

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—COLLIE COAL INDUSTRY.

McVee Findings.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: What is the approximate price increase, per ton, of local coal to the Railway Department due to the recent findings of Industrial Commissioner McVee on the recent Collie coal industry dispute?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Twopence.

QUESTION—EDUCATION.

Senior Technical School, Admittance.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Education: Is the Senior Technical School, including accountancy and trade classes, open to all sections and not limited to apprentices? If not, will he, in view of the difficulties faced by many lads and others to acquire knowledge that will enable a living to be secured, make the necessary arrangements whereby, subject to payment of the customary fees, all who desire may be admitted as students?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied: Yes, except to classes provided for registered trade apprentices. In certain other classes preference is given to applicants in occupations to which the instruction given has relation.

QUESTION—CITRICULTURIST.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Having in view the increased planting of citrus throughout the State, and the fact that there are now probably between 600 and 750 growers of citrus concerned, does he propose to appoint a citriculturist in order that producers may be assisted with dependable advice?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: In view of the advice already available to citrus growers, the appointment suggested is not warranted.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. F. J. S. Wise) on the ground of urgent public business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

MR. WILSON (Collie) [4.34]: In common with other members, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the Speakership of this House and I trust that you will occupy the position for a long time. I wish also to extend a welcome to the new members for Sussex (Mr. Willmott) and for Hannans (Mr. Leahy). They will, I am sure, be valuable additions to the House. With you Mr. Speaker and other members, I was present in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. I was disappointed that more was not said of the intentions of the Government for the future; yet I am not so much concerned with promises as with what the Government has already done and hopes to be able to continue to do. The Minister for Employment and his officers are to be congratulated upon the steady and gradual reduction in unemployment. They have not yet reached the peak of their efforts in this direction, or at least I hope not, and I trust that in the next two or three months we shall find most of the unemployed men, and especially those that are married, in full-time employment.

No reference was made in the Speech to the situation at Collie. Members had to wait for the Address-in-reply debate to hear all about that matter. It will be remembered that last year I took the opportunity to move the following motion:—

That in the opinion of this House an expert Royal Commissioner should be immediately appointed to inquire into the following:—

(a) Nationalisation of the coal mining industry;

- (b) the establishment of a national power scheme at Collie;
- (c) the practicability of both of the above schemes; and
- (d) the estimated cost.

That motion was carried by a large majority, but so far nothing has been done to give effect to the wishes of the House though I have been prodded by my constituents to ascertain what has taken place. It is a peculiar thing that the policy speech of the National Party Leader appeared in the "West Australian" newspaper on the same day as that on which we listened to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. I want to tell the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that I agree with many of the ideas propounded in that policy speech, and I compliment him on his changed attitude in certain directions. Last year the hon. member voted against my motion for the nationalisation of the coal-mining industry and the establishment of a national power scheme at Collie. Now that is one of the planks of the National Party platform. If my advocacy had anything to do with his conversion I am delighted. In his policy speech Mr. McDonald said—

The National Party would explore the possibility of extensions of electricity for power and light to country areas, particularly in the South-West and the Great Southern, and would examine the suitability of Collie for the production of the necessary power. The question of generating power at Collie and its distribution was considered many years ago and was not then recommended. The situation has now undergone a change both from the point of view of electrical knowledge and practice and as regards the development of industrial activities of the South-West and Great Southern. The National Party regards cheap electricity as a valuable feature of the development of the State, and will press for any practicable scheme for the extension of electrical power for the farming areas.

I trust that the Leader of the National Party will do all in his power to help me to bring this scheme to fruition.

I now come to the big question of the Collie coal industry, and I wish to take exception to the remarks of some members who think that there is collusion between the coal companies and the coal miners, and that those two parties pilfer from the Government by getting an exorbitant price for local coal. During the last 10 years the employers, and the buyers of local coal, have

met together from time to time for the purpose of conferring as to the price to be paid for coal and, incidentally, to wages. The Government of the day brought over a man from the Eastern States in the person of Dr. Herman, and he made an exhaustive inquiry into the Collie coal enterprise, and found that the men were getting too much money. Then we had Judge Davidson from New South Wales over here to make a formula which would tell the coal companies and the Government of the day how much should be paid for coal. I do not object to the Davidson formula otherwise than to this extent, that the coal companies and the railways alone are the parties who under that formula, would fix the price of coal and incidentally the wages of the coal miners. I notice that in the negotiation under the formula a part was taken by the manager of a certain railway which never used Collie coal. The manager of that company was consulted on the question. I refer to the late Mr. Poynton, who never bought a pennyworth of Collie coal. This fact shows that the arrangement must have been built up on false premises. I inquired of the Minister for Railways the names of all the bodies that took part in the negotiations that led to the decisions which are now known in the coal industry of Western Australia as the Davidson award, and also the names of all the parties who are now governed by that award. The reply to each question was—Amalgamated Collieries of Western Australia, Ltd., and the Commissioner of Railways. I was surprised to learn from the Press that Mr. Poynton had been called in to assist. The miners were not called in at all. They had nothing to do with it. Representatives from the coal companies and the Railway Department seemed to me to have met in conference before the Walsh award was made about 1930.

