

Hon. A. Thomson: Are you reducing the carrying capacity?

The HONORARY MINISTER: In some cases. The proposed new schedule is in two parts. One provides for solid rubber-tyred vehicles, and the other for iron or steel-tyred vehicles. With regard to the latter type, consideration has been given to the diameter of the wheel.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That is nonsense, the diameter of the wheel.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I say that consideration has been given to the diameter of the wheel for, according to the experts, it is material to the position. In any event, the effect of the new schedule will be to protect country roads, which cannot stand up to the heavy traffic they are called upon to bear to-day. In addition there are many consequential amendments to the Act. No doubt members will be prepared to agree to most of the amendments contained in this Bill. In Committee I shall be pleased to give any further information that may be asked for. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.48 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 26th September, 1935.*

	PAGE
Leave of absence	884
Bills: Industries Assistance Act Continuance, Mes-	
sage, 2R.	884
Electoral, 2R.	885
Forests Act Amendment, returned	895
Annual Estimates, 1935-36, Com. of Supply	895

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

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motion by Mr. Wansbrough, leave of absence for one month granted Hon. J. J. Kenneally (East Perth) on the ground of ill-health.

## BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

### Message.

Message from the Lient.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

### Second Reading.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.33] in moving the second reading said: The continuance of the Act is necessary because there are still settlers whose debts have not been funded. Owing to the late rains this year and the lack of feed, it has been found necessary, especially in the north-eastern wheat areas, such as Mukinbudin, Kununnoppin, Ben-cubbin, and along the Kulja-eastward railway, to grant assistance for chaff and other requirements. As the Premier pointed out during the debate on the Address-in-reply, over 1,000 tons of chaff had to be purchased to relieve the situation in that portion of the State. Those advances had to be made under the Industries Assistance Act, without which they could not have been furnished. As an emergency measure, the Industries Assistance Act contains a provision that allows credit to be granted, if necessary, giving an automatic charge over the crop, as well as the lands and chattels, of the borrower. It is not proposed to utilise the Act except where its provisions can be effectively employed, particularly in respect of requirements such as I have just mentioned and for harvest operations. The granting of such credit is not possible under the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act. The position in respect to the Industries Assistance Board as at the 30th June, 1935, was as follows:—

		£	s.	d.
No. of Accounts	1,374			
Liabilities—				
Non-funded ...	Principal	672,122	12	4
	Interest	184,896	7	9
Funded ...	Principal	829,862	11	2
	Interest	204,407	3	5
Grand Total	...	£1,891,288	14	8
Advances for year ending				
30th June, 1935	...	10,985	19	6
Plus refund of proceeds	...	533	9	0
		£11,519	8	6

	£	s.	d.
Collections—Principal ...	16,691	16	10
Interest ...	20,170	17	3
	£36,862	14	1

There is no further information that I can give. Hon. members know from their experience how the Act operates. It has been in existence since 1914 and its operations have been of advantage to a great number of settlers, although unfortunately, many of them did not do any good under it. Regrettable as it may be, that is the position. Although it has been suggested by Parliament, year after year, that the Act should not be allowed to continue, we find it necessary to re-enact it to meet situations such as those that arose early this year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

## BILL—ELECTORAL.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 17th September.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [4.37]: As one of those entrusted by the House with the responsibility of sitting on the select committee and the Royal Commission to examine the electoral position under our laws, I have endeavoured to give the Bill most careful consideration in the time at my disposal. I desire to refer to certain aspects of the measure with a view to the Minister for Justice taking them into consideration and perhaps referring the matters to his electoral experts and legal advisers for advice. In the first place, this is a machinery Bill. It is not desired by the Commissioners, as I understand it, to interfere with the basis of the Parliamentary representation of the people. It would not be, to my mind, desirable—and I have no doubt that is the view of the Government—that any attempt should be made in the last hours of this Parliament to introduce a Bill involving any fundamental changes in the basis on which members of Parliament are elected. For that reason, the circumstances referred to by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) are not matters, in my opinion, that can profitably be considered in connection with the Bill. The principal alteration in the electoral law has been with reference to people who desire to vote other-

wise than by personal attendance at a polling booth in the electorate in which they are enrolled. I think I am interpreting the view of the Commission correctly when I say that, in making alterations with regard to postal and absentee voting, the members of the Commission desired to embrace the opportunity of assimilating the State electoral law to that of the Commonwealth law. The result would be that the elector would have one procedure to follow in both State and Federal elections. That will make for simplicity and better understanding by the electors, regarding the way in which they can go about the exercise of the franchise. This view of the Commission was felt to be a just view, more strongly because, I think, nearly all the States of the Commonwealth have assimilated their electoral laws very largely to those of the Commonwealth. The Commission have also added to the Commonwealth law by providing extra facilities for voters who are in distant parts. That was felt to be especially necessary in a country of more vast distances than any other State, and the Bill makes two particular provisions in that respect, one to the effect that the time for the issue of the writ for an election in certain distant electorates shall be longer than is usually allowed for electorates generally, and the other to enable electors in distant parts to register themselves permanently as absentee voters, such registration to continue so long as the electors maintain their right to exercise their votes in the districts in which they have registered their names and addresses. I propose to say something in the first place about the electoral law as it affects the Legislative Assembly elections. Under the old law, voting could be in person at polling places in the district or province for which the elector was enrolled. That was the ordinary voting in person. In addition, under the old law, an elector could vote by what was called postal voting. Under the Bill, we still retain those two methods of voting and, in addition, we have adopted the provision of the Commonwealth law by which an elector may vote in person at a polling place outside the province or district in which he is enrolled. This is a necessary addition to the facilities for voting in view of the fact that we propose to establish compulsory voting. Dealing with postal voting and voting at polling places outside the electorate, I desire first of all to refer to the terminology employed in the Bill. The Bill defines an

absent voter as including a person voting by post and a person who votes at a polling place outside his district. The postal voting provisions in the Bill are under the heading "voting in absence." When it comes to the provision to deal with voting by an elector in person at a polling place outside his own enrolled district, it is contained in the Bill not under the heading "voting in absence" but under a separate heading. The other statutes which I have looked at seem to place this in a very much clearer position. In the Commonwealth Act there is a heading "voting by post," and that deals with voting by electors who are a number of miles distant from the nearest polling place, or who send their voting papers by post. An elector who votes in person but at a polling place outside his electorate is included under the heading "polling." In the New South Wales Act the position is made still more clear. That Act contains the heading "voting by post," in which provision is made for the elector who sends a ballot paper by post, and there is another heading "absent voters" under which provision is made for an elector who votes in person but outside his electorate. It seems to me that we could clarify our Bill by adopting headings somewhat on the lines of those in the New South Wales Act. As the Bill stands, the terms "voting in absence" and "voting by post" seem to be intertwined, and apt to be difficult to understand by anyone reading the measure. Under our Bill we provide that a man may vote by post if he is seven miles away from the nearest available polling booth. In New South Wales the distance is ten miles; on the other hand, the distance stipulated in the Commonwealth Act is five miles. Possibly the distance of seven miles is reasonable, although it has been suggested to me that seven miles was inserted in the State Act many years ago, and that the advance in travelling facilities in later days would make it possible to increase the distance beyond seven miles. If that could be done, it would minimise postal voting, facilitate the work of the electoral officers, and increase the expedition with which election returns could be dealt with. Probably seven miles is a reasonable compromise. In the Bill before us, an elector who desires to vote by post may apply for a postal voting paper at any time after nomination day. In New South Wales, and also under the

Commonwealth Act, an elector may apply for a postal voting paper at any time after the issue of the writ. The day of nomination was doubtless inserted in our Bill, because, until the nominations were received, it would not be possible to print the ballot papers with the names of the candidates. As I understand the Acts of the Commonwealth and of New South Wales, the postal ballot paper applied for after the issue of the writ and before nominations would be one in blank in which the elector could write the names of the candidates and the order in which he desired to vote.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is done here.

Mr. McDONALD: According to the proposal now, an applicant for a postal voting paper will not be able to apply for a ballot paper until after nominations have been received, and it is a matter for consideration, especially in relation to country districts, whether this may not materially reduce the time available to the voter in which to get his ballot paper from the registrar and forward it to the proper authority to have it counted at the ballot.

The Minister for Justice: I think he could make his application before the nominations, but would not be supplied with a ballot paper until after the nominations.

Mr. McDONALD: The provision in the Bill is that any elector who has reason to believe that he will not be within seven miles of a polling place may, after the declaration of nominations but not before, make application to the Chief Electoral Officer or registrar for a ballot paper. Evidently he cannot take the first step towards getting a postal ballot paper until after nominations, and the Bill seems to contemplate also that the postal ballot paper sent to him will contain the names of the candidates. If that is so, the Chief Electoral Officer, after receiving nominations, would need to have the names printed on the ballot papers and then send them to the country, which might further encroach on the time available to an elector in which to exercise his postal vote.

Mr. Moloney: Additional time used to be granted in the country.

Mr. McDONALD: Perhaps so; I am not sure of the effect of the old provision. Under both the Commonwealth and New South Wales Acts, an application for a postal voting ballot paper may be made at any time after the issue of the writ, which

is no doubt intended to enable people in distant parts of the country to have the fullest possible time in which to exercise their franchise.

Mr. Rodoreda: An elector who was registered as a permanent postal voter could apply at any time.

Mr. McDONALD: He would be all right.

The Minister for Justice: He would not have to apply.

Mr. Marshall: It would be forwarded direct to him.

Mr. McDONALD: The Bill provides that an application for a postal vote to be sent by an elector must be witnessed by an elector or by any person qualified to be an elector. That provision goes beyond the Commonwealth law. The Commonwealth law says that the witness to an application for a postal ballot paper must be an elector. The Commonwealth Act contains a further provision requiring the witness to certify to the identity of the applicant. We have no such provision in this Bill, but it may be intended to have forms that will compel the witness to certify that the person applying is the man he represents himself to be. I am inclined to think that we might well be guided by the Commonwealth Act by confining the witness, at all events, to an elector.

The Minister for Justice: A witness might not be an elector, though he might think that his name is on the roll.

Mr. McDONALD: That is a consideration.

Mr. Marshall: He might also have been struck off the roll illegally.

The Minister for Justice: And without his knowledge.

Mr. McDONALD: In adopting these provisions, we have largely followed the law of the Commonwealth and of the other States, but we have made some rather material departures and have omitted certain safeguards which the Commonwealth and other States have adopted. Under the laws of the Commonwealth and of New South Wales, when an elector applies for a postal ballot paper, the registrar forwards the postal ballot paper and a certificate. The certificate is one to testify that the requirements of the Act regarding postal voting have been complied with, and it has to be signed by the voter and by an authorised witness. The authorised wit-

nesses are very numerous in the Acts of the Commonwealth and New South Wales, in order to give a wide range to people in country districts. Under our Bill such a certificate will not be forwarded. We will simply send out the postal ballot paper, and the completed ballot paper has not to be witnessed by any authorised witness. That is a safeguard which the Commonwealth adopted and which we have eliminated. As against that, we have adopted a safeguard of our own. Under the Acts of the Commonwealth and of New South Wales postal ballot papers are sent, in the case of the Commonwealth, to the divisional returning officer, and in the case of New South Wales, to the district returning officer, and those officials deal with the ballot papers, count them and include them in the result of the poll. Under our Bill all postal ballot papers will have to be forwarded to the Chief Electoral Officer. That has no doubt been stipulated in order to provide a safeguard which, to a certain extent, compensates for the safeguard which the statutes of the other States impose in the shape of a certificate signed by an authorised witness at the time the ballot paper is completed. The idea of having our postal votes sent to the Chief Electoral Officer is to enable him to compare the signatures on the applications with the signatures on the claim cards. No doubt that will prove a very substantial safeguard. In the Commonwealth and in New South Wales, the safeguard is that the divisional or district returning officer himself compares the signatures on the application and the certificate, but we carry it a step further by providing for the Chief Electoral Officer to handle the papers and to compare the signatures on the applications with those on the claim cards. Which is the better system is a matter of opinion. There is one consideration which the House should bear in mind, namely, that the sending of the postal ballot papers to the Chief Electoral Officer must necessarily delay the result of elections. The Chief Electoral Officer, in his evidence before the Royal Commission, relied on the experience of the referendum taken at the last elections, when the central office undertook the counting in all cases of voting by post, and he considered that the requirements of the Bill could be fulfilled by him, though the centralising of the check-

ing of postal ballot papers will undoubtedly mean a delay in ascertaining the results of the poll. By later provisions of the Bill dealing with voting in person at polling places outside the elector's district, ballot papers are also sent to the Chief Electoral Officer for examination by him. That officer is going to have a great deal more work to do than obtained under the previous system of postal voting. His opinion, however, is that he will be able to cope with that without undue delay in the declaration of polls. The other provision in respect to voting in person at polling places outside the elector's own district is similar to that provided for in the Commonwealth and New South Wales legislation, except that by both of those Acts voting papers are sent to the divisional or district officer, whereas under this Bill they will be sent to the Chief Electoral Officer in Perth. I wish to make one or two comments concerning the qualifications for the Legislative Council. The Chief Electoral Officer impressed upon the Commission the fact that it was very difficult to interpret the provisions under the Constitution Act and that many opinions upon them had emanated from the Crown Law Department. It was hard to determine who was qualified, and difficult to remove from the province rolls people who were not qualified. The desire of the Commission was not to disfranchise any electors who were legitimately entitled to vote under the present law, but to clarify the position and facilitate the work of the Electoral Department in eliminating electors who were not qualified. At present an elector is qualified to vote for the Legislative Council who has a leasehold in possession of a value of not less than £17 a year. It is now proposed to alter that and provide that the leasehold must be a registered leasehold. The idea of the Chief Electoral Officer was that if the leasehold was registered he would be enabled to go to the Titles Office and exercise a check to determine whether the leasehold was in existence or not. Registration is not necessary to validate a lease, because many leases are not registered. A lease may exist for a brief period or for several years without any registration taking place. The chance of any difficulty arising through the insolvency of the landlord may be very remote, especially in cases where the landlord is a person of substance. There are not always advantages in registration, and sometimes it

is only an additional expense and is not resorted to.

