. Is it

possible, however, actually to assess the losses on or the value of the group settlements? If there has been an expenditure of £10,000,000 of money on group settlements, have we not at least got some assets? Surely the whole of the asset is not lost. I do not think the Agricultural Bank or any statistician in Western Australia can really assess the loss on or the value to this State of that scheme. The group settlement scheme can, of course, be classed as a failure in certain directions. It was started in the first instance as an experiment differing from the old customs of land settlement, and was thus open to a certain amount of failure. Nevertheless, I would like to quote one or two instances to show that we have at least an asset in connection with our Agricultural Bank clients in the dairying district. I can remember the Manjimup district when there was no group settlement. Going through the town it was a difficult thing in those days to find a butcher's shop open for the purchase of meat, because the position of Manjimup did not justify a shop being opened every day. That was before group settlement started. Manjimup to-day is one of the most thriving towns in the South-West, on account of the establishment of a group settlement there. I have here figures covering a period of three years, but I will content myself with quoting those for this year to show what one Manjimup factory—that of the South-West Dairying Products Company—paid out for butterfat last season. The amount paid out was £42,339 6s. for butterfat, and bonuses of £3,111 8s. 2d., or a total of £45,450 14s. 2d. Take into consideration also the number of people who are there to serve the settlers in the matter of transport facilities and in other directions. I did not trouble to get the railway figures, but I am prepared to suggest that they are considerably higher to-day than for the period before group settlement was established. Margaret River, just over the bridge, in those days consisted of a little road board hall and one house. To-day there is a growing township which could not have been established but for the group settlement scheme. In that district last year there was expended for butterfat and bonuses £39,198 1s. 3d. Then we have Busselton. Anyone who knew Busselton

in days gone by realised that it was a town at a standstill. Through the establishment of a settlement there, although we then had a butter factory practically not worth keeping going, this factory paid out for butterfat during the same year, 1935-36, no less a sum than £75,453 19s. 2d. These three instances should satisfy every member of this House that the group settlement scheme has been an asset to the State in some respects. In addition to that there has been established in the South-West at Picton Junction a superphosphate works. In anticipation of the growth and progress of the group settlement scheme down there, the Mt. Lyell Company established those works in which alone we have a wonderful asset insofar as they pay out from £12,000 to £15,000 in wages annually. Their importations of rock phosphates and sulphur last year amounted to 37,867 tons. Prior to the establishment of these works at Picton, our imports were insignificant. Consider too the work that has been created for railway men, wharf labourers, and others employed in conjunction with the group settlements. In spite of the money spent on the scheme we have to take into account that there must be a great amount of it still in our pockets, as it were. How is it possible to assess the amount lost or the wealth gained through that class of settlement?

Mr. North: Tobacco will be a big help.

Mr. WITHERS: I could quote figures to show that tobacco growing has made great strides in the South-West, because of the fact that it was preceded by the establishment of dairying settlements. The tobacco industry would not have gone ahead if dairying had not preceded it. In 1925 the butter production in the South-West was 3,216,000 lbs. In 1934 it was 13,308,003 lbs., that is 10,000,000 lbs. more in 1934 than nine years previously. That progress may be largely attributable to the group settlement scheme, though a large number of the Agricultural Bank clients in those districts are not directly concerned with the scheme. In addition, figures could be quoted to show the growth in the production of cheese and honey. Driving through the Nornalup district to-day through the forests to the Walpole area, large numbers of beehives are to be seen. Their presence is due to the fact that settlement has taken place, and roads

have been constructed, making it possible for the settlers to go round with lorries and collect the honey from the hives in the various parts of the bush. The honey produced to-day is far in excess of the demand. This is all due to the fact that a certain class of settlement preceded it and so it gained this benefit. I do not need to stress the position further except to say that the Agricultural Bank Commissioners, operating under the Act as they are doing, have a most difficult task to carry out. With the introduction of the new form of management, it was expected that the existing position would have to undergo certain changes and reforms.

Mr. Doney: The Commissioners have been operating for two years.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, but the former method of management had existed for a much longer period. The Bank to-day, although not functioning to the satisfaction of the settlers coming under its jurisdiction, is compelled to do something which must be distasteful to a section, and in doing that something has created a little trouble; but the settlers have been awakened.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And a rude awakening it has been for some.

Mr. WITHERS: I have no doubt that in the introduction of reforms someone has to suffer. Many of the settlers however will realise that although the Bank has been hard in some respects, the Commissioners have not acted harshly intentionally. We read this morning the statement of the Chairman who declared it was not desired to inflict injustice on any settler. When an Act is put into operation someone must suffer, but there remains always the opportunity for those who consider themselves aggrieved to put their case before the authorities. Everyone realises that there had to be a tidying up in connection with the group settlement scheme. I am one of those who were not over optimistic about group settlement becoming a success, and I venture to say that a 15-cow man cannot hope to make a living in the South-West to-day. Fifteen cows are not enough; even twenty cows are not enough, and until such time as a settler gets to the stage of more than 20 cows, he will not succeed unless he has also a sufficient area of pasture, and is able to conserve pasture for the winter months. Whether they have been successful in doing the right thing in the past or not is beside the question, because in the early stages of

the scheme—I am speaking of the first four or five years—there was too much governmental control, and the individual settlers were not allowed to exercise sufficient initiative. Recently one peculiar instance was brought under my notice. Two very old settlers knew a man in the district who had worked intermittently for various farmers and was recognised to be a most capable and efficient farmer. He had a thorough knowledge of the farming requirements of that part of the State. This occurred some time ago when applications were called for the position of foreman in connection with the group settlement scheme. The man I refer to went to those two farmers and asked if they would give him a recommendation if he put in an application for the position. They told him they would go along to put in a word for him personally because they knew his qualifications. When they went to see the district officer about this man, the officer said, "We don't want a man with all that knowledge, but a man who can keep books." That was a wonderful thing! They did not want a practical man.

Mr. Broekman: If the man could have admitted he had been a failure on an Agricultural Bank holding, he would have got the job.

Mr. WITHERS: Perhaps so.

The Minister for Lands: Who was the district officer?

Mr. WITHERS: This happened in the Busselton district.

The Minister for Lands: What was the officer's name?

Mr. WITHERS: I do not wish to give the name publicly but I will tell the Minister privately.

Mr. Doney: Can you vouch for the accuracy of your statement?

Mr. WITHERS: Yes. A man who was attending the road board conference recently told me about it when speaking to me in the corridor.

Mr. Doney: That does not necessarily mean that the statement is accurate.

Mr. WITHERS: From my own knowledge of the position, I can quite credit the statement because I know that, particularly in the early stages, some of the group foremen were less capable than some of the much-criticised group settlers. For my part, I do not think the settler, even though he be a failure to-day, should be

asked to carry the burden arising from the mal-administration of the scheme in its early stages.

Mr. Brockman: Our chief inspector to-day is an Agricultural Bank failure.

Mr. WITHERS: It would seem that, in order to become an Agricultural Bank officer, one must first be a failure on the land. It is very evident, at any rate, that people who are in fairly good positions to-day and are directing the operations of Agricultural Bank settlers, irrespective of whether they were or were not a success on their holdings, at least left their holdings in order to accept their present positions. The fact I want to stress is that the money we have invested in group settlement as a whole has not been lost to the State, for I believe that, in a few years' time, when people who have a little capital realise what can be done with the abandoned holdings, they will take them up. When that time comes, there will be very few vacant holdings in the South-West, more particularly if the price of butterfat is maintained approximately at what it is to-day. One adverse feature is that the increase in the herds during the past few years has not been to the advantage of the settlers. Dairy cows that cost up to £20 each in the early stages of the scheme are to-day worth £3 or £4 only, and it is almost impossible to sell their progeny. I know that at one sale a Jersey bull was sold for 2s. 6d. and a Jersey cow for 1s.