That was one of the means which brought about—shall I say?—the stealing from the miners of a right they had enjoyed for over 40 years. The system has existed in coal mining since time immemorial. In Newcastle we had the sliding scale 50 years ago. When I came to Collie, in 1904, the sliding scale had been in existence there for only 10 years. However, within the last four or five years the sliding scale was taken away from the Collie miners. The sliding scale provided that as Newcastle coal increased in value

Collie coal should go up proportionately. However, the sliding scale was taken away from the coal miners, and a sliding scale was given to the goldminers, who never had a sliding scale until four or five years ago. Why this discrimination? At the present time the Davidson award is only a blot on the industry. In this House I asked certain questions having reference to the price of coal and the sliding scale. I wished to know the price per ton of imported coal to the Railway Department in the truck at Fremantle, 30th June, 1937, and 30th June, 1938, respectively. Here is the reply I got from the Minister—

30th June, 1937—large 38s. 2d., small nil;
30th June, 1938—large 41s. 8d., small 38s. 2d.

In June of this year the price of Newcastle coal was increased by 3s. 6d. per ton. I also inquired the price per ton of local coal to the Railway Department at the pit's mouth, Collie, on the 30th June, 1937, and on the 30th June, 1938, respectively. The Minister's reply was—

30th June, 1937—large 13s. 9.17d., small 9s. 6.21d.; 30th June, 1938—large 13s. 6.12d., small 9s. 4.70d.

This year, therefore, the price of Collie coal is 13s. 6d., approximately. The Newcastle miners received an increase of about 3s., and the Collie miners received nothing except a kick in the bucket. Would the wheat-growers stand down on the question of the parity of wheat and the price fixed on the same pro rata basis? I think, not.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We are not objecting to a fair price being paid.

Mr. WILSON: But the Leader of the Opposition made plenty of noise about the Collie miners receiving 2d. per ton extra as compared with last year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The question was whether the Government should, contrary to the law, override the decision of the Arbitration Court; and that was the only question.

Mr. WILSON: I am one who at one time broke an Arbitration Court award.

Mr. Thorn: You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

Mr. WILSON: But I am not. I remember it being said at the time that I should be arraigned before this House because I broke away from the award of the court.

However, that was an outrageous award, diabolical to the men.

Mr. Thorn: But you believe in industrial arbitration, do you not?

Mr. WILSON: The hon. member is asking too many questions now. I am at present engaged in stating what I know about the Collie trouble.

Mr. Marshall: They won't understand you. Don't worry about them.

Mr. WILSON: Never mind. I shall understand myself, and that is perhaps more than the hon. member does. The trouble at Collie came about from this source. About two years ago the Collie miners issued their citation for a better award. Something like two years ago the case came before the Arbitration Court; and Mr. President Dwyer in delivering the minutes in August 1936 made these remarks:—

As to the adjustment of rates for contract workers, it seems to me that the parties might well consider the advisableness of conferring, after the delivery of these minutes, with a view of coming to an agreement whereby they might be adjusted at regular periods either by agreement between the union and employers, or by remission to a special board of reference, where they could be dealt with expeditiously.

It will be noticed that Mr. President Dwyer suggested a board of reference. He was not too sanguine about what the award might do, but he suggested that the parties should confer. It is rather a peculiar thing to say, but the conditions in the coal mining industry vary so much. In some places there is a nice seam of coal, which gives no trouble at all. Then, in the near future, there is nothing but trouble, upsetting all prices and conditions laid down for the men under normal conditions. Mr. President Dwyer appreciated that fact and suggested to the company's representatives and to the union that a board should be appointed to deal with the matter, quite apart from the Arbitration Court, so that the industry might work smoothly. In accordance with that suggestion, a meeting was held in September, 1936. At that conference between representatives of the employers and the employees, the proposal to set up a special board was considered, and Mr. Carter, the advocate for the coal mining companies at Collie, Mr. Gill, and the mine managers would not agree to do anything in the matter. They would not accept the advice of the President, who had made the proposal

for the appointment of a board with the object of assisting the industry. Certainly the conference was held, but the employers refused to assist the President along those lines. The President issued his first award in October, 1936. I am sorry I have to go over all these details, but I have been forced into the position of being compelled to do so. I attended all the conferences that took place in an endeavour to effect a settlement of the issues, and I can assure the House that if any section deserves credit arising out of the various proceedings, it is the coal miners, because they acted quietly all along. For two years they endeavoured to secure redress, and members know what they got at the end of that period. Speaking to the minutes of the proposed award on August 26, 1936, Mr. President Dwyer said:—