Mr. Marshall: How will the qualification apply to the owner of a building that is in course of purchase?

Mr. McDONALD: It does not apply. A person must have an equitable freehold of a value of £50. The property that was being purchased would be equitably owned by the purchaser, and legally owned by the vendor. Both people would be entitled to apply for a vote. The Bill does not alter that.

Mr. Marshall: If there is an occupier of a building, three persons can get a vote for the one place.

Mr. McDONALD: That may be so.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: What if the building is under contract of sale? That would not be registered.

Mr. McDONALD: The alteration in the Bill to require registration is not proposed to be applied to contracts of sale. A man who has a contract of sale which is not registered may apply to be enrolled as a voter, and can be enrolled. The stipulation of registration has only been applied to leaseholds. That stipulation is not necessary, and may disqualify many people who have leases for a number of years, under which they may be paying substantial rents. Possibly the permission of the Government might be obtained to eliminate the necessity for registering leaseholds, and inserting in place of that a provision that evidence of the existence of the lease must be produced to the satisfaction of the Chief Electoral Officer. On production of his lease or tenancy agreement, which may consist of correspondence, the applicant will be able to satisfy the department that the lease exists, and be admitted as a voter.

The Minister for Justice: How will the Chief Electoral Officer be able to continue to check the existence of such leases?

Mr. McDONALD: That difficulty would apply in the case of registered leases. The Chief Electoral Officer would go to the Titles Office, look up the lease, and see that it was for more than £17 a year and that it had such-and-such a period to run. He would then note the date of expiry. If we eliminated registration as a stipulation, the same thing would apply. The applicant would go to the Chief Electoral Office and produce an unregistered tenancy agreement. The Chief Electoral Officer would ascertain

the date of expiry and note that, and would be in possession of the same information as if he searched the Titles Office for a registered document. The stipulation of registration might disfranchise many people who are substantially interested in leases but do not register their documents.

The Minister for Justice: We do not require any proof of an actual lease except the claim.

Mr. McDONALD: As it is now proposed, the Chief Electoral Officer, on receipt of a claim, would make a search of the Titles Office to ascertain the terms of the document. If we eliminated registration as a requirement, the Chief Electoral Officer would read the documents that were produced as evidence of the lease by the applicant.

The Minister for Justice: The applicant might say the documents were in the bank and could not be produced.

Mr. McDONALD: The applicant would have to satisfy the Chief Electoral Officer in each case, and if he failed to do so, he would not be enrolled. The system I am suggesting would be an easier one than that of making periodical searches at the Titles Office. It would cast the onus of proof upon the elector.

The Minister for Justice: The evidence in many cases would be difficult to supply.

Mr. McDONALD: I think it would be harder to supply if registration took place.

The Minister for Justice: The Chief Electoral Officer would get the information instead of the onus being cast on the individual. The documents might be in the bank.

Mr. McDONALD: Leases are seldom held as a bank security. The applicant might require to go to the bank and pick up the documents. Many people hold leases carrying a rental of 10s. or £1 a week. They are now entitled to the franchise under the law. The documents are brief, and the leaseholders would hesitate to incur the additional expense of registering them. The documents would have to be copied two or three times. The elector would have to pay 10s. registration fee at the Titles Office, and may have to employ a solicitor or an agent to attend to the registration. The leaseholder may not desire to incur that additional expense when only a small rent is being paid, or the lease is for a short time. These people are entitled to be enrolled. If we place the onus of proof upon them, there should not be any difficulty about the pro-

duction of the documents which would entitle them to vote. Leasehold documents that are registered at the Titles Office are mainly those which are registered by business firms. The amount of rent may be large, or the lease may be a long one. The people concerned are generally what is known as business people. The ordinary lease of a shop or a dwelling or a field is for a low rental and, if solicitors were not employed, the documents would not be registered. This avoids expense and trouble, and yet, under the amending Bill, because the documents are not registered, the people concerned would be deprived of the right to vote.

The Minister for Justice: The vast majority of them would have other qualifications.

Mr. McDONALD: That may be so. The object of the Bill is not to reduce the number of persons entitled to exercise the franchise, or to interfere with the qualifications laid down by the present law.

The Minister for Justice: It is to get people to register qualifications that are easily certified.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. We should not make it more expensive or difficult than it is now for small people to prove their qualifications. I appreciate the object of the Chief Electoral Officer, but I think he is making this too technical. I think it would be well to place the onus on the elector of satisfying the Chief Electoral Officer. In nine cases out of ten he could do this by bringing along the documents or correspondence proving his lease or tenancy agreement.

The Minister for Justice: Unless enrolment was compulsory, very few people would bother about that.

Mr. McDONALD: If the elector is sufficiently interested to fill in his card and leave it with the Chief Electoral Officer, he would probably take the extra step of producing the necessary document. The House will require to examine the proposal to abolish the qualification of being an elector on the ratepayers' list of a local governing body. The Chief Electoral Officer pointed out that, as the law now stands, a man who is on the roll of a road board or municipality is automatically entitled to be enrolled as a voter for the Legislative Council. He cannot go behind the qualification of enrolment on the electoral list. He pointed out that a man may be on the list for say 32 Ord-street, West Perth, thereby obtaining qualification as an elector, and

two months later he may have left that address to go to Katanning. But still his name will remain on the list. Although his real right to be on the list has ceased by his removing out of the municipal area, the Chief Electoral Officer is not able to go behind the municipal roll but is compelled to allow that man's name to remain on the Legislative Council roll. I am not certain yet, from my examination of the matter, to what extent this may affect people who are now entitled to be enrolled as electors for the Legislative Council. In my opinion, it is a matter requiring examination. The only other aspect I wish to refer to is the penalty provisions. The Royal Commission have endeavoured to bring those sections substantially into line with the provisions of the Commonwealth Act, and I consider they have made improvements there. The main object of the Bill is, as I said, to improve the electoral machinery, and to enable the elector to exercise his franchise with more certainty and more confidence, and more easily, than he has been able to do under our past legislation.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [5.17]: I desire to deal with only two aspects of the Bill. The first is the Legislative Council qualifications of electors, and the second is the limitation of electoral expenses. The provision as to postal voting is not in question now, and can be better dealt with during the Committee stage. As regards the Legislative Council qualification of electors we are informed by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that that matter is not involved; but I think we have a right to, and should, express our views on it. Many years have passed since the original Act dealing with plural voting was drafted; and in these days it seems difficult to justify such a provision in a State Parliament, when not only has the Federal Legislature made both Houses to be elected upon an adult franchise, but the reasons for the system of plural voting no longer apply, as I see the situation. In relation to the Municipalities Act there may be good arguments why plural voting should still be retained, because of people with money invested having the right to control the loan expenditure of the local body. Such people would feel that by their having more say, they could prevent funds being wasted by local bodies, whereas irresponsible votes might be cast to extend a town and incur large loans.

But in this situation, the justification for plural voting cannot be applied, since the finances are not controlled by another Chamber. It is even disputed whether the Legislative Council can control the finances. Then why should there be the right, on a restricted franchise, for one elector to vote in all the provinces? To me that seems hard to justify. One cannot contend that it is done in order to prevent excessive loan expenditure, because there is no say as to that. Even the matter of taxation is open to dispute in that respect. Therefore we surely should no longer tolerate a situation in which a few persons who believe in putting their capital into land have the right to an extra voice in the affairs of the State. I consider that the time has come for reviewing the matter. Even if it cannot be altered now, opinions should be expressed on a phase which is absolutely out of date. As to limitation of electoral expenses, again time has passed and we have in the limitation of those expenses a provision which excepts from them such things as stationery, postage and telegrams.

Mr. Raphael: It was a waste of public money to obtain that return.

Mr. NORTH: I shall suggest that the provision might include telephony, because in the last few years we have seen the rise of the radio. Indeed, some political parties in the Eastern States have their own broadcasting stations already. If it is right for us to exclude the cost of postage from electoral expenses, then in view of the great change which is coming over our ways of living and of electioneering we ought to consider the exclusion of the various forms of telephony, as well as telegrams and postage, from the operation of the Bill. As things are to-day, it is possible for candidates to be speaking over the air on various subjects; and in doing so they could hardly fail to express their political views. Under the Bill as drafted, they will be liable, if later on they stand for Parliament, to have the expenses of those radio calls charged to them, or divided amongst, say, a dozen candidates if the calls are for a party. There is definite provision that where expenses are incurred on behalf of a number of candidates, each candidate shall be responsible on his part for the expenses. This thing is getting highly intriguing, because all kinds of people are going on the air. I think the Labour Party of this State some

time ago were broadcasting. All the difficulties to which I have alluded would be avoided if the Bill provided for the exclusion of telephony. I use the word "telephony" because in many parts of the world experiments are being made whereby on a circuit hundreds of houses can listen-in through their telephones. The Bill is really drawn, in this particular, on the lines of the dear old days when telegrams were the last word. They are not now. In view of the fact that the Bill has been drafted by a Royal Commission, originally a select committee, and is a great improvement with regard to postal voting and in many other ways, I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

**HON. J. CUNNINGHAM** (Kalgoorlie) [5.24]: I shall apply myself only to those provisions of the Bill which deal with the qualifications of electors for the Legislative Council. Although this is merely an amending Bill, I regret that it does not contain a provision to clarify the position concerning the qualification of inhabitant occupiers. The basis now adopted for deciding on the theoretical value is to take the valuations of the various local authorities throughout the State. Each local governing body has its individual valuer, and therefore we find differentiation throughout the various road board districts, and also the various provinces of the State.

The Minister for Justice: Do you mean as regards freehold, or as regards rented properties?

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM**: I mean, for the purpose of arriving at the clear annual value in the case of either an inhabitant occupier, owner, or tenant. It amounts to the same thing. The Bill provides that the inhabitant occupier of a dwelling house of the clear annual value of £17 shall be qualified for registration. The trouble as regards the claimant is to know when he is right and when he is wrong. The Bill does not differ as to that phase of the qualification in any way whatsoever from the old Act.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, it does.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM**: I am afraid it does not.

The Minister for Justice: There is a definition in Clause 18.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM**: It depends entirely upon whether we are confined to

the valuations arrived at through the work of the individual valuers.

The Minister for Justice: No. Anybody who actually pays that amount is entitled to a vote under the Bill.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM**: Take the owner-occupier. He pays no amount, though his qualification is fixed by the local authority in connection with the annual value.

The Minister for Justice: No. He gets on the roll for being a freeholder.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM**: But he may not be a freeholder. In Western Australia there are numerous leaseholders with a term of 99 years. Therefore the freeholder qualification will not come in at all. Throughout the goldfields, people are entitled to apply for a residential area, for which they pay the small sum of 10s. per year. Their qualification will thus be decided by the valuer of the local authority.