Mr. Wilson: Was there no meat on the animals?

Mr. WITHERS: They could walk, and, at any rate, their hides were worth 10s. If cattle were of a more satisfactory class, those settlers would not be in their present position. A man who has 40 or 50 head has a very heavy load to carry because, unless they are of a good type, they are no good for the market. Settlers who have cattle that can be taken to market where fair prices can be secured are few and far between. Under existing conditions the people are unloading their stock at a sacrifice, whereas if the stock were of a better type, they could demand good prices and the settlers would not be confronted with failure, as they are to-day.

The Minister for Lands: Were the cattle you speak of fats?

Mr. WITHERS: No; fat cattle bring fair prices. What has happened has been that the butchers have taken cattle that have any meat on them at all and that has the effect of keeping the price for fat stock at a low figure. While dealing with agricultural matters, there is one thing agitating the minds of the people in my district, in common with farmers in other parts of the State, and that is the lack of veterinary surgeons. Possibly that is due to the fact that the machine age did not provide an incentive for young people to embark upon a course of training in veterinary science. To-day there is a dearth of veterinary surgeons throughout the State.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That applies throughout Australia.

Mr. WITHERS: That may be so, but in this State we are in a particularly unhappy position inasmuch as we cannot train our young men to be veterinary surgeons. There are only two places in Australia where such training is available. One is in New South Wales and recently facilities for that purpose were provided in Queensland.

Mr. Doney: The trouble is that it is as expensive to train in veterinary science as it is in medicine, and naturally young fellows choose to be doctors.

Mr. Patrick: And veterinary work is not so remunerative.

Mr. WITHERS: When the distribution of money available under the Hackett bequest to the University of Western Australia was under consideration, a request was made in the early stages for the establishment of a Chair of Agriculture. If any money were available from that source to provide a course in veterinary science, it would be helpful. Failing that, the Government might see their way clear to provide an annuity to assist students who desire to go to the Eastern States to qualify as veterinary surgeons. I was pleased to note from the "West Australian" of to-day's date that at the Muresk College recently the authorities had conducted a class for training in veterinary first-aid work. About 50 farmers of the district took advantage of the course, which was much appreciated. The services of departmental officers were made available for lecturing purposes and I am sure the course will prove beneficial to the settlers in that particular district. The advantage gained,

however, was confined to farmers within reach of Muresk College, and the settlers in the South-West are still in the same position and in need of assistance in this direction. I suggest to the Minister that he should consider arranging a course of lectures along similar lines to those conducted as Muresk, so that the settlers in the South-West may take advantage of the provision. Last year I discussed with the Minister a proposal that he should send a departmental officer to a suitable centre in my district, where demonstrations could be given to farmers regarding the anatomy of stock and the treatment of various ailments. At Bunbury we have an ambulance, and various classes are conducted in first-aid work for human beings. Some similar movement could be launched so that farmers would have some knowledge of first-aid methods in dealing with their stock. If they had that much knowledge, they would probably be saved much trouble in connection with stock diseases and other complaints. The operations of the Transport Co-ordination Act have given cause for some concern. That was to be expected. When the measure was before the House we could see that some of its provisions might have a detrimental effect upon various districts or individuals, but it was difficult to secure amendments that would provide for contingencies that could not be foreseen. We were given to understand by the then Minister for Railways (Hon. J. C. Willecock) that when the measure became an Act its provisions would not be rigidly enforced in certain directions. "Don't worry about that," he told us, "It won't be enforced." As soon as the Act became operative, it was ascertained that anomalies were created and hardship was inflicted upon some individuals. For instance, some persons had established motor services that were not in competition with the railways. We know that the Act was framed in order to protect the railway system, with a view to driving the main source of opposition off the roads. Members will realise that there are other phases of motor transport that do not come into competition with the railways, and it is in that direction that hardships have been inflicted. When we have approached the members of the Transport Board regarding anomalies, we have been met with the retort, "Here is the Act.

You passed it; you gave us the Act to administer, and we are doing what you told us to do." It is useless for us to tell the members of the Transport Board that the Minister in charge of the legislation said that some of its provisions would not be rigidly enforced. Naturally, the members of the board would not take any notice of such a statement.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are giving the show away.

Mr. Marshall: At any rate, the statement by the member for Bunbury is not true because in many directions the administration of Acts is not rigidly enforced. Will the hon. member say that differential treatment is not meted out in various districts in respect of the liquor trade?

Mr. WITHERS: I am not concerned about that trade.

Mr. Marshall: Are the liquor laws enforced rigidly?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WITHERS: I am not dealing with the liquor laws but with transport matters. In one instance orchardists were in the habit of disposing of fruit that was not ordinarily marketable, to other people who could not secure supplies of good fruit from the markets. That practice is indulged in extensively in the South-West. Members will realise that Bunbury is, as it were, in a dead end. From that centre we cannot go north or west, but can proceed, under the provisions of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, for 15 miles to the south and 15 miles to the east. Immediately one desires to use motor transport beyond that distance, the Act prohibits such operations.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. WITHERS: Before tea I was dealing with the Transport Act and, more particularly, the Transport Board. As I then said, there are in my district certain persons making a living by going around the orchards and picking up fruit that the orchardists cannot market through the ordinary marketing channel. The people who gather that fruit take it to other people who cannot afford, or at all events cannot secure, the first-class fruit, which is marketed. Therefore, those people who have created this avenue are helping the or-

chardists to get rid of their second-class fruit, and also helping poorer consumers to get cheap apples and other fruit at a price which they can afford. But under the Act, those people who gather this second-class fruit are debarred from getting a license. I might say that it is impossible for them to interfere in any way with railway transport, because the roads they follow do not run parallel to the railway or for only a very short distance. And, as I say, that second-class fruit, if not picked up by those people, is left to waste. I have known instances of those men being fined by the court for contravening the Transport Act. Yet they cannot get a license while the Act remains as it is. So I hope the Government will give serious consideration to this question with a view to allowing those fruit gatherers to operate. Before the tea adjournment I mentioned also the cartage of honey which is produced in the South-West and also along the Great Southern. The Transport Act is operating prejudicially to the producers of that honey, in so far as they are not allowed even to cart their own honey over a 15 mile radius: that is to say, they may cart their unstrained honey, but not honey that has been strained. I think these matters should be taken into consideration with a view to allowing the producers interested to get a little better treatment than they are receiving to-day. I do not wish to deal any further with those two questions although, as I say, they are the grounds of very definite complaints. Another matter to which I would refer is the hospital tax. We all know that in the first instance the hospital tax was introduced for the specific purpose of relieving the hospitals of their burden and, incidentally, relieving the Government also. I understand there is not sufficient money received from the hospital tax to meet the cost of the whole of the work necessary in connection with Government and committee hospitals. It would be interesting to know the amount of subsidy which the Government used to give the hospitals, and which is not now given. When a person says he cannot pay hospital fees to-day, he has to prove his inability to do so, irrespective of the amount of his earnings. The Leader of the Opposition will remember that when he was the Minister controlling the Act he brought down an

amendment that made the Act operate in the way that it does to-day. We know of course that everybody in receipt of an income of over £200 per annum is expected to pay hospital fees.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But only if they can pay.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, under the original Act, but under the amended Act each and every person must pay. Although he may definitely state that he does not earn the prescribed amount, he has to prove to the satisfaction of the department that he is not in a position to pay.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are treated very generously.