As to the adjustment of rates for contract workers, it seems to me that the parties might well consider the advisableness of conferring after the delivery of these minutes with a view to coming to an agreement—

Before he made his award, and when dealing with the minutes, Mr. President Dwyer had asked the parties to meet with a view to settling matters, but without result, for the companies stood pat in a spirit of stubbornness. Continuing, the President said:—

—whereby they might be adjusted at regular periods, either by agreement between the union and the employers, or by remission to a special board of reference where they could be dealt with expeditiously. Considering the experience of the rates placed before the court in 1931—

I well remember the proceedings of 1931. It was then that the Collie miners lost the sliding scale, and they also suffered big reductions in other directions. Only an individual like myself, who had been in the forefront of the battles on behalf of the miners for half a century, could realise the position, and naturally I became annoyed to think that all the work I had effected in the course of those many years could be swept away, simply because the chairman of the board of reference held views different from mine. Then this is what the President said:—

Considering the experience of the rates placed before the court in 1931, when the matter was dealt with by an industrial board, and again in 1934, and again on this present occasion, it is obvious that one must expect alterations and changed conditions.

Members will see that the President agrees with me when I say that conditions change and alterations are necessary. For that reason he pointed out to the companies that it would be wiser if a board were appointed. To continue the President's remarks:—

Sometimes changes in earnings may be brought about by an alteration in the nature of the place where the work is done, or by the employment of special and different machinery, so that the experience of any six or 12 months period will differ from that of any succeeding six or 12 months period. This fact seems to point to the advisableness of a board, such as I have mentioned, who may deal with and adjust the rates at fixed and definite periods. This suggestion, however, would require an additional clause in the award and, except such a clause is arrived at by agreement, it would not be inserted in the present award at this late hour.

The award was signed on the 6th October, 1936. It would certainly seem that Mr. President Dwyer believed in the creation of a board to deal with these matters. He seemed to think that such a board would have provided something in the nature of a saving grace for the industry, but the companies did not agree with him. About the end of October I was requested by the Collie Coal Miners' Union to call upon Mr. President Dwyer, to urge upon him the necessity to convene a conference on the question of the appointment of a board. That conference was held but the companies objected once more to the appointment of the board. In the meantime, although the President had urged the creation of such a tribunal, there was an unfortunate—I use that word advisedly—stoppage of work on the part of the miners at Collie over the question of a setrider. But for that, the board might have been created. However, we had to return to Collie to endeavour to get the men to return to work. The other question had to stand aside until we were able to get the new development settled. We found that the men were stubborn, and it was two or three days before the difficulty was adjusted. In the meantime I had spoken to Mr. President Dwyer over the telephone, and asked him if he would go on with the conference regarding the board, but he refused to do so on the ground that the men had not taken his advice to return to work. In November, 1936, the union lodged an application for a supplementary award to cover the powers, functions and duties of the special board. In that

month, accompanied by the union executive, I interviewed the President of the Arbitration Court about the difficulties of the Colliie miners, and he then told us that the work of the court on the gold-fields would occupy his attention for five or six weeks, during the course of which he would not be able to take the union's application into consideration. We had to rest content with that, but in the meantime the chairman of the Amalgamated Collieries had sent a letter to the union saying that he was not agreeable to the appointment of a board. A copy of that letter was also sent to the President, and that ended the matter for some time. Now, there was a development that I wish to stress. On the 27th January, 1937, we again convened a meeting, and later saw Mr. President Dwyer. Those who attended that conference included, in addition to myself, Mr. Keating and Mr. Nash, of the Trades Hall, and Messrs. Vernon and Griffiths, of the Colliie Miners' Union. That interview with Mr. President Dwyer was just before he started on his long vacation, but he suggested that we should go ahead in our effort to submit our case to the Industrial Reference Board. The miners' representatives then asked who would be chairman of the board. The President said he presumed it would be the usual chairman, Mr. Walsh. The Colliie miners' representatives refused point blank to meet under the chairmanship of that officer. Mr. President Dwyer said that that difficulty might be overcome. He was trying to be helpful. At that time we thought we were getting along splendidly. I asked what the functions or powers of the board would be, and the President replied that they would be practically the same as those of the Arbitration Court, or words to that effect. To me his words seemed to indicate that the board would sit to deal with the application for which the miners had been fighting for months, and that the board would be able to exercise the same powers as the Arbitration Court. I left that meeting thinking that all was well. I believe that Mr. President Dwyer left on his trip, which he had earned full well, with the same thought in his head. In the meantime, the companies refused to appoint their representatives on the board, and it was two or three months before they finally did so. Mr. Wallwork, R.M., was appointed chairman. I take exception to a remark by the registrar, who said that the union wanted to nominate or pick its own