The Minister for Justice: That is not so.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM**: A few years ago this aspect created considerable confusion, and also inflicted considerable hardship on people who applied for registration. In fact, many people were prosecuted on charges of having signed false declarations. I find nothing in the Bill to remove that disability. In spite of what has been said by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) concerning the manner in which the Chief Electoral Officer shall be guided, the onus of proof of qualification is thrown entirely upon the claimant for enrolment. The Act provides that if the claimant makes a false declaration and does not possess the qualification claimed, he shall be liable to certain penalties. My point in bringing this matter under the notice of the Chamber is that there are in Western Australia thousands of people who are afraid to apply for registration as electors for the Legislative Council. They are not all afraid to apply; many of them make application. But there is in the Act a provision that any person or scrutineer or district returning officer may question a qualification and challenge it. Then the claimant will be asked to sign a declaration that he is entitled to a vote. Again that provision frightens people from claiming what, in their opinion, is a vote they are entitled to cast. The Bill contains nothing to remove that diffi-



culty. The entire responsibility devolves upon the person who is claiming, and that fact operates to the disadvantage of the people I have in mind. Perhaps the provision is all right for residents of the metropolitan area and other settled portions of the State where clear annual values can easily be defined by valuers of local authorities. It is when one gets into the more remote portions of the State that difficulties arise. I doubt whether any place fit for human habitation would not qualify the occupier for enfranchisement. Irrespective of where a person may be in the State, he will have to pay at least 1s. per night for a bed in a hotel or lodging house. On that basis of 7s. per week, any person occupying a dwelling-house that is fit for human occupation is entitled to enrolment as an elector holding property of £17 clear annual value. I am afraid we are not getting any nearer to a satisfactory solution. I agree with the member for Claremont (Mr. North) that the time has arrived when we should have an amendment of the qualifications of electors for the Legislative Council. Why fix the clear annual value of £17 qualification for a vote for the Council? Where is the special merit in that? Then we have another qualification of £10. Any person who pays for a license or lease from the Crown £10 per annum rental is entitled to be registered as an elector for the Council. Where is the merit in that, and why should we differentiate between the two, the £17 clear annual value and the £10 annual rental payable for a Crown lease? I agree that the time has arrived when this matter should be dealt with. From time to time Bills have been passed in this Chamber and sent to another place with a view to bringing about an amendment in the Council's franchise, but of course, those Bills were defeated in another place. However, the Bill before us is not a Bill for that purpose alone, but has for its chief object the amendment of the electoral law, and incidentally the amendment of the franchise qualification for another place. Certainly this is an opportune time to bring before the public the anomalies existing in the franchise qualifications of electors for another place, because irrespective of the valuation of a dwelling occupied by a would-be elector, most of the people are taxpayers and all are called upon to vote at elections and should have opportunity for doing so. But there

are in the Bill provisions that will meet with certain of my objections and therefore I shall be pleased if when in Committee the Minister will give us a fuller explanation of the points I have raised, because it is desirable that we should remove the fear of the people in making application for registration on the Council roll. There is that fear following upon numerous prosecutions that have been taken in the past, and unless that fear be removed the people will be bluffed out of making application for registration on the roll and so will be bluffed from voting at the election. That is not a desirable state of affairs.

**MR. J. H. SMITH** (Nelson) [5.34]: I will support the second reading. We appointed a select committee which was afterwards converted into an honorary Royal Commission irrespective of party, to go into the question of electoral reform. I think they have made a good job of it, the only trouble being that the Minister has not carried out all their recommendations.

The Minister for Justice: Nearly all.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH**: There are some important recommendations which the Minister has not embodied in the Bill. It is now proposed that we shall have compulsory voting. In the past we have had compulsory enrolment, but not compulsory voting and in consequence we have not always had a satisfactory poll. That I attribute to the fact that we have not had compulsory voting. The Bill proposes compulsory voting as well as compulsory enrolment. That, I think, is a move in the right direction. It is a pity it is not possible to embody the two Electoral Acts, Federal and State, in one and have but one Chief Electoral Officer. Of course the fixing of the boundaries, Federal and State, would cause some difficulty, but no doubt that difficulty could be overcome. I notice the Minister has made no suggestion as to the recommendation to extend the life of Parliament.

The Minister for Justice: That is a constitutional matter, and so could not be included in this Bill.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH**: Still I should have thought the Minister would give us some idea as to whether any notice is to be taken of that recommendation from the Royal Commission.

The Minister for Justice: It would have to be done in the Constitution Act.

**Mr. J. H. SMITH**: Yes, so the Minister has already said, but no intimation has been

given us of what is intended by the Government. Many people are in favour of the recommended extension of the life of Parliament. That is not to be wondered at, for the existing limit of three years does not give the successful party at the polls a chance to put its policy into operation. Another important matter is the fixing of the hours at the polling booths. Dozens of people in my electorate have been disfranchised at one time or another through mistaking the hour at which the poll will close. They get confused through the hours for polling at a Federal election being from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., whereas the hours of polling at a State election are from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. I remember that at Bridgetown at the 1930 election, a number of people who came to vote against me were very wroth. There was a big car-load of them, and they arrived at the polling booth at five minutes past 7 o'clock in the evening. To my knowledge many other people have suffered the same disappointment, and I suggest that in Committee the Minister should agree to an amendment extending the closing hour to 8 p.m.

Mr. Coverley: If you made it midnight some goat would be late.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Really it is not so much a question of the hour, as an attempt to remove the existing confusion. At a Federal election the hours during which a polling booth is open are from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., whereas at a State election the hours are from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Also I trust that in future the Minister will see to it that every little area or locality has its polling booth. At the last Legislative Council election, in my electorate the returning officer made no provision for polling places south of Manjimup. There was a monetary reform candidate standing, and a great deal of feeling was engendered by the fact that neither at Pemberton nor at Northcliffe was any polling booth provided. I was appealed to, and with others interviewed the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Gordon, who although very courteous, explained that it was then impossible to do anything. Rightly or wrongly, those people who were disfranchised through this omission, considered it a put-up job, and would not be convinced to the contrary. They thought they were disfranchised because they were advocating something new and were out for reform, and so had been denied a polling place. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) can bear me out in

that. We do not want that sort of thing to occur again. It will sometimes happen that a returning officer in some district is quite strange to the district and knows nothing of its requirements, and so I ask the Minister to have returning officers carefully instructed in future. I do not blame the Minister for what I have related, but it was a very serious blunder and a great deal of feeling was engendered by it.

Mr. North: Was there a booth there previously?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, but not many voted there, and I understand that because of the apathy of the electors—

The Premier: Who were the candidates? Would that explain the apathy of the electors?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am sure the Premier does not want me to go into that. I hope the Minister will see to it in future that adequate provision is made for people to exercise their votes. As to the proposed votes in absence, I think the provision in the Bill a very wise one, for no doubt there have been abuses of the postal votes in the past. And, curiously enough, those abuses have occurred where they were least expected, that is to say, in the metropolitan area, where there are many facilities given for voting. I will support the second reading, and in Committee I will move an amendment to extend the hours of voting at the polling booths. I hope the Minister will agree to it.

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton—in reply) [4.52]:** There is not much to reply to, in that every member who has spoken has indicated that he will support the second reading. So anything I may have to say will not be in defence of the Bill, because there has not been much criticism of its provisions. To a large extent it is a machinery Bill, to be dealt with in Committee. What gave rise to the Bill was the difficulty experienced in trying to understand the existing electoral law, and the fact that many of its provisions were difficult to put into operation. Also provisions regarding certain methods of voting were proved to be undesirable in their application, and so it was thought the time had arrived to clarify the law, and to alter certain methods of voting which had given rise to abuses. We set out, not on a campaign of electoral reform, to violently

alter the law, but so to alter it that people would be able to understand it. The member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham) referred to the clear annual value qualification of electors for the Council, that anybody who pays £17 per annum is entitled to a vote, or in regard to people who occupy premises other than by paying actual rent, that the rental value shall be taken. I know that various local authorities have different methods of valuation. Some make their valuations very low, and others make them high. In some instances this is done deliberately. The valuation is low and the rate is increased so as to get as much money as possible by way of rating. But when the rates for water supply and sewerage are based on the annual value the position is that the man pays lower rates, although the municipality gets the same amount so far as the actual rating is concerned. When this is done and it is accepted as an electoral qualification it will be seen that the principle is not right. The Parliamentary draftsman was asked to make the law as clear as possible so as to obviate the possible difficulties. The member for Roebourne raised an objection to the word "forthwith" with respect to the putting in of claim cards. "Forthwith" might be interpreted as "within a reasonable time." The trouble has been with the law as it stands that men have received claim cards and have retained possession of them for three or four months. We want to alter that and compel their being handed to the registrar within a comparatively reasonable time, and the word "forthwith" was suggested. If it is thought that that is too drastic I do not mind its being amended in Committee. But we must provide that anyone who receives a claim card from another person should lodge that claim card within a reasonable time. It should not be retained in any person's possession for weeks or months until the time for lodging it has gone by. From the administrative standpoint we desire that the people themselves should put in a claim card to the district registrar. Canvassing seems to have existed for years, and some canvassers have not put in the cards they have collected. All that is desired now is that these cards shall be handed in within a reasonable time, and we thought that "reasonable time" would be expressed by the word "forthwith." But I do not want to insist on the retention

of "forthwith." As far as polling hours are concerned there is no principle involved. In many cases where the provisions of the Act were not submitted to the Royal Commission for alteration, not very much consideration was given to them. The desire was that we should get uniformity in connection with enrolment, voting, the hours of voting, claim cards, etc. With regard to the hours of voting we can conform to what is the general practice. In three States the hours are from eight to eight. In Tasmania polling takes place between 8.30 a.m. and 7 p.m., in Western Australia from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., and it is the same in one other State, while there are two States in which the voting hours are the same as those of the Commonwealth, namely, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. I am aware that variations such as these lead to confusion, and that people may become disfranchised because they consider that certain hours operate, and when they go to a polling booth find it closed. As I said, there is no principle involved, and the desire is to make the electoral laws as uniform as possible. It is not necessary to refer to other matters that were mentioned by members because the details can be dealt with during the Committee stage. I do not expect the Bill to go through without some amendments. Wherever reasonable amendments are suggested and we think they will improve the working of the measure after it becomes law such as giving people reasonable facilities to vote, I shall be prepared to consider them on their merits. I do not think the Royal Commission were absolutely adamant in regard to their recommendations. What they suggested was in their opinion reasonable. What the Government propose to do regarding the other recommendations of the Royal Commission is a matter for explanation later. This Bill deals only with the electoral law. As I have said, it is a Committee Bill, and we shall be discussing it again. There has been no opposition offered to the measure; and in my opinion it is not desirable to occupy more time with the Bill at this stage. In Committee every opportunity will be given for full discussion, and for reasonable amendment in any way the House may think desirable.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House. There is an absolute majority of

members present, and there is no dissentient voice.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

### **BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

### **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1935-36.**

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 24th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

*Vote—Legislative Council, £1,742:*

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [6.1]: I desire to say a few words regarding the late Mr. George Taylor, whose interment took place yesterday. I had the privilege to sit under Mr. Taylor as Speaker for some time, and later sat next to him in this Chamber. He was Speaker for many years. The late gentleman belonged to the old school of democrats. He stood for principles always, possessed an outstanding character and was inflexible in any action he took, and honourable and fearless in the work he did. I venture the opinion that every member of this Chamber had a great respect for the deceased gentleman, whose work certainly was to the advantage of Western Australia. We mourn his loss, and we respect the labours he performed. He reflected honour and credit on this Assembly, and he was helpful and straightforward both as a member and a man. As regards the position relating to Federal grants and the claim which this State put forward, I greatly regret that the disabilities grant to Western Australia was reduced from the requested amount of £1,500,000 to £800,000. I know that the latter amount is £200,000 more than was provided in the previous financial year, but then there was a special grant of £100,000. The regret I have expressed will, I am sure, be general. Western Australia has done a tremendous amount of work in its desire to develop the territory that is under its jurisdiction. To settlement in the South-West, for instance, the Commonwealth Govern-

ment were a party. That closer settlement scheme was a work to which this State devoted its endeavours; and although there has been considerable loss, that is not the fault of the present Government, or indeed to any other Government, of Western Australia. It is stated in the report on the applications for disabilities grants that the main causes of Western Australia's inferior financial condition were serious losses arising from reckless financing of wheat settlements. That is easy to say, but in view of the great responsibilities faced by this State more generous consideration should be given to its claims. As regards our North-West, more particularly, there is ample opportunity for comment. Comparing the position as regards the Northern Territory and our North-West, one must admit that Western Australia has spent on the North-West little more than a fraction of the amount that is being spent by the Commonwealth on the Northern Territory. Those who have been in both places will, I believe, agree that the work done in the North-West of Western Australia is of much greater value to the Commonwealth than the work done and being done in the Northern Territory. I am not including in my comparison the establishment of oil tanks at Darwin, but I am referring to those efforts that have been made to establish different industries in our own North-West. Tremendous sums have been spent in the Northern Territory and so far as I could see when I was there some time ago, no industries have been established there.