Mr. WITHERS: Personally, I do not think they are, and I think the majority of those with whom I have discussed the question would be prepared to pay greater hospital tax if they were going to be free from the burden of hospital fees. I have discussed this with the Under Secretary for Health, who told me that ½d. in the pound would give the Government practically the amount required to maintain the hospitals; for that is only for maintenance: while if they were to raise a penny in the pound we might possibly get this freedom from the payment of hospital fees in addition to hospital tax. On the subject of public works I do not know really what the Government have in view for the future in the way of big reproductive works for the purpose of employing the labour that will be offering within the next year or so. I say "year or so" advisedly, because there are big works nearing completion; and when the Minister is replying to the debate I should like to know what the Government have in mind as to some of the schemes they have in view for the purpose of affording employment to those who, I know, will be looking for work when some of the big works now in hand are completed.

Mr. Fox: There will be other works required.

Mr. WITHERS: I should like the hon. member to tell us where they will be.

Mr. Cross: There is always the Canning Bridge.

Mr. WITHERS: Well, I hope the Government have some big works in view, because I know that in my district there are nearing completion big harbour works and extensive improvements to the jetty, all of

which have disbursed a considerable amount of money during the last three or four years. I know that shortly there will be anything up to 200 men on the labour market in that district. So I for one would like to know where there are some big works to be undertaken advantageously to the workers and to the State.

Mr. Doust interjected.

Mr. WITHERS: I hope the hon. member can suggest something in the way of alleviation. There is the grade reduction on the Bridgetown line, but I know of no other work offering at the present time. There is perhaps no work of a more reproductive nature than the re-grading of our railways, because following on that work bigger loads can be hauled. And the work we want to see put in hand must be reproductive work, not work that is merely for the sake of employing labour, work that will be of no use when completed. As I say, I hope that when the Government find further work it will be work of a reproductive nature. In the South-West there are considerable opportunities for getting on with road construction, although I admit we have had wonderful consideration from the Main Roads Department, with the result that the roads in the South-West are really pleasant to travel over in almost every direction. But there is a limit even to what the Main Roads Department can do, and I should like to know what the Government have to offer in the way of employment in the near future with a view to absorbing men who will then be out of work. I should like to direct attention to the inadequate housing of departmental officials at Bunbury. In 1928 I brought this matter before the House, and quite recently the Bunbury Municipal Council got into communication with the Treasurer through me and received a reply stating that lack of funds was the stumbling block to any proposal to reconstruct the buildings. The construction of buildings may not be the means of providing employment to absorb a large number of workers, but whether built of brick, cement or wood, the materials are produced in the State and are first and foremost labour-giving industries. Thus not only the construction of the buildings but the provision of material will create work. The Bunbury offices are in a deplorable condition. The building in which the Agricultural Bank officials are housed must have been erected in the whaling days. They were old buildings when I was a boy,

and so by no stretch of imagination can they be deemed to meet modern requirements. I urge the Government to consider the spending of some money to house this very important department. The Department of Agriculture has not been housed as it should be. The head office in Perth is not a credit to the State. When we are establishing new agricultural centres, we should insist upon decent accommodation being provided. At Salmon Gums fairly good accommodation was provided three or four years ago, but when staffs are housed in old buildings, like those at Bunbury, the idea seems to prevail that they are good enough, even though Bunbury is practically the headquarters for the South-West. A year or two ago I endeavoured to get the Government to purchase five acres of land, which was being offered at a reasonable price, to meet the future requirements of the central school. The school buildings are situated in one of the most dangerous parts of the town on a very small area not at all suitable for a progressive place like Bunbury. I regret that the offer was turned down by the Government. It was almost the last available piece of land in the town suitable for a school site. Now the land has been subdivided, and houses are being built on it. Thus the Government missed a wonderful opportunity. Some time ago I suggested to the Government the purchase of land adjacent to the railway at Bunbury. This land would be practically useless for ordinary building purposes, but it would be suitable for leasing for stacking sites, and should be held to meet future expansion as the port progresses. If the Government miss this opportunity as they missed the other one, they will be losing a chance to acquire a really good asset. Sixteen or 18 acres of land are available, and if not required for railway purposes immediately, could be used for stacking grounds, oil depots, or for factory purposes. This land is available at a nominal figure, and I hope the Government will see the wisdom of obtaining it because in future it will be very valuable. I trust that my few remarks regarding the requirements of my district will receive attention from the Government.

MR. HILL (Albany) [7.45]: It is a pleasure to be able to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your election to the honourable position you hold. It is pleasing for a new member like myself to know that I

can always rely upon receiving from you kindly assistance and consideration. I naturally listened with great interest to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, but I must admit I was disappointed with it. The surplus for the financial year is very small when we consider that on all sides we are hearing cries for decreased taxation and costs. One year is a very brief period in the life of a State, so I propose to quote a few figures relating to the year 1900 for purposes of comparison. In 1900, the State debt was £68 5s. 2d. per head of the population; to-day it is about £200. In 1900, direct taxation amounted to 13s. 10d. per head; in 1934-35 it was about £4 5s. per head. The revival of the timber and mining industries is very fortunate indeed for the State, but when we export our timber and gold, we are parting with assets. For our permanent prosperity we must look to the agricultural industries. The estimated wheat crop for the coming season is 28,000,000 bushels, compared with 53,000,000 bushels in the season 1930-31. There are nearly 3,000 abandoned farms in the State. We have heard quite a lot about secession. In "The Case for Secession of Western Australia," paragraph 46 informs us that the Commonwealth, with an area of 3,000,000 square miles, has nearly half the population in a little strip of an aggregate area of 1,245 square miles along its eastern and south-eastern seaboard. To this fact, no doubt, is attributable quite a lot of the disabilities suffered by this State. Let us consider the position of Western Australia to-day. The area of the State is 976,000 square miles, and 48 per cent. of the population of the State reside in a little strip of 203 square miles at this end of the Swan River. All thinking people will agree with His Majesty the King who, when in Australia, said, "What, half the population in the cities of Australia and a young country! Australia cannot progress under those conditions." I fully realise that it will be extremely difficult to improve matters in that respect. To my mind, we should start by straightening out transport, which is one of the greatest problems not only in this State but throughout the world. Of a total State debt of £90,000,000 about £35,000,000 has been spent on transport services. To this enormous amount we must add the money spent on roads, etc., by local governing bodies and the value of privately-owned ships, motors, etc. If we had an ideal sys-

tem of transport services, the costs of production would be considerably reduced, and the population would be more evenly distributed. The "West Australian" of the 22nd May, 1929, published a summary of the report of a committee appointed by the Commonwealth Government to report upon transport in Australia. The committee recommended that all transport activities be placed under one Ministerial head, and that there should be a transport board or commission to deal with all forms of transport and the ports. As the Government ignored that recommendation, it is the duty of the House to face the problem. If we are going to straighten out the transport services, it is essential to start at the outports. Our aim must be a national and complete transport service to keep costs down to a minimum so that producers might be able to compete in the markets of the world. Our objective must be not a minimum railway mileage, but a minimum cost to convey our produce from farm, mine or forest to the overseas markets. In 1921 Mr. E. H. Onderbridge, chairman of the Port of New York authority, in the course of an address, made remarks so applicable to this State that I shall repeat them. He said:—

As a nation we have been prodigal in the waste rather than in the use of our natural resources. We have grown amazingly in spite of the neglect of port planning because of the natural advantages afforded us, but in doing so we have created points of congestion which check the easy flow of commerce, limit our capacity and entail heavy expense.