Mr. Marshall: Did you see that pumpkin garden that cost over £800 to establish?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not remember seeing even a pumpkin, but that is a subject on which the hon. member can enlighten the Committee. I did see a large building erected by Vestey's, but that represents the work of private enterprise and not of the Commonwealth Government. Even so, Vestey's Meat Works remain unused, and that is a standing reflection upon the possibilities of the Northern Territory. In Western Australia the establishment of the Wyndham Meat Works was effected to make possible the development of the cattle trade in the North. Those works are used not only by the cattle men of Western Australia, but by those whose holdings are in Central Australia and the Northern Territory. Then

again we established a shipping service that was essential if there was to be an opportunity for the North-West to be developed. The one industry in the North that offers any possibility of considerable success seems to be the cattle industry. We may talk about what the Commonwealth Government have done regarding the production of peanuts, but there are very few people engaged in that branch of primary industry, and I have yet to learn that they are doing any good at it. Therefore, it will be seen that the cattle-raising industry offers the greatest opportunity for the successful development of the North. Hence it was that a former Government of Western Australia decided to establish the Wyndham Meat Works. The economic use of the vast area of the North cannot be considered unless cognisance is taken of the pastoral industry. We have been informed that the Federal Grants Commission advised the Commonwealth Government as follows:—

The Commission cannot advise the Commonwealth to undertake responsibility for uneconomic enterprise. It is possible, however, that if money were spent on development, such as the establishment of feeding grounds near the works where stock could be put in proper condition for producing marketable meat, the economic results of the freezing industry might be very different.

That is very easy to say, but to establish such feeding grounds in order to recondition beasts before slaughtering, would involve very great cost. I doubt whether Western Australia could hope, for many years to come, to be in a position to undertake such an expenditure. At any rate, this State has strenuously endeavoured in many ways to provide opportunities for the progress and development of industries. Those efforts have not been limited to the South-West, nor to the North-West, but have applied to many parts of the State. The position seems to be that the Commonwealth look to the comparative handful of people in Western Australia to do all that is required to enable us to pay our way, while at the same time the Federal authorities explore practically every avenue of taxation possible and so take more and more money from us. The whole position is most unfair. It would matter little what party occupied the Treasury bench, for it would be impossible for any State Government to enable the country to pay its way and undertake all necessary works to develop our huge territory. I desire to voice my regret that the Commonwealth Government are so wanting in appre-

ciation of the difficulties that face this far-flung and comparatively empty State, and fail to give us the support that is so essential if real progress is to be made. I feel sure it would pay the Commonwealth Government to give fair consideration to the special needs of Western Australia. I do not suppose there are any other people in the world who have done more to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to them than have the people of Western Australia. We are faced with unusual difficulties. We know Western Australia is a wonderful country and that there is scarcely any product or mineral that cannot be produced within its borders. On the other hand, we must acknowledge that the country is patchy, and very careful thought is necessary if we are to achieve success with what has to be undertaken. Certainly it is unreasonable to expect the people of Western Australia to carry out all the developmental work that is necessary in the great North-West as well as in the great South-West, and at the same time pay their way. The deeply-rooted inclination and habit of the Commonwealth Government of invading every field of taxation is exemplified to its worst degree by the manner in which the motor industry is attacked. Motor spirit pays a very heavy duty. I know that the same duty is imposed in the other States, but in Western Australia the position is especially difficult because of the road problem. Long distances are involved, and if the Commonwealth Ministers had had greater time when they paid a visit to the State recently, they might have had a better opportunity to realise why greater consideration should be given to Western Australia in respect of larger refunds than obtain at present.

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

Mr. SAMPSON: Before tea I referred to the petrol tax. The tax should be returned to the State. It is quite unreasonable that the Government of the State should be expected to do what is required with the small amount of money now available. The stinging criticism of the Commission dealt in a very discouraging way with our primary industries. The State was accused of reckless expenditure in establishing those industries, which were labelled unprofitable. Why should they be unprofitable? Is it not acknowledged that in normal times the biggest handicap on our pri-

mary enterprise is the tariff. Then there is the sugar embargo, and what it means to that portion of northern Australia on the eastern side. Surely the Commonwealth Government overlook the specially heavy disabilities which our North-West has to face. I would not for a moment reflect on the quality of the land up there, but everyone knows that it has not either the fertility or the rainfall that is enjoyed in the North on the eastern side of Australia. It is time consideration was given to allowing the sugar industry to work out its own salvation, at least to an extent. As a result of the sugar embargo, the value of land used for sugar production in Queensland has greatly increased in price, and before any additional area is put under cultivation of sugar cane it is now necessary that permission be obtained. I know that the wheatgrower, except in special circumstances, has to face the competition of the world, meanwhile assisting those engaged in secondary industries in the Eastern States. Because of the tariff, this State carries a specially heavy burden, and however well we may be able to face those disabilities in the South-West, it is manifestly unfair that our northern areas should carry this burden. So I strongly disagree with many of the remarks made by the Commission. This State is doing excellent work in striving to develop the area under its control. It is an obligation on the Commonwealth Government to look into the position, to seek to understand our difficulties and assist in a reasonable way to make it possible for this country to be developed. We are told that, from the standpoint of protection, it is essential that the sugar embargo should be maintained. But what about production in this State, for we have at least equal advantages and so should be given every consideration. The enterprise of Western Australians is shown by what is being done, in Carnarvon, for instance. No one believes that it is as easy to produce good fruit at Carnarvon as it is on the eastern coast of Queensland. Yet the fight is being waged, and I sincerely applaud and congratulate those responsible for the progress made in the profitable production of fruit. I will leave this subject now, but I venture again to say that there can be no complaint made against this State. Successive Governments have done their best to develop the country with the small amount

of money at their disposal, an amount which is small because of the existence of Federal taxation. It is very gratifying to note that the unemployment position is steadily improving. That brings us to a consideration of tradesmen in Western Australia. It is a subject concerning which much has been heard in the past, but unfortunately no remedy has yet been brought forward to alleviate the position.

Mr. Marshall: Do you know where the problem has been solved, in any part of the world?

Mr. SAMPSON: I know of a way in which it can be solved, at least to an extent, in this State. Tradesmen in Western Australia are augmented to a fairly large degree by tradesmen from other countries. Meantime the Western Australian boy is deprived of an opportunity to learn a trade, and so he finds himself in the ranks of unskilled workers. That is the tragedy of the position, and we should set ourselves out to amend it. The Industrial Arbitration Act should be overhauled, and the awards should be reviewed. At all events, as they expire, an effort should be made to ensure that a larger quota of boys shall be permitted to learn various trades. I would go further than that: I consider every boy should have opportunity to learn the trade he desires to learn. At present there is something in the nature of a conspiracy between trade unions and employers. On the one hand there is a disinclination to allow the quota of apprentices to be increased, and on the other hand there is among the employers a disinclination even to employ the number of apprentices which the award or agreement permits. None can dispute the wisdom which permits consideration of our own boys. It is unfair that they should not be given an opportunity to learn a trade. Why should one lad, perhaps the son of an employer or the son of a leading trade unionist, be picked out and given this special privilege, whereas the great bulk of the boys are permitted in their earliest years to act as office boys or fill other dead-end occupations and later on are compelled to depend on unskilled work. These men are those who embarrass Governments, for not having been taught a trade they are forced to appeal for relief work. That is a very sad commentary on the result of our progress in this regard. We talk about the mechanisation of industry, but it

is the lack of sympathy, understanding and action on the part of those who have power to amend the present condition of affairs against which the greatest criticism should be levelled. It is a delicate question, but in the interests of the boys, we should do what is right. Tradesmen, I believe, are coming more and more to realise how important it is that consideration should be given to this subject. We do not train sufficient tradesmen for the needs of industry in this State. That is a sad reflection on us. Charity begins at home, but this is not charity; the rights of the boys should not be overlooked. We keep on repeating statements of that kind, and perhaps some day in the distant future something will be done. It is a sad reflection indeed on the development of industry that our youth should be denied the opportunity which they so greatly need.

Mr. Marshall: If you had had your way some years ago, we would have had Maltese tradesmen here now.

Mr. SAMPSON: No doubt we have Maltese tradesmen and tradesmen from other British countries here now, and it is idle for the hon. member to whip himself into a fury and vomit forth remarks without first giving them the slightest consideration. Because I put forward a proposition that white people belonging to the British Empire should be welcomed to this country, the hon. member infers that it is wrong. Surely the hon. member has some capacity to think for himself! To voice an expression of disgust because of something that occurred in 1928 shows, on the part of the hon. member, a long memory but very short consideration.

Mr. Marshall: That is how you intended to look after the locally-born—by the importation of Maltese.

Mr. SAMPSON: Those are wild and whirling words, and we must pass them over more in sorrow than in anger. The hon. member means well, and God forbid that I should speak unkindly to him. I shall strive to exercise restraint, although I am tempted to speak vigorously when I hear such pigmy views put forth. Dependence on the Government by those who need work is undesirable. If there is one thing that men should endeavour to get away from, it is relief or sustenance work.

I am entirely with the Government in the endeavour to assist them in every possible way, and by assisting the Government, I shall be assisting those who have experienced the necessity to depend upon Governments. What hope is there for a family where the bread-winner depends upon sustenance work? I was talking to a man from Scotland this morning, a fine strong man, apparently capable in every way, but for the time being compelled to accept sustenance work. I said to him, "As soon as you can, give up sustenance work because, while you are on it, your family can never make progress. You are losing the most valuable thing in your possession, namely, self-reliance. Take your fortune in your hands and go out and you will find work." There is plenty of work on the goldfields. There are certain places on the goldfields where it would be almost difficult to avoid being put to work. Not only on the goldfields but in the agricultural districts, there is work for all, I believe, and I shall stand by the Government in their efforts to provide work which offers a future to those concerned.

Mr. Tonkin: There is plenty of work, but it is all being done.

Mr. Cross: There are too many there to do it.

Mr. SAMPSON: In various trades there is a shortage of tradesmen. In some directions there is more work than there are men to do it. Take the building industry: A friend of mine called for tenders some time ago for the erection of a brick shop with living rooms attached. He received one tender, and that arrived two days after the closing date. What was the reason for that? There is more work for tradesmen in this State at the moment than there are tradesmen to do it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is more work offering.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, and that applies in many industries, though I do not say it applies to every industry. The State is enjoying a measure of prosperity, and I venture the opinion that if we deal fairly with our boys, we shall be able to handle our own work and not have to depend upon workers from overseas or from the Eastern States to hold down the jobs that industry offers.

Mr. Fox: You will have a lot of men coming to you to-morrow looking for a job.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, they will be along to see you.

Mr. SAMPSON: Why this pessimistic view that men are always looking for work? I know that some men are looking for work, but they are unskilled workers, and while the hon. member fails to act effectively regarding the remedy, the number of unskilled workers will continue to increase. That is the difficulty.

Mr. Thorn: There is a shortage of farm labourers, too.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. Recently I read a resolution of the Kellerberrin Road Board asking that workers be made available for farm work in the district.

Mr. Fox: To work from 6 in the morning to 10 at night!

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member has my assurance that I do not propose to discuss farm workers. I am discussing the importance of training tradesmen and providing opportunities for our boys to learn a trade. Is there any member who would deny that what I have said on the subject is perfectly right? I thank members for their silence. We should do what we can to make it possible for the boys to learn a trade. One avenue in which there is a shortage is the building trade, which is the criterion by which industry, trade and prosperity can best be judged.

Mr. Stubbs: It is a barometer.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is indeed a barometer. To-day there is quite a revival of building.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Government proposed to build a couple of houses to start it off.

Mr. SAMPSON: Quite a lot of building is going on, and the difficulty is to obtain tradesmen. I cast no reflection on those who are engaged in building. They are good men; Australian workmen can hold their own and win in competition with the workers of any other country. That I know. There is a great opportunity for the Government to take action along the lines I have suggested. This subject should not be lightly dismissed. It should be developed, and if members give it their consideration, I am sure that at least a partial solution will be found. It is only fair that every boy should have the right to learn a trade. Boys are brought into the world and are condemned to a life of poverty, because they have never been given the opportunity

to do that work for which they have an inclination.

Mr. Tonkin: The social system is responsible for that.

Mr. SAMPSON: I feel that Parliament is partly responsible because we allow differential treatment to be meted out. Every boy should have an equal right to learn a trade. What is in the Constitution of the United States?; that all men are born equal. They are not born equal. They are born unequal and are treated unfairly from birth upwards.

Mr. Thorn: They should have the opportunity.

Mr. SAMPSON: If they had the opportunity, we would all be in a better position. We are suffering to-day through the absence of tradesmen. The enterprise that would be shown by those who have capital to invest cannot be given effect to because it is impossible to get the tradesmen or skilled workers that are essential. If a man wished to employ an unskilled worker, he would not dare to advertise for one; he would get hold of one surreptitiously by some means whereby his desire was not made public. If anyone advertised for an unskilled worker he would never be able to reach his office in the morning.