We are using automobiles, telephones, amplifiers and many products of inventive art and science for our comfort and better intercourse between ourselves, but in our port terminal operations we are in the main using the methods of our forefathers. I shall not take up your time either to ask your reason why; as members of the port authority it is not ours to reason why, we have but to do or die in the attempt to overcome the loss and inertia of the past, to plan so that we may catch up with our past mistakes, and recover our lost opportunities. It is a Herculean task. I shall not weary you with details or statistics. What is the problem? Briefly, it is to apply modern science and invention to the natural advantages at hand. What are the obstacles? Here are just a few. 1, The general ignorance of and indifference to the subject; 2, The immense and complex character of it; 3, The diverse authorities and interests involved, many of which see only their own tiny part of prerogative, and are jealous of others, or are unable or unwilling to look at a larger horizon; 4, Stubborn adherence to old customs. How are these obstacles to be overcome? 1, By education of all the people as to what the port problems really mean to them in

the cost of doing business, or living, and in the facility to earn their living; 2, By exhaustive, intensive and continuous study by qualified and trained men; 3, By a proper spirit of co-operation between all the various and private agencies concerned, working with and through a co-ordinating agency with adequate powers of administration; 4, By demonstrating the economies and advantages to be obtained by the application of modern scientific methods, so as to remove prejudice and change uneconomic custom.

I am sure it will be agreed that the remarks I have just read apply to Western Australia to-day. Our job is to set out to catch up the ground we have lost and make up for our past mistakes and lost opportunities. One of the first problems confronting us is the high port charges. Sir David J. Owen, general manager of the Port of London authority, when he assumed office in 1932 as president of the Institute of Transport, gave an address on the problem of port costs. He concluded his remarks by stressing the fact that we must consider the problem of transport as a whole. He referred to the need for co-operation amongst the various transport activities, and the need for the scientific study of all transport problems, and the various forms of transport, all of which are capable of performing useful services for the community. He said the tendency was for those engaged in these activities to look at their particular work as the end instead of the means to some other end. He said—

For instance, the railway mind was inclined to look upon ports as existing for no other purpose than to feed the railway. I visualise, however, a day when the legitimate function of each of the various forms of transport will be clearly defined and regulated in the best interests of the national needs, and in the picture that will be then on view, docks and harbours will be seen in their proper perspective acting as efficient links between sea transport on the one side and the various forms of land transport on the other.

Ports are rarely seen in the proper perspective in this State to-day. The port zone system would be desirable if the prosperity of the State depended upon the ports. Our first consideration must be to provide our producers with export facilities at the lowest possible cost. Our present port zones were not designed with that objective in view. They should be replaced by port zones based on needs of modern transport, and designed with the object of

effecting economies in the interests of the State. Only one factor was taken into consideration when our port zones were arranged, namely railway mileage. We in this State are particularly fortunate with regard to railway mileage. The average distance over which our wheat is hauled is only 153 miles, compared with 250 miles in New South Wales, 800 miles in South Africa, and probably 2,500 miles in Canada. Our high costs to-day are largely due to the lack of co-ordination in our transport services, and high Government interest bill. Our so-called Transport Board are not concerned with co-ordination between sea and land transport, although that is a far more important point than is co-ordination between railways and roads. Our high port charges also are no concern of theirs. Practically half the revenue of the State is needed to service our debt. On every pound that is paid to the Railway Department, no less than 6s. is required for interest. On the average we have to collect 1s. 4d. per ton on every ton of shipping in order to pay the interest charges on our ports. The writing-down of the capital cost of our railways and ports will not pay the interest charges, but will only shift them. Sir David Owen said—

The true significance of a port lies simply in the fact that it is the junction between sea and land transport. A port is not in itself a means of conveyance or of transport; it is only a facility for the actual instruments of transport. A port to be effective must adapt itself to the changing means of transport.

We have all seen the revolution that has taken place in land transport. Living near a port, as I do, I have also seen the revolution that has taken place in sea transport. In 1905, 797 ships called at Fremantle, the tonnage being equal to 1,462,000 tons. In 1935, only 735 ships called at Fremantle, 62 less than in 1905, but the tonnage had increased to 3,682,000 tons. The ships of to-day are on an average about three times the size of the ships of 30 years ago. The improvement in land transport, the increase in the cost of labour, and in the size and cost of ships, have resulted all over the world in big ports gobbling up their smaller neighbours. In this State, where we have the port zone system, there is much talk about decentralisation, and about each port having its own trade. Fremantle on the average has a trade nine times greater

than all the other ports in the State combined. Trade follows the ships, and population follows the trade. Political influence naturally follows the population. Legislation has sometimes been passed that is beneficial to the city, but may be at the expense of the country. Money has been spent in non-productive works in the city instead of on productive works in the country. Producers in outlying portions of the State are severely handicapped because we have to trade with Perth or Fremantle and pay railage both ways. This growth of the metropolitan area is like a rolling snowball, gathering weight as it goes. There are people who want the Fremantle Harbour extended at enormous cost. This would undoubtedly lead to higher port charges. There are two reasons why we should not extend the Fremantle Harbour for many years. The first reason is that such extension is unnecessary, and the second is that

the State cannot afford the outlay. The port of Fremantle and the railway leading to it are congested at peak periods, because they handle 90 per cent. of Western Australia's trade. If we reduced that percentage we would undoubtedly relieve the congestion, and at the same time would be enabled to reduce transport charges to the outlying parts of the State. We have spent £6,600,000 on our ports, and should hesitate before increasing that amount. Some people complain about the high port charges at Fremantle. If these were reduced, further forms of taxation would have to be brought down. All the profits of the Fremantle Harbour are swallowed up by the losses at the outports. As capital expenditure is the main factor affecting port charges, the following figures should be of interest. The first set of figures deals with Western Australia, the second with South Africa, and the third with Great Britain.

	W.A.	South Africa.	Great Britain.
Population	446,000	7,330,000	49,000,000
Capital costs of ports	£6,600,000	£17,000,000	£225,000,000
Railways	£25,000,000	£148,000,000	not available
Ratio Expenditure, railways to ports	4 to 1	9 to 1	...
Cost of ports per head of population	£15	£2 6s. 8d.	£4 11s.
Shipping tonnage	3,810,000	30,000,000	350,000,000
Approximate costs of ports per ton of shipping	£1 14s. 8d.	11s. 4d.	12s. 5d.

During the last four years this State has expended £1,062,580 of loan money on our ports, or approximately as much per head in four years as South Africa has spent altogether. Since the Collier Government took office in 1924, no less than £2,624,300 of loan money has been spent on the ports. Albany's share of that amount has been nil. I am not complaining: I am only stating facts. It is not possible for me now to deal as fully as I would wish with the import problem. I would suggest that hon. members carefully read the report on "Transport in Australia with special reference to port and harbour facilities," by Sir George Buchanan, Volume I. Never mind very much about Vol. II. for the present. In Vol. II. Sir George briefly comments upon the various harbour schemes for Australia. He suggests there how we should spend money. Our trouble to-day is that we have already spent, and are spending, too much. Vol. I. is the report that should be studied by members, as it deals with the administration and

economics of transport. We have no transport administration in this State, and because railway charges are direct, and made on mileage basis, the tendency is to imagine, in the majority of cases, that reduced railway mileage means transport economy. Sir George refers to the many factors which must be considered besides railway mileage, and he explains at considerable length why a very few big, properly-equipped ports are preferable to many small ones. He points out that all ports cannot be developed as overseas ports, and recommends that the most suitable ports be selected, that all political wire-pulling be cut out, and that the selected ports be developed as modern ports. He makes it very clear that in this State Geraldton, Fremantle, Albany, and perhaps Esperance should be the overseas ports for our agricultural areas.

Mr. Withers: What about Bunbury?