Mr. Thorn: He would be killed in the rush.

Mr. SAMPSON: The restrictions appertaining to apprentices are too severe. It is possible to protect tradesmen from an oversupply of apprentices, but would that be fair? What about the overwhelming number of unskilled workers, the men on the basic wage? They are the men who deserve most consideration: but who is protecting them? Let us give consideration to all, and let us give it to the sons of our own people and provide them with the opportunity to learn trades.

Mr. Fox: Give them something to do when they have learned their trade.

Mr. SAMPSON: Once a boy had become a tradesman, there would be no difficulty about that. He would be none the less capable as an unskilled worker if he had a knowledge of blacksmithing, of carpentry, or of mechanics. That knowledge would be of great advantage to him. If he should, in any way, be connected with primary production he would get a very much better position than if he were an unskilled worker. When a farmer purchases a tractor, he must have someone to drive it. Most frequently



the man who is engaged for that purpose has no knowledge of internal combustion engines. The farmer, therefore, does not get the service from the machine he would get if the man in charge had learned the trade of a mechanic.

Mr. Marshall: Who manufactures the tractor; do Australian manufacturers produce them?

Mr. SAMPSON: Of course they are manufactured in Australia. I am surprised the hon. member does not know that. People in Melbourne and Sydney are making machines that are being used on our farms. We have to put up with that for the time being, but in time to come perhaps there will be sufficient enterprise and sufficient tradesmen in this State to enable us to produce our own machines. The hon. member is not aware that tractors are being built in Victoria and New South Wales, and that there is an organisation which produces these machines.

Mr. Marshall: You had better sit down because you are making a bigger ass of yourself standing up.

Mr. SAMPSON: At all events, I am endeavouring to speak wisely. To come back to earth, it would be a great advantage to the farmers if the tractor operators possessed mechanical knowledge. Members connected with primary production know that in many instances those put in charge of tractors have no mechanical knowledge, and therefore do not get the best results from the machines. Some relief is provided by vocational training. In order that this may be of greater advantage, boys must remain at school for a longer period, perhaps another year. Vocational training, as a commencement, might be started along the lines I have indicated. A considerable sum of money would be required to carry that scheme into effect. I doubt whether any Government could do what is necessary in that direction. Additional buildings would have to be erected and additional teachers employed. I think the solution of the problem is to review our Arbitration laws and awards, with a view to giving to boys the opportunity to which I have referred.

Mr. North: Do you think that machinery reduces the demand for unskilled labour?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have never believed that machinery and the economic production of goods is a bad thing for either employers or employees. The needs of the people of the world are so great that, subject to hav-

ing the money to buy what is desired, we shall never reach the stage of having a surplus of goods. If it were not for machinery, we should not be enjoying all the advantages we enjoy to-day. The hours of labour might still be too long, though they would undoubtedly be longer were it not for the machinery that is being used. We blame the mechanisation of industry for men being put out of work, but that does not get to the root of the matter. When goods are produced cheaply, a greater number of people have the opportunity of using or consuming those goods. The time when people sneered at the value of reforestation is past. Reforestation is recognised as essential. There is great need even here for softwood timbers. I know that the use of the redwood case is commended, but there are goods that call for the use of white timber. I hope the work of the Forests Department will be greatly extended.

Mr. Thorn: We want to retain the redwood case for our fruit.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is important, as has been shown by the Agent General, by the Premier and Leader of the Opposition when they were in London, and by practically every visitor to the Old Country who has attended Covent Garden and the fruit markets of the different centres. I certainly support greater consideration for reforestation. We have ample opportunities here for the development and marketing of timber. And there is an associated industry—that of wattle bark, a species of acacia, the broad-leaved wattle. In my boyhood I stripped many tons of that bark. In fact, my grandfather, who was a mixed farmer near Clarendon, in South Australia, tried out the planting and growth of wattle trees, and found it a commercial proposition. Land which is not of sufficient value for intense culture or even for good pasture, will grow wattle. My grandfather told me repeatedly—and I saw it with my own eyes, when helping to strip some of those wattles—that the proposition was sound and remunerative. The seed was broadcast as wheat was sown in old days. It is not easy to describe how, exactly, to treat the seed, but as hon. members' attention is not at this juncture being directed to the production of wattle bark I need not go into that phase. Now a word or two on the basic valuation of lands by the Taxation Department. It would be a good thing if the Commissioner of Taxation completed the

basic valuation in the South-Western and Great Southern districts, embracing Gingin and other areas north of Perth. In those places basic valuations have not been made by the department. The road boards in those areas are concerned as to the basic valuation; and through my connection with the Road Boards Association I know that basic valuation, if it could be undertaken by the Taxation Department and the South-Western district completed, would be a great advantage. I acknowledge that the valuation put on lands by the Taxation Department is in many instances in excess of its real value, or perhaps I should say its selling value. However, it is quite competent for road boards to adopt those valuations and to make a reduction of 10 or 20 per cent., or such percentage as they might think reasonable. Undoubtedly, these departmental valuations are made only after careful thought and after inspection in the field. They are not made from the departmental offices. The valuers go through the country, and the result is that local authorities can confidently accept those valuations as sound. Up to the present, 64 boards have accepted the departmental valuations. Fifteen boards have had no opportunity to do so, because basic valuations have not been made in their cases. The area to which I refer does not include the North-West, nor the country eastward of, I think, Narembeen, nor does it include Southern Cross or the Salmon Gums district. Apart from those, there are 15 road boards which up to the present have had no opportunity of availing themselves of that assistance. I hope the Premier will take the matter up with the Federal authorities and endeavour to secure the carrying out of the balance of that basic valuation which is so greatly needed. Under existing laws the classifications and values would be used for probate, stamp duty, estate duty, and resumption purposes, as required, and also for State vermin tax, as practically all holdings over 160 acres are taxable. They would also be used for road board and drainage rating where desired. If approval were granted for the appointment of valuers to proceed with the completion of the scheme as outlined, it would, I can assure the Premier, prove most helpful. This, of course, is a Federal matter.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But we pay for the work.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope our Government will do what they can to get the valuations

completed. The importance of uniformity of values for Federal, State Government, and road board purposes need not be stressed. The maintenance of carefully co-ordinated values would be of great and permanent benefit. The other evening I listened with much interest to the remarks of the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) on taxation. I hope I shall not be considered to be intruding when I say that in my opinion the North-West and the goldfields should receive special consideration.

Mr. Marshall: When the goldfields are going to secede from the metropolitan area we shall call upon you for your able assistance.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is possible I shall be able to help the movement, and it is possible that such a movement will need help. The position in connection with the goldfields is as follows: An enterprising person on hearing of a find goes out to the locality and starts a business. Unfortunately it sometimes happens that the find does not prove of lasting value. Perhaps in two or three years it becomes impossible for the business man to continue. He may have spent some hundreds of pounds in putting up premises, and during the first two or three years he may have done well. As soon as he makes any profit, he has to—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Pay taxation.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. It may be said this is perfectly fair, but I do not think so, for if the same thing were done in the metropolitan or some established agricultural area, there would be no fear of the working out of a lode, or however it may be described. The man who goes to the North-West, where he is subject to uncertain rainfall, may after three or four bad seasons get a good season, and then, as the member for Roebourne has pointed out, the Commissioner of Taxation, as authorised by the Act, immediately demands a certain tax. In some cases the position is such that if the person taxed had been working on sustenance he would have been as well paid as he is by taking the great risks to be encountered in the far North.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is also the case of the agriculturist who has to work his farm at a loss for about five years.

Mr. SAMPSON: Consideration should be given to all those who go out from the metropolitan area, and certainly those people

should be encouraged. At present, encouragement seems to be extended to those who remain in the city where life is comparatively easy. It is not so with those who go out into the country, to the goldfields and further inland.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are you still on taxation?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, taxation pursues them all. It is most unfair that the position should be as it is. I appreciated the difficulties referred to so clearly and eloquently by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda), and it was because of that that I ventured to say a word or two regarding the matter.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well, that is the end of Roebourne!

**MR. TONKIN** (North-East Fremantle) [8.11]: Listening the other evening to the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), I could not help thinking how very true, when applied to politics, was the comment of Bacon in one of his essays that a man who could not possibly mend his own case, would do what he could to impair another's. The member for Nedlands seemed bent on destruction. In a way, his utterance was more spirited than accurate. At the same time, I think we are indebted to him for considerably enlivening the proceedings. For my part, I thoroughly enjoyed his speech: it was quite different from 90 per cent. of those delivered by members this year. There was more fire, more spirit in it, and I felt it was good to be alive. There is an old Spanish proverb which says, "Tell a lie and find the truth." I felt that the member for Nedlands had that proverb in mind when he was speaking the other evening, because he seemed to have forgotten all the acts of the Government of which he was a member, and it appeared that he was endeavouring to discover the truth by simulation. He said he felt very, very keenly the injustice under which public servants had been labouring for some time. He mentioned that in 1934 he actually referred to the grave discontent in the service. The member for Nedlands must be truly upset regarding that grave dissatisfaction in the service, so upset that the mere reference to the discontent sufficed him! I should have thought that, in such a matter of grave discontent, nothing short of moving the adjournment of the House would have met the

position. But the member for Nedlands said that he had referred to it, and then he did nothing more. That sufficed. He said there was grave discontent, and he then told us that nothing had been done by the present Government to remedy the position. If there had been grave discontent in 1934 and nothing has been done since, the position now should be indeed extremely grave. What did the member for Nedlands do? Did he move the adjournment of the House?

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Speaker would not allow him to do it.

Mr. Doney: He could not do it.

Mr. TONKIN: On the contrary, the member for Nedlands contented himself with a mere reference to the grave discontent.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No one knows better than you do, that he could not have moved the adjournment of the House.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course he could.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not on a matter like that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Certainly he could have done so.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TONKIN: Did not the Leader of the Opposition tell us the other night that members on the Opposition side of the House listened to speeches without interrupting? Example is better than precept.

Hon. C. G. Latham: This is one of the very rare occasions.

Mr. Thorn: We do not like this window-dressing.

Mr. TONKIN: The member for Nedlands contented himself with merely referring to his previous remarks, together with an intimation that nothing had been done since to meet the situation. He contrasted his great concern with what he alleged to be the Premier's lack of sympathy. Actions speak louder than words. What did the member for Nedlands do when he was Minister for Education? He deprived the teachers of their long-service leave, despite the fact that they, in common with other public servants, had been subjected to a 20 per cent. cut in their salaries. Long-service leave was given a cash equivalent by the classification board. When the salaries of teachers were fixed, it was definitely stated, in effect, that the salaries would have been higher were it not for the fact that the teachers enjoyed long-service leave. In those circumstances, I

think I am correct in saying that there was a cash equivalent for the long-service leave. The member for Nedlands singled out his own Department for special taxation because, in common with other civil servants, the teachers had been subjected to the 20 per cent. cut and, on top of that, the member for Nedlands took away their long-service leave.

Mr. Wansbrough: And that caused more grave discontent.