Mr. HILL: I would refer the hon. member to the "West Australian" of the 21st July. The Federal Transport Committee,

according to the "West Australian" of the 22nd May, 1927, reported that on the mainland of Australia 80 per cent. of the trade is done through the main ports at the capital cities, which ports show a profit of £500,000, the minor ports handling only 20 per cent. of the trade at a loss of £490,000; so that the trade of the capital ports has to be taxed to meet the losses of the minor ports. The committee recommend reducing these losses by closing down some of the minor ports and concentrating the trade by road and rail transport on the more suitable ports. In the "West Australian" of the 1st July, 1935, we read that Mr. Lyons while in England discussed the question of reduced freights with the shippers, and that it was understood he would, on his return to Australia, recommend limiting the number of ports. In the "Monthly Magazine of the Port of London Authority" for last March is published an abstract of a paper read before the Institute of Transport by Sir David Owen on "The Future of Port Control, with special reference to the possibility of grouping." This article is of special interest to us, as we must group our ports so that the profits of some can be utilised to meet the losses of the others. Moreover, when dealing with our present-day problems, we must consider the needs of the future, and not base our policy on the mistakes of the past. Sir David Owen says:—

In view of the vital importance of overseas trade to this country, it will be agreed that it is essential that the expenses incurred at our ports, which have eventually to be borne by the goods imported and exported, should be reduced to the lowest possible level. But we may well ask ourselves whether the competition between our ports is the best way to reduce costs. The tendency to-day is still for the ships to increase in size, and therefore the number of ports capable of accommodating the average ocean-going vessel must decrease unless considerable sums are spent in expanding the facilities. It may be justifiably said that much of this expenditure is not necessary, since it would make for economy and efficiency for ships of the future to call at as few ports as possible. It might be desirable that they should discharge as much as possible of the cargo at a single port, and leave it to be transported to its local destination by coastal ships or by rail and road.

It will be noted that all agree on the remedy; that is, to reduce the number of ports. It appears a rather drastic proposal, but we must realise that in the days of bullock wagons and sailing ships we needed as many

ports as possible. In these days of motors, railways, and big ships we need only a few big ports. If we do not limit the ports judiciously, the ships will limit them; and they will overdo the limiting, as is happening in this State to-day. A few years ago one of the most prominent questions in Western Australia was the Fremantle bridge and the extension of the Fremantle harbour. If the McCallum-Stileman combination had had its own way, that work would have been done at a cost of £4,000,000; but what would we have to-day in return for it? Our production would not have increased one iota, but we would have had to look for our production to-day to pay £160,000 per year more in interest—an amount which would pay £3 per week to 1,000 men. We have spent £32,000,000 on our ports and railways, and have to pay £1,300,000 a year interest on them. We must hesitate before we increase these amounts. While railrage is a direct charge, and made on a mileage basis, and while port charges on our wheat and so forth are indirect, there would be continued agitation for direct railways and more ports. To stop this agitation, railrage should be charged on a zone basis. To encourage the timber trade, a reduction of 16 2/3rd per cent. has been made in railway rates for timber exported oversea. I do not think that is a fair way to reduce costs. The man with short railrage has many advantages over the man outback.

Mr. Withers: That proposal would give great advantages to centralised Fremantle.

Mr. HILL: No. I shall explain that. On wheat to-day there is a maximum railrage of 6d. per bushel. I suggest that the maximum be reduced so that all wheat railed over, say, 160 miles pays the same rate, provided that the wheat is railed to its zone ports. This would enable the Government to abolish the present port zones, and they could re-arrange the zones so as to effect economies which would not only pay for the adjustment of railway charges but would also enable the Government to reduce port charges and co-ordinate sea and land transport. In addition, the man outback, particularly, would be materially assisted. I will now submit a proposal which would probably cause the Premier to be called names if he suggested it. The only interest I have in the North is that of one who has the interest of the whole of the State at heart. At Geraldton nearly £1,000,000 has been spent on the construction of a harbour.

I believe a harbour improvement rate is charged, and this rate results in thousands of tons of wheat going to Fremantle, where the trade is taken to meet the losses on Geraldton. We do not want to penalise the trade of Geraldton. We want to encourage it. We must group our ports, and have uniform port charges. I further suggest shifting the boundary of the Geraldton-Fremantle zone further south, and adjusting railway rates so as to encourage wheat to go to Geraldton in preference to Fremantle. The railways are only one of our Government concerns. We should not hesitate to run portion, or even the whole of the railways at a loss if we can benefit the State or effect economies in other directions by doing so. The adoption of this suggestion would mean relieving congestion on the railway to Fremantle and at the port of Fremantle, reducing the losses on the port of Geraldton, and encouraging greater use of that port. Further, if the producers in the North could do their trade through the port of Geraldton, it would mean reduced costs to them. This would encourage production, and so one development would lead to another and help to increase the population in the North. The southern portion of the State has been favoured by nature but the politicians of the past, instead of applying modern science and invention to the natural advantages at hand, did the exact opposite and bequeathed to us what can only be described as a transport tragedy. Nature not only made the Albany harbour, but she made easy grades throughout to Merredin and even to Southern Cross. The Great Southern railway was, like the Midland railway, built by private enterprise. When the question of opening up the country east of the Great Southern railways was under consideration, the railway officials wanted a loopline from about Beverley to Mt. Barker following the natural lie of the country to the natural port at Albany; but the politicians ignored the advice of the railway experts and our natural advantages, and built the railways east and west, with the result that wheat has to be hauled up in the air to cross the Darling Ranges to places that are to-day crying out for enormous expenditure for harbour works. What we must consider to-day is: Are we going to pass on this transport

tragedy to our descendants, or are we going to try to catch up with our past mistakes and recover our lost opportunities? My predecessor in this Chamber wanted new railways constructed and was rather annoyed because I would not support his proposals. I have already pointed out that we have spent £32,000,000 on our ports and railways, and we are paying £1,300,000 a year in interest on that expenditure. We must not increase those amounts unless it will pay us to do so. When we use other people's money, we must pay for it and we shall, in all probability, have to send the money out of the State in order to do so. To straighten out this tragedy, we require to use our own commonsense and natural advantages. We can not only use these without paying, but natural gifts now lying idle can be used to earn money for the Treasury. When our present Premier arranged the port zone system a few years ago, he had the opportunity to show himself a statesman, but he missed the chance. He had the report of an independent expert to support him. Instead of setting out his port zones so as to effect economies in the interests of the State, he arranged them not in the most intelligent way but in the simplest way. The only factor considered was railway mileage. He ignored the economic fact that extra rail-age to a natural harbour is more economical than interest and maintenance upon a constructed harbour. A few weeks ago I accompanied a deputation of Great Southern members to ask that railway rates be adjusted to encourage the traffic to follow the easy grades of the Great Southern railway to Albany instead of over the Darling Ranges to Bunbury. I can only describe the reply of the Minister for Railways (Hon. J. C. Wilcoock) as pathetic. He admitted that haulage had been cheaper over the Great Southern railway but quoted figures to show that now the Collie-Brunswick section had been re-graded, Albany did not have that advantage to-day. The figures he quoted were not complete and, to a certain extent, were misleading. The Minister admitted that if the few grades on the Great Southern line were reduced, it would probably be cheaper to haul to Albany than to Bunbury. He stated that he was not prepared to interfere with a policy that was benefiting the out-ports. Although I have the privilege of representing one of our outports, I am not

a resident of that port. I am one of the producers of the State to whom the ports must look for their existence. Instead of trying to benefit the ports, we must realise that if costs of production, particularly those applying to transport facilities, are not reduced, there will be little trade for any of the ports. I will admit that Albany handles more wheat under the present zone system, but I desire to stress the fact that the whole State will benefit by an arrangement of the port zone system upon an economic basis. I am sure I shall have every producer in the State behind me when I say that Parliament's first duty is to frame a policy that will mean reduced costs. We cannot stand the present increasing costs. The port zones down south will not result in reduced costs to the farmer, but will probably increase them. We must not look upon the problem with a narrow railway mind, so I shall not argue with the Premier as to whether it is cheaper to haul to Albany or to Bunbury, but will make statements that he will not be able to contradict. First, I state that the policy of refusing to develop Jurien Bay as a port in the North and the concentration of trade at the one port of Geraldton is sound and in the best interests of the State. Secondly, an adjustment of railway charges to encourage the trade of the Great Southern railway in order to use the natural port and the existing accommodation at Albany, so as to obviate the provision of additional accommodation at other adjacent ports, will not only effect economies in the interests of the whole State, but if the trade is concentrated at the more suitable port, as recommended by experts, the result will be considerably reduced charges at the port. Thirdly, Albany is the natural port for the Great Southern from Narrogin downwards. I will indicate to the House how this damnable port zone system is handicapping the Great Southern railway. Various Governments have constructed railways that have diverted trade from Albany but have failed to construct a railway that would take trade to that port and by so doing have driven the oversea liners away from the southern port. Those liners cannot get in to Bunbury; they would not, if they could, trade with a port only 90 miles from Fremantle. About six years ago the Albany Chamber of Commerce asked the Government to equip the Albany cool stores for the export lamb trade, for which they had been originally constructed. The Director of Agriculture, Mr. Sutton,

went to Albany and, in the course of a lecture, explained that the production of the local zone did not warrant the provision of facilities for the lamb trade. The company that will, within a few days, be exporting lambs from that port, have set an example the whole State should follow.

The Minister for Agriculture: Who made that possible?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do you say that you did?

Mr. HILL: They ignored the port zones. They recognise that Albany is the natural port for the Great Southern, and the result is that the southern end of the State is to have facilities for the lamb trade. This will encourage production, and the whole State will benefit in consequence. We will now examine the problem of super supplies. When the question as to which of the southern ports should be selected as a site for super works was under consideration, Albany, on the port zone figures, did not have a look in. The question was under consideration for quite a time. In the "West Australian" of the 24th April, 1929, the announcement was proudly made by the present Premier that the Government had asked the company to erect super works at Picton. When the Government made that request they overlooked the fact that super is hauled only at a profit to the railways when it is conveyed as back loading. The Picton works are in the wrong place from that standpoint as 80 per cent. of the trucks for the South-West must be hauled empty from the metropolitan area, while 95 per cent. of the trucks from Albany return empty. I feel quite safe in saying that the blunder in placing the works at Picton instead of Albany is costing the Railway Department over £20,000 a year.

Mr. Nulsen: Ask the railways about that.

Mr. HILL: They are there to-day, and the consumption of super in the southern parts of the State is rapidly increasing. Within a few years the Picton super works will be hard put to it to supply the needs of that part of the State. It is in the interests of Western Australia that the supplies for the Great Southern shall be drawn from Albany. Last year the Bunbury zone east of Collie drew 99 tons from Picton and 25,700 tons from the metropolitan works. The Albany zone drew 17,000 tons from Picton, which was hauled at a loss of at least £1 per ton to the railways. With works established at Albany, that loss of £17,000

to the railways would be turned into a profit of probably £5,000, as the trucks now returned empty would earn revenue. Farmers throughout the State would have more expeditious deliveries of super and those with holdings along the Great Southern railway would save about £3,000 in freight. Albany is the only port in the State where it is possible to reclaim a site for super works on the water front. Works of that description with its own wharfage accommodation would save 3s. 6d. per ton on all super produced, which would represent a further saving of £7,500. I can only guess £50,000 as the cost of such a reclaimed site and wharf. The wharfage charges of 1s. 8d. per ton on the raw material would yield £3,000, which would pay interest and sinking fund on the cost of the work.

Mr. Lambert: But operating a small unit like that would be far more costly than a larger unit.

Mr. HILL: The above figures are based on last year's consumption of 43,000 tons. In a few years the Great Southern will be using 100,000 tons of super a year.

Mr. Lambert: But super is hauled at a low rate.

Mr. HILL: It must be in order to protect the railways, and there is no back-loading from Albany now. On the figures I have given, it looks as though the State would gain over £30,000 a year if super works were established at Albany. I have carefully followed the question of bulk handling, and if I suggested providing two bulk handling ports within 34 miles I would be considered a fool. That is practically what will have to be done under the present port zone system. There is on an average only 34 miles saved by railing wheat to Bunbury in preference to Albany. When giving evidence before the select committee Mr. Tomlinson, Secretary to the Railways, explained that the railway system was controlled by the Mt. Helena-Swan View section, and down south by the Collie-Brunswick section. The Director of Works, when giving evidence before the Royal Commission, recommended that as the production of the Albany zone was so small, it be not provided with bulk facilities, that it would not be an economical proposition to provide facilities at Bunbury, so he suggested that the Fremantle zone absorb the Bunbury zone. The secretary of the bulk handling company stated

that his company were prepared to provide facilities at Albany and Bunbury, but there would be extra handling charges of about $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per bushel, or 2s. 3d. per ton at these ports. The Royal Commission recommended that orthodox facilities be provided at Geraldton and Fremantle, and that the Government give serious consideration to the question of terminals at Albany and Bunbury. We can only presume that the Government did give that serious consideration. We know that when the Bill for bulk handling was introduced, Geraldton, Fremantle and Albany were the only ports mentioned. If the Government had had the courage to tell the House the truth, that is, that owing to Albany's natural advantages it would be more economical to provide facilities at Albany for the Great Southern railway and to scrap the present port zone system, I would have withdrawn from the election. When the Minister, instead of telling this House the truth, moved the amendment to include Bunbury, the Government threw away the Albany seat. It will be an easy matter to reclaim a site for orthodox facilities at Albany, but we must economise at Albany as well as at the other ports. We have plenty of accommodation at Albany to-day. A few months ago the bulk handling company asked to be allowed to provide facilities at Albany. This permission should be granted. I would suggest that the old deep water jetty be handed over to the bulk wheat company to be equipped with facilities for the wheat of the Great Southern railway. This jetty has many years of use in it. The berths are 700 feet long. On one side there is 28 feet of water and on the other 31. It is obvious that one terminal instead of two would mean considerably reduced overhead expenses, and by concentrating the trade at the one port, the maximum amount of direct loading from the main line to the ship would be possible. This would mean one handling instead of three, and would reduce costs. These savings would probably more than compensate for the extra railage, but it would not be fair to make the producers pay extra railage, as it is the general taxpayer who has most to gain by the adjustment of the port zones on an economic basis and the adjustment of railway rates as I have suggested. The total loan expenditure at Albany to-day is only

£154,192 15s. 2d. Included among the many items which should not be charged up to the Albany harbour is £1,300 wasted by the Public Works Department in the Kalgan River above my orchard and 16 miles from Albany. Maintenance at Albany is practically nil. In 1912, the Public Works Department favoured the construction of a concrete wharf at Albany approximately 800 feet from and parallel to the foreshore. The stone for the work is right on the job. Bedrock as far as borings went was found at an almost uniform depth of 42 feet. Everything was in favour of the scheme. Our then member, Mr. W. Price, instead of looking after his constituency, was holidaying in England. The engineer who was taking borings was staying with me when he received an urgent wire ordering the return of all plant to Fremantle. Nothing further was done until just before the elections of 1914. Mr. Price and the then Minister for Works, Mr. W. D. Johnson, came to Albany with a scheme for another jetty. Mr. Johnson showed one bit of sense. He kept clear of my flying fox. I will leave it to Mr. Johnson to tell you about that. I wanted the Albany people to kick Messrs. Johnson and Price out of the town, but they foolishly adopted the attitude, "Let us get what we can." If it were possible to-day to estimate what the Great Southern has lost because we had the Johnson-Price tin-pot jetty instead of a modern wharf, those gentlemen would keep right away from our end of the State. Sir George Buchanan recommended the progressive reclamation of the foreshore approximately along the three-fathom contour between the jetties. This is about 900 feet out and further out west of the town jetty. He suggested $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of water front and the reclamation of 590 acres for warehouses, and this would require 7,300,000 cubic yards of reclamation. This reclamation should not cost more per yard than the work on the Swan, and would mean a cost of only £187,000. It seems almost too good to be true. One of the finest natural harbours in the world, a tide of, only four feet, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of waterfront with only 50 acres less than the area of the city of Adelaide of level ground alongside for £187,000. Compare what has been spent, and is being spent, at our other ports.