Mr. TONKIN: The member for Nedlands now says that he is gravely concerned about the disparity in the amounts of the salaries that the Government propose to restore to public servants. ; He would have us believe that he feels considerably for the men on the lower grades. I think that the member for Nedlands is merely dissembling when he says that, because, when he took the long-service leave from the teachers, he permitted the inspectors to retain that privilege. That means to say that the teachers, who were in the lower grades, had two cuts—the loss of 20 per cent. of their salaries and long-service leave—but the inspectors, who were in receipt of considerably higher salaries, were still allowed to enjoy long-service leave. That was what happened in the hon. member's own Department and so, when he comes here with protestations of sympathy for men on the lower grades, I do not think he will deceive many of us. His protestations, in my opinion, in view of his action while he held office as Minister for Education, lack sincerity. I now desire to address myself to another subject. On page 14 of the Estimates, we are given a list of the various amounts of loan funds, and are shown the rates of interest payable in respect of that indebtedness. The cost of financial accommodation in Australia generally is far too high. If we study the Estimates, two factors stand out. The first is that the rate of interest is too high, and the second is that the burden must be borne for a long time. It is true the State has benefited in a very small way from loan funds, but they have been so very small that the benefit to Western Australia does not amount to much. I notice that no additional benefit from that source is expected this year. I find that of the loans raised outside of Australia, out of £46,545,402 no less than £11,268,414 carries 5 per cent. for very long terms. Of

that eleven million odd no less than £9,079,258 extends to the year 1975 at that 5 per cent. rate of interest. Of the loans raised in Australia, with one exception, namely, an amount of £5,550,000 for Treasury bills, the rate of interest ranges from 3 per cent. to 5.0375 per cent. Out of a total of £42,044,774, over £20,000,000, almost one half, carries 4 per cent. or over. In my opinion that is far too high. Fixed income investments in Australia for the current year have returned as low as £3 4s. 6d. per cent. That was for Australian 4 per cent. consolidated loans, and was dated the 25th January. Last year the return on Australian 4 per cent. consolidated loans was as low as £3 2s. 5d. per cent., which was recorded on the 13th October. Even at that rate there was great competition for this class of investment, so much so that investors were prepared to pay high premiums. I find in this publication I have in my hand, which is issued by the National Bank of Australasia, a list of the figures showing the average price of 4 per cent. consolidated loans, and the average yield per cent. These are the figures:—

Date.	Average Price.	Average Yield % including Redemption.
1933—	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
29th June ...	103 15 9	3 15 1
31st August ...	103 17 0	3 14 8
1934—		
28th June ...	108 15 0	3 5 7
30th August ...	107 11 3	3 8 2
1935—		
27th June ...	104 18 3	3 12 0
29th August ...	103 6 3	3 15 10

The fact that the premium was so high shows the competition for that class of investment. Members will notice that in 1934 the premium was 8½ per cent. for these 4 per cent. funds, and investors endeavouring to obtain that investment were satisfied with a return of £3 5s. 7d. per cent. I could give further evidence that the rate we are paying for loans is too high. In June of 1934 the Commonwealth Bank underwrote for the Australian Loan Council a works and funding loan to amount to £12,000,000, redeemable in 1948. The issue price of that loan was £98 10s., and it carried only 3¼ per cent. interest. That is to say, the effective rate of interest was £3 7s. 8d. per cent., when we take into consideration the discount at which the loan was issued. Yet that loan was heavily oversubscribed in three days. Let us examine the table of rates of

interest paid by the Commonwealth Bank. This presents very interesting reading, and I want members to notice the difference between the rates of interest the Commonwealth Bank allows to depositors and the rate it charges on warrants. On the 27th June, 1927, the Commonwealth Bank was charging 4 per cent. for Treasury bills. At the same time it was allowing 4 per cent. on fixed deposit for 3 months, 4 per cent. on fixed deposits for 6 months,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on fixed deposits for 12 months, and 5 per cent. on fixed deposits for two years. We find that in October, of 1929, the overdraft rate of the Commonwealth Bank was  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. That is the general bank. The rural credits department of the bank was charging  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The bank was still charging  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on Treasury bills, and it was allowing 4 per cent. on fixed deposits for three months, 4 per cent. on fixed deposits for six months,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on fixed deposits for 12 months, and 5 per cent. on fixed deposits for two years. The Savings Bank was allowing a maximum rate of 4 per cent. on deposits. In October of 1930, the overdraft rates from the general bank were  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and from the rural credits department, 6 per cent. It was charging the Government of this country 6 per cent. for accommodation on Treasury bills. The amount it allowed on fixed deposits for three months was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., on fixed deposits for 6 months  $4\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., on fixed deposits for twelve months 5 per cent., and on fixed deposits for two years  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. It was charging local authorities for their loans from 6 per cent. to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. I do not wish to weary members, so I will move on more quickly. In October of 1934 the overdraft rate of the general bank was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and of the rural credits department  $3\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. Treasury bills had come down to 2 per cent. On fixed deposits for three months the bank was allowing  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., on fixed deposits for six months 2 per cent., on fixed deposits for 12 months  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., and on fixed deposits for 24 months  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Now take the latest figures available, namely those of January, 1935. The overdraft rate of the general bank was  $4\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., and of the rural credits department  $3\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. The rate on Treasury bills was  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., and on fixed deposits the rates were, for three months 1 per cent., six months  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., 12 months  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., and two years  $2\frac{1}{2}$

per cent. The maximum rate obtainable by depositors in the savings bank was 2 per cent. Members can see from those figures that the Commonwealth Bank was charging a rate of interest on Treasury bills out of all proportion to what it should have been, and that the rates of interest have, since 1927, steadily declined until to-day they are as low as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. By charging that high rate of interest on accommodation to the country, the Commonwealth Bank was imposing too great a burden on Governments and indirectly on the people. The present rate on Treasury bills is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. This State has £5,550,000 accommodation on Treasury bills and we are now paying  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. interest on that amount. Notice how the rate has fallen. Previously the Commonwealth Bank charged 6 per cent. for accommodation on Treasury bills. What is the cost to the Commonwealth Bank of giving accommodation to Governments on Treasury bills? It is merely the cost of printing and bookkeeping, nothing else. What a fine thing it must have been for the bank when Governments were being charged 6 per cent. for that accommodation. Apparently the bank authorities have taken a tumble and have now come down to a rate which I maintain is still far too high, namely  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. Members who read the financial columns of the local paper will know that every week there is published a cable from Great Britain stating the amount which has been applied for by the banks there for Treasury bills, and showing the rate of interest payable. For the purposes of comparison, let me quote a cable, transmitted by British official wireless, dated London the 20th September:—

The total amount applied for in tenders for £45,000,000 worth of British Treasury bills this week was £65,165,000.

Look at the competition—only £45,000,000 worth offered and tenders given for £65,000,000 worth, so anxious were the banks to obtain that investment. What price were the banks prepared to accept? The average rate for Treasury bills at three months was 10s. 6.58d. per cent. as against 10s. 7.02d. per cent. the week before. The banks availed themselves of the offer to obtain for three months an investment which returns them 10s. 6d. per cent. Yet the Commonwealth Bank charges the Western Aus-

tralian Government £1 15s. per cent. There can be no justification for charging that rate, when the cost to the Commonwealth Bank, as I have said, is merely the cost of printing and bookkeeping. I suppose actually the cost to the Commonwealth Bank would be less than one-half per cent. What a good thing the bank must have been on when it charged 6 per cent.! It is a wonder there was not a riot in the country.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: At that time the profits of the people were greater.

Mr. TONKIN: The cost of money is such that too great a burden is placed upon the State, and as a result the Treasurer is prevented from passing on concessions to the people. On the 22nd August last I asked the Treasurer a series of questions about the interest on advances to purchasers of workers' homes which, with the replies, were as follows:—

1. What reduction in the rate of interest charged on advances to purchasers of workers' homes has been granted by the Government because of the saving effected as a result of the conversion of loans during the past four years?—Two reductions, each of one-half per cent. The first was made in 1931, and the second on the 1st January, 1935.

2. What is the rate of interest at present being charged to purchasers of workers' homes?—Five and a half per cent.

3. Will he give consideration to the possibility of reducing the rate in the near future?—Unless there are further substantial reductions in the interest rates paid by the Government, it will not be possible to make further reductions in the rate charged by the Workers' Homes Board to its clients.

In the latter statement, I must agree with the Treasurer. At first I could not understand the Treasurer's reply, because I was under the impression that we had benefited considerably by the conversion. When I studied the amount and the terms on which we had borrowed—we had borrowed the bulk of it at 5 per cent. until 1975—I realised that the Treasurer was unable to give concessions at the moment.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: By the same token, the Commonwealth should be able to give a lot.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition, in his speech, expressed great concern about the State's high interest bill, but his remedy was to restrict borrowing. These were the hon. member's words—

Spend money only in such avenues as will provide interest and build up an asset.

Incidentally, I might remark that if by any mischance the Leader of the Opposition should become Treasurer of the State, you, Mr. Chairman, and I would be very little better off in our efforts to get a new bridge for Fremantle. The hon. member believes that we should borrow less money, and that when we do borrow, we should spend it only in such avenues as will provide interest and build up an asset. That would knock out our bridge.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not necessarily.

Mr. TONKIN: Would the hon. member build the bridge out of revenue?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes; there is plenty of revenue with which to build a bridge.

Mr. TONKIN: Then I think I shall have to support the hon. member. But I cannot believe he is serious. He would not attempt to build a bridge out of revenue, and he would spend loan money only on such works as would return interest.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The additional sum of £200,000 given to the Treasurer the other day would do for a start.

Mr. TONKIN: My remedy is not to restrict borrowing because such a policy at the present time would cause chaos. The remedy is to reduce interest, which is still too high.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The last loan was not too great a success.

Mr. TONKIN: The remedy is to reduce interest and that can be done. Let me quote a cable message that appeared in the "Daily News" on the 19th September under the heading "Bankers to Convert Canadian Loan"—

The Canadian Government have completed arrangements for bankers to convert 4 per cent. loans totalling 135,000,000 dollars (£27,000,000) maturing 14th October for a new 2 per cent. issue. There will not be any offering to the public.

There will not be any offering to the public because it is too good an investment. The bankers want the lot.

Mr. McDonald: Was the period stated?

Mr. TONKIN: No.

Mr. McDonald: We might be better off on Treasury bills at 1½ per cent.

Mr. TONKIN: It says there will be no offering to the public, but that arrangements have been made with the bankers to do the business. I take it that the arrangement is for a lengthy term. It is such a good investment that the banks want it all.

It provides a good return for them, seeing that the greater proportion of the business will represent pen and ink money.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Alberta will settle them.

Mr. TONKIN: Alberta will prove something to us one way or the other.

Mr. North: The Bank of New South Wales is encouraging Treasury bills.

Mr. TONKIN: That is a good investment, a gilt-edged security, and carries no risk. If we could nationalise the banks, we would get all our money for nothing. Although the Canadian Government may be satisfied with interest at two per cent., the private banks in Great Britain are content with less. The British Government can float a loan successfully at round about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  and  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. interest.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Over what period?

Mr. TONKIN: Over almost any period. They can float a loan for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for a period that will compare more than favourably with the Canadian float.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The cheapest money in the Old Country was the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. loan of ten millions for ten years, and Glasgow got it.

Mr. TONKIN: I am surprised to hear that. I think I could refute that statement.

The Minister for Mines: You are not taking that as a criterion of the rate at which the British Government can float a loan, are you? Glasgow got it in defiance of the authorities.

Mr. TONKIN: I am practically certain I have read recently that the British Government could obtain money at from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. A Treasury bill running for three months may commence on the 1st January at a particular rate of interest, and after running for three months, may be renewed on the 1st April at a lower rate of interest. I have already stated how the rate of interest fell.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am sure the Treasurer would like to do that sort of thing.

Mr. TONKIN: Why should he not do so? There is no justification for the State Government being fleeced by the Commonwealth Government, as has been happening. Fancy charging the State Government six per cent. in 1927 for accommodation which cost them next door to nothing. I have here an interesting proposal which was published in

the "West Australian" of September 19th last and is as follows:—

Interest adjustment—Stabilisation proposal. Hobart, September 18.—Colonel A. C. Blacklow, a former Federal member for Franklyn, submitted a scheme of interest adjustment in an address to a meeting at Hobart to-day. His proposal was that a stabilising influence would be exerted if interest rates were adjusted automatically, according to changes in the world or London parity prices of the principal Australian products.

There is something in that.

Mr. McDonald: I think so too.

Mr. TONKIN: An investigation along these lines might lead us out of our difficulties. A worker can only get his wages. He invests his labour in industry and his labour represents his only capital. In return for his labour he receives wages, which represent his income. This income rises and falls. As the cost of living goes up, the wages go up, but a considerable time after. The worker has no fixed income. His wage is subject to arbitration in some cases, and in other cases he takes what the employer is prepared to give him. Instead of the worker's income being fixed, it is the very first thing to be reduced when the country gets into financial difficulties. During the heart of the depression the Government of the day brought down the Financial Emergency Act. We were half afraid to touch the interest of overseas bondholders, but had no compunction about slashing into the wages of the workers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are not telling the truth now.

Mr. TONKIN: We cut them by 20 per cent.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And there was a cut of  $22\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on all Government loans in Australia.

Mr. TONKIN: We did not like doing that.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Who said we did?

Mr. TONKIN: All the argument ranged around whether we would do it or not. People talked about the sanctity of contracts.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It was not made compulsory by legislation. It was only done by negotiation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was made compulsory.

Mr. TONKIN: We reduced the interest of the bondholders in Australia, but did not cut the interest of overseas bondholders. Furthermore, we had no compunction about

reducing the income of the workers, who have been carrying that reduction for a long time. Interest rates and other fixed money claims are supposed to be left alone. We must not touch them because of the sanctity of contracts. We say there was a contract, and that it must be kept. We have to carry out some of these contracts until 1975, according to the Treasurer. When a man invests money in a gilt-edged security his capital remains intact. He receives a fixed income annually for the stipulated number of years, and at the end of the time his original capital is intact. The worker invests his labour and receives his income in the form of wages. His capital is depleted every year, because at the end of 12 months he has lost a year of his life. A man may enter the public service at the age of 18. We give him 47 years of work, which represents his capital. Every year he works his capital is reduced. At the age of 65 his 47 years of labour have been used up, and he is thrown on the scrap heap, or left to an old-age pension of 17s. 6d. per week.