In 1908 I was on board the flagship of the American fleet. There were seven battle-ships, a cruiser, two supply ships and six coal boats anchored in the Albany harbour. The jetties were all available for commercial shipping. A Yankee sailor said to me, "If we had this harbour we would darned soon use it." If the farmers east of Wagin and Narrogin wished to use their natural port, the Commissioner of Railways would make them pay extra railage. To stop this we should unify the management of our ports and railways. If we had a general manager of the ports and railways, as in South Africa, or a director or commissioner of transport, or some such sound transport administration, our present port zone system would not last a month. North of Fremantle the Government are constructing a harbour at enormous cost, to save up to 318 miles of railage. There will be no need for a considerable time to incur further expense than I have suggested to provide accommodation for the trade of the Great Southern to save only an average of 34 miles of railage on our wheat. Nature has provided the harbour; the accommodation is there, lying idle. An adjustment of railway rates as I have suggested to encourage the trade to go down the easy grades of the Great Southern railway to its natural port will not only effect economies in the interests of the whole State, but if the recommendations of experts are adopted, and the trade is concentrated on the more suitable port, the result will be substantially reduced port and shipping charges. Fremantle has 21 berths with interest charges of £123,000. The gross revenue is £236,000 and the surplus is £113,000. Albany has six berths with interest charges of only £7,000. These are practically lying idle. They could easily handle one-sixth as much trade as Fremantle, and show a revenue of £40,000 and earn a surplus of £30,000. Nature not only gave Albany's harbour to the State, but she would not charge for its use. If we use other people's money constructing more facilities at unsuitable ports, we will not only have to pay for the use of the money but artificial harbours are always costly to maintain. The extra cost will have to be paid by the Fremantle Harbour Trust. If Albany is used in the interests of the State, our natural advantages will assist the Fremantle Harbour Trust to meet the losses of the other ports. East of Albany we have Hopetoun. If the suggestion that that be made a port

is ever revived, the Government should squash it flat, as Hopetoun as a port is hopeless. Still further east we have Esperance. If the railway at Esperance had been constructed 38 years ago, the State would be different to-day and I would probably have been a resident of Esperance. As I have suggested that the Government encourage the use of Geraldton on the north, Albany on the south, so do I suggest that they encourage the use of Esperance on the east, for the country there and for the goldfields. The jetty and railway at Esperance instead of lying idle should be earning revenue for the State, relieving congestion at and to Fremantle, and reducing transport charges to the goldfields. We all want to cut out unemployment. Public works with borrowed money is not the solution. The solution is increased production. To increase production we must reduce costs and I have briefly outlined a policy which will result in substantially reduced costs to the producers of the State. I will now deal briefly with the group settlements. I have been in many of the homes of group settlers, and I cannot see that they have much for which to thank the Government. In the first place, they were brought out under false pretences. They are not responsible for the appalling waste of money. They are not the authors of the scheme; they are the victims. The taxpayers are going to lose a lot of money over the scheme. The group settlers have to pay their share as taxpayers, and in many instances they have lost every penny they possessed and years of their lives. The people who will ultimately gain by the writing down and the cancellation of the interest that will give the settler the chance to make good are the taxpayers. If the Bank Commissioners demand interest above the capacity of the farm to pay, the settler will have no alternative to walking off. The taxpayer will then have to pay all the interest, and will lose the benefit of the production as well. A producing farm is an asset; an abandoned farm is a liability. The Agricultural Bank is only one of the many concerns in which the taxpayer is interested, and if the Bank is too hard, the taxpayer will lose revenue to the railways and other Government concerns besides having to pay all the interest. The bungling on the part of those who have been running the group scheme has driven many really good men off their holdings. The hard times of the

last 12 years have weeded out the misfits. I take my hat off to the men and women who have stuck to the groups for the last 12 years. It will pay the State to adopt a policy that will keep the settlers on the farms. I blame the Bank for the trouble during the last few weeks. Last October the settlers entered into an agreement with the Bank to pay or work out current interest up to the 30th June of this year. The settlers were looking forward to getting a clean interest sheet on the 30th June. On the 10th June the Bank Commissioners announced through the Press the policy that there would be no remission of interest save in exceptional cases. The settlers were called upon to sign procuration orders, authorising the butter companies to deduct in 12 equal monthly instalments the interest from the 1st January to the 31st December of this year. I do not know what the legal definition of "current interest" is, but I do know that the settlers feel that they have been double-crossed by the Bank. Settlers who did not sign the procuration orders had their cheques commandeered by the Bank, and, in the majority of instances, were not left with enough to live on. What would happen on the Fremantle wharf if the Government stepped in and commandeered the pay of the lumpers, say, for this month? On the 21st June some of the group settlers told the Governor-General at Denmark of their troubles. I was there, and came straight to Perth, and the next day discussed the matter with one of the Bank officials, but it was not until the 3rd July that the information I was given on the 22nd June was passed on to the manager at Denmark. Had the statement published in the "West Australian" on the 4th July been made known concurrently with the Bank's statement of the 10th June, I am of the opinion that most of the trouble would have been avoided. I am hoping that the trouble has cleared the air and that good will come of it. The settler must recognise his responsibility to pay interest. The Bank must fix the amount that the settler can afford to pay, and must not only tell the settler that he is a Bank client, but must treat him as a client and not as a worker of the Bank. One settler summed up the position in this way, "We want more super and less supervision." It is of no use trying to run Denmark from Hay-street. I believe the Bank now realise that they must give more power to the local managers. If the

local managers do not collect as much interest as the Bank Commissioners think they should, Perth should realise that, for the sake of the taxpayer, our policy must be to secure the maximum amount of production and not the maximum amount of interest. I am pleased that the Bank Commissioners have been big enough to modify their actions and to admit that anomalies exist. No time should be lost in adjusting those anomalies, as this is necessary to secure co-operation between the settlers and the Bank. I am confident of the future of the South-West and particularly of my own electorate. To encourage others to take up abandoned farms, we must aim at a policy which will give hope to those already on the land. Another very valuable asset which is badly neglected by the Government is the tourist trade. We have a wonderful State, and it is well worth advertising. We should not only adopt a policy that will bring tourists to the State, but we should encourage tourist traffic within the State. Outside tourists will bring money to the State. We ourselves should see as much as possible of our State so that we may view our problems from a State-wide standpoint instead of parochially. The Government should spend more money on tourist literature and organisation. In the library is a book entitled, "Europe in Zig Zag," in which it is stated that it does not seem an exaggeration to suggest that the equivalent of two British Budgets is expended annually by tourists in Europe. It is impossible to estimate what Western Australia could gain from tourists. During the three years ended the 30th June, 1930, not less than £5,412 was spent on tourist literature. During the last three years only £1,514 was spent, while the estimate of the Tourist Department last year was only £2,080. The tourist trade is a State asset, the only one which we can sell and still keep. It will pay the State to foster it more than is being done to-day. Perth, Fremantle and Kalgoorlie have their tourist bureaux, while Albany, Bunbury, Busselton and other places have their local organisations. These local organisations should at least be subsidised by the Government on a pound-for-pound basis, as the whole State benefits by their activities. I should like to stress the need for a revival of immigration. The only argument that I need advance in support of it is the fact that if the British people do not populate this State, some other nation will want to do