Mr. North: That is four per cent. on £1,000.

Mr. TONKIN: But he has not £1,000. His capital is completely gone. And whilst his capital has been used up, his wages, which represent his income, have been reduced by financial emergency cuts. We take no cognisance of the fact that he is losing his capital all the time. On the other hand, to the man who invests money we say that his contract is sacred. Let him put in his £50,000, and we will pay him his 5 per cent. interest every year until 1975; and in 1975 we will give him back his original capital, his £50,000, still intact. I consider that to be a wrong view. Money is god in this world, and human beings are a secondary consideration. That position ought to be reversed. We ought to say that when a working man has invested his labour and his capital is being reduced, on no account should his wages be touched. On the contrary, his income should increase as his capital is being used up. But with these money claims, the capital is there all the time. Thus there is all the more reason why that form of income should be subject to reduction. This should be a matter for the Loan Council.

Mr. North: It is the Tasmanian proposal you are speaking of for the moment?

Mr. TONKIN: Yes. The Loan Council should take the matter up with the various Governments concerned. I hold that it could be suggested to the British Government that they control loans raised in their country and tell the investors in Australian loans that 5 per cent. until 1975 is out of all proportion. The value of money has fallen, interest rates have fallen. I believe that the British Government could make arrangements for the proper conversion of those loans to a reasonable rate of interest. It cannot be argued that existing rates, simply because once fixed, should remain inviolate whilst the rates of the workers are attacked at the first onset of depression. I make an appeal for the wage-earner, for the man who loses his capital as he invests it. I put it up to our Government that they will render a service to the people, will lift the burden off the shoulders of the people, if they secure money at a cheaper rate. And they should get it at a cheaper rate, because the present rate is altogether disproportionate to what ought to be paid. When I remember that this burden has to be borne by Western Australia until 1975, a time when most of the members of this Chamber will be in another place—

Hon. C. G. Latham: In the Council?

Mr. TONKIN: Yes, in the councils of the Lord. When I think that we have to carry the burden for that period, with very little chance indeed of reduction, I consider that strong efforts should be made immediately by those in authority to bring about a reduction. I go so far as to say that if the bondholders will not do this spontaneously, they should do it by compulsion.

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [8.55]: I do not think it too late at this stage of the debate to congratulate the Government on the manner in which they have handled the finances of the State during the last two or three years. We realised that at the beginning of the present financial year the Government were faced with a difficult financial position. However, I am pleased to know that as the result of good, sound administration Western Australia is in a much happier position to-day than it was in at this time last year. I desire to touch on various matters in a gen-



eral way. Most of those matters have been referred to by previous speakers. Let me make a brief reference to the much-discussed Premiers' Plan. I congratulate the Government on their decision to abolish the wage and salary taxes inaugurated under the Premiers' Plan as the result of the passage of financial emergency legislation. The decision to abolish those taxes was arrived at prior to the last State election by the party now occupying this side of the Chamber. It was enunciated at Boulder by the present Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, in the policy speech he delivered there. The hon. gentleman stated that if returned with a majority he would make it part of his legislative programme to amend drastically the financial emergency legislation imposing cuts on wages and salaries. Shortly after taking over the reins of government, the Premier restored cuts that had been made in the case of Eastern Goldfields public servants, amounting, if I remember rightly, to about 8s. per week. That was the first instalment. The Premier also announced in his policy speech that the cuts made by financial emergency legislation would be abolished by instalments extending over a period of three years. I am happy to know that the Government find themselves in a position to redeem that promise of the Premier. I congratulate the hon. gentleman on being in that position. Now I wish to say a few words on unemployment. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) this evening stated that on the goldfields there were great opportunities for tradesmen and also a deal of employment available. I want to clarify the atmosphere; I want to enlighten the member for Swan as to the real position obtaining on the goldfields. Probably it will surprise the majority of hon. members to know that there are upwards of 1,000 men out of work on the goldfields at the present time. I am given to understand that there are upwards of 400 men unemployed in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district. Certainly there is a little building going on in both towns, Kalgoorlie and Boulder, but not to the extent suggested by the member for Swan. Therefore the hon. member was ill-advised in making his statement of this evening, which in all probability will have the effect of attracting large numbers of men to those districts, only to be disappointed upon their arrival there. The hon. member also referred to the fact

that the youth of Western Australia were not given the opportunity to learn trades. He inferred that that resulted from opposition on the part of trade unions and the Labour movement generally. But that is not so at all. The Labour movement of Western Australia stands for training the youth of the country to follow occupations, professions, and callings. The great trouble is that those opportunities are not available to the extent desired. Further, some of the opportunities actually available are controlled by the employers. Employers in the building trade are not availing themselves of their opportunity to train the youth of Western Australia. Those employers are tardy and reluctant to afford the youth of Western Australia opportunities to learn trades. That applies not only to the present; it has been the practice for years past. Huge buildings have been erected, and, in some instances, not one apprentice has been employed on them or given an opportunity to learn a trade. Therefore, the blame cannot be laid as a charge against the trade unions of the State. Rather is it a charge that can be safely levelled against the employers, who have refused to open these avenues for apprentices. Next I will deal with the policy enunciated by the Leader of the Opposition as to the way he would assist the State to a better financial footing, and so help the people generally. So far as I could sense the meaning of his remarks, the Leader of the Opposition based his policy for a revival of industry on an increase in the price of wheat. I think it quite unnecessary to deal at length with that suggested remedy, because we are all desirous of an increase in the price of wheat, the effects of which will be reflected throughout all the industries of the State. As to the Leader of the National Party, the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), he also has a policy that he has mentioned both inside and outside the House. In his desire to bring about a greater measure of prosperity, he referred to a plan, but all that I could see of a plan that he had evolved, was his suggestion that a conference should be held in the Eastern States to consider the disabilities of the youth of Western Australia.

Mr. North: The scheme for Empire works still interests him.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, I will come to that. I take it that the Leader

of the National Party referred to a Federal conference to discuss the problem of unemployment that confronts the youth of Western Australia. We know that these conferences take place; matters are discussed; those who attend return to their own States. The decisions arrived at during the conference are published in the newspapers, and that is the end of it until the next conference. By such a method the youth of the State cannot look forward, with any degree of confidence, to securing relief.

Mr. Thorn: You have a pessimistic outlook.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Apparently that is the attitude of the National Party. Nothing can be done beyond meeting in conference in the Eastern States and discussing the problem!

Mr. North: Representatives of the Governments have to meet in conference.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, but not merely to discuss the problem of youth unemployment in Western Australia. Conferences are held, in consequence of the present financial machinery, to secure money to carry on the government of the State. Some time ago, the Leader of the National Party delivered a speech in which, I think, he was leading up to this scheme of his regarding a conference. On the 3rd September last he attended a Nationalist rally at Northam. I suppose the object was to consolidate the forces he leads with an eye to the next general elections. Apparently he made a good speech. He castigated the present Government for carrying on without a plan. Evidently nothing can be done unless there is a plan. I followed up the hon. member's remarks with a view to discovering what plan he had evolved. I found it was a large plan. It was a plan for Empire public works. Strange to say, however, he himself pointed out that it was one over which we as a State could have no control whatever. Moreover, it was beyond the ambit of even the Commonwealth Government. So his plan is one with which we cannot be connected, because it must be initiated elsewhere.

Mr. North: His idea is to initiate the plan here, not to wait for London.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The Leader of the National Party was not reported as having made that explanation. On the

contrary, he remarked that it was beyond both the State and the Commonwealth and remained for some other Parliament to initiate. In those circumstances, all we can do is to struggle on as we are doing. That is what the hon. member's policy resolves itself into.

Mr. Thorn: Have you a plan?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, and we are putting it into execution. We are endeavouring to consummate the plan of the Australian Labour Party. We have a plan not only of public works, but a financial policy too. The party, with which I have the honour to be connected, will go right ahead. We will not talk about conferences, but do the work that is necessary in the interests, not only of the youth, but of the people generally throughout the State. Then again, I find that the United Australian Party Prime Minister of Australia (Mr. Lyons) has a plan, which is also removed from Australia.

Mr. Thorn: Is not your plan one of borrow and bust?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: If I am to be guided by the speech of the Leader of the National Party, members occupying the Opposition Benches are also prepared to borrow to the utmost, if it is deemed desirable, in order to achieve prosperity for the State. I suppose a conference in the Eastern States will decide if it is advisable, but, at any rate, they are prepared to borrow to the very limit. I was pointing out that the Prime Minister of Australia had evolved a plan and the details of it have been published throughout the Press. It is an "Eat More Food" plan.

Mr. North: Do you object to that?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: That plan will knock these easy-credit advocates all of a heap!

Mr. McLarty: Do you intend to help?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: What a remarkable plan! Fancy telling hungry people, those who are out of work, men who are strenuously endeavouring to secure work so that they can buy some food, that they must eat more! There are, I believe, no fewer than 77,000 unemployed persons in Australia. And the Prime Minister has told them all to eat more food! So it appears we are now on the right track, we have only to eat more food. Where we are to get the money with which to buy it, the Lord only knows. Then we shall have conferences in the Eastern States with a view to doing

something for the youth of this country. Clearly, it is very necessary that we should have a change of Federal Government, so as to get back to commonsense practice and do something real and honest in the direction of providing additional employment for the people, rather than talking such nonsense as eat more food, when the people have not the money with which to buy the food.

Mr. North: That is what the inquiry at Geneva is about.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The member for Claremont will be glad to know that there is another scheme afoot at Geneva, namely the stabilisation of the currency. That has been sponsored by the Australian representative at the League of Nations. So there is still hope for the member for Claremont. In all probability the scheme will come to fruition, because this matter will be taken up by capitalistic institutions right through Australia, and so it is likely there will be something done to bring about the desired alteration. Because, irrespective of what might happen either in the Federal Parliament or in the League of Nations Council meeting, they all wind up by saying that something must be done. So in all probability something will be done. However, I am pleased to know that an effort is being made at last to bring under the notice of the respective Governments associated with the League of Nations the desirability of doing something about the stabilisation of currency. No doubt it will bring about a happier relationship between the nations and probably will result in some good. There is another matter which is well worth the consideration of the Government. I notice recently the Government declared their intention of extending the Goldfields Water Supply from Coolgardie to Norseman. It is well known that during recent years a reduction has been made in the pipe line between Mundaring and Kalgoorlie from 30in. to 24in. It is also well known that the consumption of water on the goldfields is on the increase, as the result of the general activities connected with mining and the progress which has been brought about as the result of the increased price of gold. Undoubtedly there will be a greater consumption of water, and this should receive the immediate attention of the Government, for we should in no way retard the future activities of the mining industry by reducing the quantity of water delivered at Kalgoorlie. I bring that under the

notice of the Minister because in my opinion it may be necessary to provide an auxiliary reservoir between Bullabulling and Kalgoorlie. If that should be done, it would be work of a reproductive nature and would provide employment for a large number of men, while also it would mean an additional safeguard for the scheme. There are other matters of interest to my electors contained under the various departmental headings of the Estimates, but those I can deal with at a later opportunity. But I am not going to miss this opportunity to bring under the notice of the Government the increased responsibility accruing in the Kalgoorlie Hospital. It is not really the Kalgoorlie Hospital, but the "Goldfields Hospital." Very serious cases are treated there, patients coming from Southern Cross, from Wiluna, from Norseman and from Laverton. So, as I say, it is not really the Kalgoorlie Hospital. The accommodation there at the present time is quite insufficient and efforts are being made to assist the Government in the provision of additional accommodation. I should like the Government to take a serious view of what is happening there at the present time. I am not prepared to say the hospital is understaffed, but I will say the hospital accommodation is quite inadequate. Additions should be made to the building and proper facilities offered to those patients who flock to seek relief at that institution. Let me conclude by saying that although I have sat here patiently listening to the criticism of the Government from the Opposition side, I have failed to detect anything put forward of a drastic nature which will assist the State more satisfactorily than the present Government are doing; therefore I think we can congratulate ourselves on the achievements of the Government during the last two years, and we can be satisfied that they will continue to handle the finances of the State in the interests of the whole of the people of Western Australia.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [9.17]: I do not intend to keep the Committee waiting many minutes, in fact I would not keep them as long as I shall have to do were it not for the interesting lecture on interest and banking delivered by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). Unfortunately, his statement was so ridicu-

lous and absurd that it is impossible to pass it by.

Mr. Tonkin: The onus is on you to prove that.

Mr. SEWARD: If the hon. member will remain quiet, I will endeavour to do so. Speaking the other night, the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) compared some figures of Western Australia with figures of the Eastern States.

Mr. Raphael: And made a hell of a mess of it, too.

Mr. SEWARD: He was reminded by the Premier that his figures were not comparable. Neither were the figures quoted by the member for North-East Fremantle to-night, because while he declared the rates of interest on some of our loans were high—and in that I join with him; it would be a good thing if we could get it down—he made the unfortunate mistake of comparing interest on loans recently floated with interest rates we are paying on loans floated when rates were considerably higher than they are to-day.

Mr. Tonkin: Surely I am entitled to do that.

Mr. SEWARD: It is well known that interest is only the value of money. If a person wants money he has to buy it, just as he has to buy anything else he might want. If the hon. member had been able to use his influence a few years ago to restrain the mad competition between the States and the Commonwealth for money at increasing rates of interest for successive loans, he might have achieved something in the way of getting those rates within reasonable limits. We all know that when some of the loans which are now carrying high interest rates were floated, there was a mad competition between the Commonwealth and all the States to obtain money. In every successive loan floated, a little better inducement was offered to the investor than in the one before. This inducement took the form of a rate of interest higher by one-quarter or even one-eighth per cent., or it was issued free of taxation, or some other concession was offered. If anybody at that time had money invested that was returning a lower rate of interest and he could get his money out, he naturally took it out and put it into the loan which offered him more attractive rates. That is the reason why some of the loans are bearing high rates of interest. To compare those rates with the rates ruling at

present, however, is absolutely ridiculous. The member for North-East Fremantle did not tell us how we were to bring about a reduction of the high rates of interest.

Mr. Tonkin: I think I did.

Mr. SEWARD: Apparently the hon. member was speaking from the point of view of the borrower and not the lender. I could readily imagine the hon. member's anger if he were told that some of his investments, instead of bearing the rate of interest for which he had contracted when he lent the money, were to have the interest rate cut down and that he would have to be content with a smaller return. Unfortunately in one respect the reputations of the financial institutions have to be considered. If they make a contract with a customer to pay him a certain rate of interest, they feel bound to live up to the contract. There was another matter in regard to which the hon. member was considerably astray. He directed attention to the fact that the State was paying a high rate of interest, five per cent. on a loan maturing in 1975, and said that we would have to continue to pay that high rate until 1975. The hon. member gave us only half the statement. He did not say that the loan could be redeemed in 1945 or 1975. The earliest date of maturity is 1945, and the latest date at which it may be redeemed is 1975. That loan could be redeemed 30 years earlier than the year he quoted. Further, the hon. member did not inform us that the loan was floated in 1927 when interest rates were considerably higher than those ruling at present. A statement was also made, by him I think, about the rate of interest paid on English and Australian loans. Naturally the rates differ. English banking conditions are not the same as Australian banking conditions.

Mr. Tonkin: But money is the same whether you borrow it in England or in Australia.

Mr. SEWARD: It is not the same unless the same conditions apply. In England the banks get money on better conditions and therefore can lend it on better conditions. Another important consideration is the security offered for the money lent. We in Australia have a huge floating debt at the present time. The floating debt financed by Treasury bills has assumed enormous proportions, and the larger such debt is, correspondingly higher will be the interest

rate to anyone lending money to the Governments. The obvious remedy to get interest rates down—and I hope it will be possible to get them down—is to restrain our borrowing as much as possible and redeem some of our floating debt, thus getting it on to a more satisfactory level from the viewpoint of the lender. There are one or two matters I wish to bring forward to-night, because I shall not have an opportunity to speak on the Estimates later. While I sincerely hope that the restrained optimism of the Premier will be justified this year, and that he will be able to keep the deficit as low as he anticipates—I even wish that he could end the year with a surplus—I am constrained to bring under notice a matter that may entail the expenditure of some money. Even though it does entail expenditure, it is a work that I am satisfied will be reproductive and will pay the interest, if not the sinking fund charges, attached to it. The work is not a new one; it has been mentioned in this Chamber over a considerable time. It is the question of providing a water supply for the township of Pingelly. As I said, the matter has been mentioned here before, but I hope that this will be the last occasion on which I shall have to bring it to the attention of members. Unfortunately, the water scheme that the Pingelly residents have had to put up with is getting worse every year. It has reached a state when it is not fit for either human or stock consumption. The latest test made shows that it contains 840 grains of salt to the gallon. It cannot be used for gardens or anything else. All our attempts to influence the Government to put in a new scheme have so far been resultless. It is not that a scheme is not available. Engineers have been to the district and have found that a scheme could be constructed to give the town an excellent supply of the best water. It would be provided from a rock catchment area. The difficulties under which the people of Pingelly are labouring are not usual; they are exceptional by reason of the fact that there is no holding ground anywhere in the vicinity of the town. The Great Southern is not an area where dams can be used, and it becomes necessary for any scheme to be capable of storing sufficient water to tide the residents over, say, five months of the summer. An excellent catchment would be provided by two rocks, which only require a concrete wall from one to the other to give a

dam sufficiently large to supply the requirements of the district.

Mr. Wansbrough: What distance would those rocks be from the town?

Mr. SEWARD: They are 12 miles out. The engineers estimate the cost of the scheme at £36,000. While that might represent the limit or slightly more than the limit of the town's requirements at present, I am confident that, with the increased consumption and the higher rate that would be paid—the people are paying only 1s. 6d. at present and the rate would be increased to 3s.—the increased revenue would be sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund. If the people could get good water, they would be prepared to pay the higher rate. I wish to urge this matter strongly to the Government, because I am quite sure that conditions in that area are becoming rather desperate. I am afraid that the people will not tolerate the present water supply much longer. I fear also that some of the advisers of the Ministers are not sufficiently au fait with the conditions prevailing at Pingelly. I have been led to this conclusion by the fact that, when they refused to put in a scheme, they said the people would have to depend on roof catchments for their water supplies. Members can imagine what the position would be in a town like Pingelly if we had to rely on roof catchments. A lot of stock come in for the sales every month; we are trucking stock to the markets every week; horses are coming in with their loads, for a great many horses are used in that district still, and for general stock purposes an enormous quantity of water is required, and the quantity could not possibly be obtained from roof catchments. A scheme is required, and until it is provided the town of Pingelly and the district must be retarded in their progress. I appeal to the Minister in charge to give early consideration to the matter, and I do hope that this is the last occasion on which it will need to be mentioned in this Chamber. Another matter to which I wish to make reference is one that arose only within the last few days. Yesterday the Minister for Lands was good enough to reply to questions of mine by giving information that the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank had recently paid a visit to the Lakes Camm, Varley and King district, although that information was a little forestalled by the report published in the "West Australian" that morning to the same effect. About

May last, after a considerable amount of urging on the part of the member for Wagin and myself, the Minister for Lands paid a visit to that area. He was so impressed that he told the settlers he would ask the Agricultural Bank commissioners to visit the areas with a view to formulating some policy for their better development. When the information was given to the settlers, I got into touch with the Agricultural Bank commissioners, and offered to make arrangements with the settlers whereby the commissioners would be enabled to see as many of them as possible in as short a time as possible. I asked that a week's notice should be given to me so that I could get into touch with the settlers, seeing that there is only one mail a week to them. In spite of all these negotiations, the first intimation I had that the commissioners were visiting the areas concerned was on last Friday morning when I received a message from Muntadjin. I do not know whether the chairman of the commissioners has a property there, but the message from Muntadjin was that the commissioners themselves were there and were on their way back to Perth. That rather disappointed me. I got into touch with the various districts concerned. To-day one of the settlers happened to be in Perth. I ascertained from him that the commissioners did not notify the settlers that they were passing through the district, and gave them no chance of meeting them. The commissioners certainly visited one or two places, but hurried through and returned to Perth. It is not within my province to object to the manner in which these officials carry out their visits of inspection, but in view of the fact that I had offered to get the necessary information for them, and arrange the various meetings with the settlers, I cannot help feeling I should have been informed about it. If they did not intend to meet the settlers, they should not have encouraged them to believe that they were going to meet them. Actually the settlers had gathered together at 9 o'clock in the morning. According to information in my possession, as soon as the commissioners saw the settlers gathered at their meeting place, they dodged the meeting by taking a by-road. These settlers have had a very hard task since they set out to develop properties that

were from 40 to 50 miles from a railway. It is not fair that they should have been treated in this fashion. They have been building on this visit for the last couple of years. They wished to put before the authorities the requirements of their district in the matter of transport, and in other directions, but the commissioners rushed through without seeing them. I also got into touch with one of the road boards concerned. That local authority went to considerable trouble in getting information concerning roads and the type of road suitable, but the commissioners did not bother to call at the town. The settlers accordingly had to return to their properties, and missed the opportunity of coming personally into contact with the commissioners. I realise that the proper official to make a report is Mr. Mitchell, who has put in a very good report, which appeared in this morning's paper. I think that report will put a lot of heart into the settlers. If the commissioners intended to rush through the country like that, I cannot see why they went there at all. They are not such experts on the classification of land that they can furnish a more comprehensive report than can be put in by an expert like Mr. Mitchell. On behalf of the settlers, I protest against the commissioners tearing through the country as they did, without giving settlers an opportunity to voice their hopes and aspirations, which would have been of such wonderful help to the commissioners. Official reports go through so many channels they may become mutilated in transit. The settlers have the idea that the commissioners did not want to be bothered with them. It would have put them in a very much better frame of mind to carry on their work had they been given an opportunity to meet the commissioners.

Mr. Thorn: According to the Press they went turkey shooting, and lost themselves.

Mr. SEWARD: The member for Wagin may have some information about that. I do not think they got lost on this occasion, and I am pleased they arrived safely back again.

Mr. Thorn: Last night's "Daily News" said they were lost.

Mr. SEWARD: They did not get lost at the time when they dodged that meeting of settlers. I now wish to refer once more

to a question I have brought up before, namely, the erection of a suitable laboratory for our very competent agricultural staff. These officers are doing invaluable work for the State, investigating all kinds of diseases, and carrying out experiments in connection with the treatment of pastures. They are entitled to every encouragement we can give them. We know that the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, which has money available, and also possesses a staff of experts, has stated that they are unable to assist the State to the full because of the poor laboratory accommodation we have. Until we can provide more up-to-date laboratory accommodation, we shall have to do without their valuable assistance.

Mr. Marshall: Where is the present laboratory?

Mr. SEWARD: It is in the Agricultural Department, which is housed in a wooden building. It is an awful thing.

Mr. Marshall: They call that a laboratory?

Mr. SEWARD: If members were to see the difficulties under which the officers of the Agricultural Department are working, they would realise it was time we provided them with decent premises in which to do their work under proper conditions. A laboratory would be of no use in the Agricultural Department itself. The experts should be stationed where they can keep stock themselves and have plenty of room in which to make experiments. I appeal to the Minister to take this matter up with the Government. Some two years have elapsed since I led a deputation to his predecessor. I also referred the matter to him subsequently. I suppose Cabinet is considering it. I also referred to the matter on the Address-in-reply. I appeal to the Minister to take it up with the Government, as I am sure he has every intention of doing. I hope his efforts will be successful, and that in the near future a definite promise will be given that a laboratory will be erected. Such an establishment should be erected outside the bounds of the city, where the experts could carry out the work for which they are thoroughly competent and for which they have been trained. It would be of the utmost value to agriculture. Anything we can do to cope with the various pests that attack the agricultural in-

dustry and promote the more intensive growing of pastures will be of great assistance to those engaged in cultivating our broad acres. I trust that the requests I have mentioned will receive the consideration of those who are responsible, and that this will be the last occasion on which these matters will have to be brought up in this Chamber.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 9.28 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 1st October, 1935.*

	PAGE
Questions: Public buildings, cost of alterations, etc.	914
Agricultural Bank, retirement of officers	915
Bills: Rural Relief Fund, 2r.	915
Plant Diseases Act Amendment, Assembly's	
Message	924
Builders' Registration, 2r.	925
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 2r.	928
Reduction of Rents Act Continuance, 2r.	932
Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, 2r.	934
Motion: Trans Australian Railway, Kalgoorlie-Fremantle section	931

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

### QUESTION—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

*Cost of Alterations, etc.*

Hon. H. J. YELLAND (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What is the cost to date of alterations, renovations, painting, etc., to the following buildings—(a) The block comprising the Public Works Department, Water Supply Department, and adjacent building; (b) The Agricultural Bank? 2, Were the amounts found from revenue, or from loan funds?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) £1,772; (b) £1,870. 2, With respect to (a)—from Loan funds; with respect to (b)—from Agricultural Bank funds. Note: The above figures refer only to the recent alterations, etc., to these buildings.