it for us. I sincerely hope that provision will be made on the Estimates for additions to the Albany water scheme. The present scheme is overloaded financially, because it was constructed by day labour and the actual cost considerably exceeded the estimate. To-day it is hopelessly inadequate. In the summer there are not only the visitors to cater for, but there are the woollen mills and the butter factory, etc., all depending on the water supply. There is no margin for safety, and it is an absolute nightmare to the water board in summer as a breakdown of the scheme would be a disaster. It is particularly desirable that provision be made on this year's Estimates, as the Commonwealth Government would pay 50 per cent. of the interest and sinking fund for the next ten years. This work would provide employment, and, when completed, would open up avenues for further employment. As an instance of this, let me mention that a sewerage scheme at Albany is impossible with the present water scheme. The Minister and the Department know the position, and I only hope that the Government will make the necessary provision in the Estimates this year. The people of Albany have sent me here to say something about our end of the State. Albany is generally regarded as a port and a summer resort, so a little information about it may be of interest to members. The electorate to-day almost corresponds with the Albany Road District when I was first elected a member in 1909 by a record of 100 per cent. of the votes cast. I received four votes, and my opponent got none. The board's area at that time was about 5,000 square miles, and the revenue amounted to £500. Since then the Denmark Road Board has been formed, and the Plantagenet and Gnowangerup Boards have also taken a slice and so reduced the Albany board's area to 2,400 square miles. Last year the board's revenue amounted to £3,800. The electorate produces about 80,000 cases of fruit and 9,000 tons of potatoes, and keeps two butter factories fully occupied, besides producing sheep, wool and other commodities. I am confident of Albany's future, and I am proud to be its member, but I realise that I must first of all be a member of Parliament for Western Australia. I shall not hesitate to oppose unnecessary expenditure in any part of the State, but I shall ask for my electorate only what is in the interests of the State. If the

whole State is prosperous, all of us will share in that prosperity. To bring about prosperity, we must all work for the whole State. We from distant parts of the State must recognise that Perth is the capital, and Fremantle the chief seaport, but members who represent metropolitan districts must extend to us in the outer parts of the State the same consideration that they in their turn desire to receive from the Commonwealth. I feel confident that they will do that, because, thanks to the changing means of transport, which are annihilating distance, we are all taking a broader view of affairs to-day.

MR. WELSH (Pilbara) [8.40]: It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, upon your reappointment as Speaker. I intend to touch only briefly upon a few matters contained in the Speech as it affects the North-West. I was very glad to see that the Government had decided to add to the State steamers by purchasing another vessel. I look upon the State vessels as standing in the same relation to the North-West as railways do to the South. If we are to have a State Shipping Service, let us have one that can cope with the trade. I am not losing sight of the fact that company-owned ships have given the North-West good service for the last 40 or 50 years. I really think we had a better service 30 years ago than we have to-day. At that time the Adelaide Steamship Company was operating against other companies' ships and we had a regular service along the North-West coast. To-day shippers do not know when the company-owned ships will be permitted to operate. It should not be difficult for the two companies concerned to come together and formulate a schedule of sailings. They should be able to make arrangements whereby overseas boats are permitted to load cargo on the tide when the "Koolinda" is not loading. For long periods the people in the North-West have to go without vegetables, butter and other commodities owing to the shortage of shipping. A considerable time must elapse before the new ship can arrive on the coast. Meanwhile I urge the Government to do all they can to make it possible for other boats to operate on the tide when the "Koolinda" is not operating. Any company would be only too glad to operate if it had the same monopoly that is given to the "Koolinda," when no other boat is allowed to load cargo on the same

tide that she is loading. Whilst we have other lines trading along the coast, I think the Government should endeavour to arrange that their vessels be allowed to load under the conditions I have stated. I am glad to say that mining in my district is definitely on the up-grade. Nearly all the old shows are being worked and new shows are continually being brought to light. This mining activity naturally brings along a greater amount of mining business. I would ask the Government, if it were possible, to appoint a warden for the Pilbara goldfields. At present a doctor at Port Hedland is acting in that capacity. Because of his medical duties, however, he cannot always attend the court at Marble Bar. Some accident or fatality may prevent him from doing so. Miners have been known to travel 50 or 70 miles to attend the court, only to find that the warden is not there. Some years ago, when mining was not as prosperous as it is to-day, a mining registrar was appointed as acting warden. This arrangement was a very good one. I would ask the Government to extend the same courtesy to the Pilbara district as was done then. I know that the doctor is often not able to attend the court because of his medical duties. Since Dr. Vickers was appointed as flying doctor, he has more than doubled the work at the Port Hedland hospital, and it has been found necessary to appoint a third nurse to the institution to cope with the work. Furthermore, the hospital accommodation is now totally inadequate for the needs of the town, and something will have to be done in the immediate future to increase it. The flying doctor inaugurated by the Australian Medical Service has been a wonderful boon to the people outback. It has given a feeling of security to mothers who have been bringing up their families. In years gone by they were so placed that they could not get into touch with any medical man. This service has been a wonderful boon to the people concerned. The pedal sets installed have not only been a commercial benefit but have enabled the people to get into touch with a doctor, when otherwise that would have been impossible. The doctor now gets into a plane, and can travel 100 or so miles in a very short time and bring the patient into hospital. I hope the Government will

continue to support the medical services of the North, as they have done already to the extent of £500. This has proved a wonderful asset to that part of the State. The Government are to be complimented upon what they have done. Reference was made in the House the other night to the road grant of £28,000 to various north-west road boards. These subsidies are always very acceptable. At times the road boards find it exceedingly difficult to keep their roads in order, and the only means they have of doing so is through these grants. As the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) said the other night, the grants are not nearly big enough. The only way to get goods transported through the North-West is along the roads, but in many instances these are roads in name only. The amount of petrol consumed in the North-West in transport services should provide a reason for further grants being given for road construction. A good deal of revenue is derived from the tax on petrol. I must say the Government have been very sympathetic in this regard to the North-West, and their assistance has been very acceptable. Without appearing to be greedy, we would appreciate further grants in this direction, and I know they would not be turned down if they were offered. The roads are frequently knocked about by heavy summer rains. Unfortunately, we have not recently had any summer rains, and the roads are not in as bad a state as they usually are. Generally speaking, however, they are in a pretty bad condition all the year round. We all know the straits to which the pastoral industry in the North has been reduced. In many instances in my electorate pastoralists have lost practically half their stock, and many young fellows who started not long ago in the industry have now been reduced to where they were when they made their start. I do not want at this stage to ask for any assistance on their behalf, because we usually prefer to paddle our own canoe, but the time has arrived when assistance might well be asked for. When the request is made, I hope the Government will see their way to grant it.

Mr. Marshall: On this occasion the Government will have to give some consideration to these people.

Mr. WELSH: I hope the Government will take into consideration the remarks I have made concerning the shipping facilities for the North-West and the appointment of a warden for the Pilbara mining district.

On motion by Mr. Doust, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 27th August, 1936.

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

ADJOURNMENT—LEADERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL.

Resignation of Hon. J. M. Drew.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.36]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 8th September.

As I have decided to resign my portfolio as Chief Secretary, which involves my resignation as Leader of the House, I wish to say a few parting words to hon. members. I shall soon be leaving this old seat which I first filled 32 years ago, and which I can never hope to fill again. The solemnity of the occasion brings up old memories, revives in my mind very old associations. I think of the men who sat in this Chamber down a long range of years. I think of their discussions, their different attributes, and the diversity of their views. From time to time there have been mighty debates in this Chamber. A score or more verbal batteries have been brought into action; and the Leader of the House, no matter what his politics might be, has often been obliged to