magistrate as chairman. That statement was not true. The names of Mr. Craig, Mr. Wallwork and Mr. Reid were submitted to the Acting President, Mr. Davies, who himself nominated Mr. Wallwork to act as chairman of the board. Then we come to the question of delays. Some time afterwards the union approached Mr. Davies, the Acting President, and asked him to try to get the board moving. The Acting President, however, told them they would have to wait probably the 12 months. The board was appointed on the 13th May, 1937, but it did not sit until November, seven months afterwards, when it began the hearing of the case. Then the report was made, and we know all about the Wallwork report, and what the court did with it. Mr. President Dwyer said, in regard to that report—

As regards the report of the board, it bears evidence of much painstaking inquiry, and even meticulous care and attention, and a very valuable summing up of the main points of the evidence on each side, all of which have saved this court a considerable amount of time and inconvenience.

Mr. Somerville knows the temperament of the Colliie miners as much as does any man in the State. He came from a coalmining district in New South Wales. In his report he said—

The report indicates that the board has done its job with unusual thoroughness. All the arguments for and against are marshalled, and the oral and documentary evidence is analysed with great care. Of course, if the reports contain suggestions which are obviously unjust, or likely to cause unrest instead of peace in industry, then it is the duty of the court to revise the industrial board's recommendations as it did in one case I could mention.

But nothing of this character can be urged against this exceptionally well-balanced and logical report. I therefore hold that the report should be adopted as a whole, even though the board has refused many applications to which the union attached great importance. My colleagues do not agree with this, and have departed from the report in a drastic way.

What the majority of the Arbitration Court did with that report is ancient history; the miners would not accept it afterwards. It left them practically where they were, and it allowed them no way of getting out of it. All that time we were trying to keep the men quiet. One wants to know something about the handling of a thousand miners to be aware of the persuasion that

is required to keep them pacified. Once they take the bit in their teeth, there is no holding them. We know the nature of their work, which is always below the surface and which, to say the least of it, is never pleasant. The union went to a firm of solicitors in Perth and asked that firm to interpret the meaning of Sections 168 to 170 of the Arbitration Act which deal with the appointment of a Commissioner. This was done prior to the miners taking any action to appeal to the Minister. Their desire was to know what their position was under Sections 168 to 170. If Section 170 has no significance, why is it in the Act? Next we come to what is known as the McVee award. If there is one man in the State who understands coalmining, it is James McVee, the inspector of mines, who was appointed Commissioner. His integrity has never been questioned, and he knows the business from A to Z. He was reared as a coalminer, and passed with credit all his examinations for inspectorship. Mr. McVee gave the matter his undivided attention, but what happened? His award was "booted out" in its entirety by a majority of the court. I should like to ask what is the purpose of that particular section in the Industrial Arbitration Act which provides for the appointment of a commissioner? It is all very well when everything is going along nicely, but contingencies do arise, and it is for such occasions that provision has to be made to meet them. That is why that section is in the Act. If something of the kind that was carried out by the Minister had not taken place, I assure the House there would have been a big industrial upheaval in the State. Members need make no mistake about that. The men had waited two years to get redress. They had been prevented from getting their just dues and only by plausible excuses. Eventually they got the increased money in their pay envelopes, but they were politely requested to hand the money back again. The talk of collusion between the companies and the men is so much balderdash. I have never known an instance in Collie where the companies have worked conjointly with the union. Some people say that the railways had nothing to do with the matter. I say that they had, and that the Commissioner of Railways has power that is not possessed by any other employer. His representative sits in the Arbitration Court and cross-questions the

miners. The companies are at the beck and call of the railways. Anyway, the question to-day is whether the miners are getting good wages. The miners themselves say they are not. If there is any person who deserves well of the country, it is the coalminer. From August, 1936, to August, 1938, the coalminers have kept remarkably quiet, and have rarely ceased work, even though the award issued by the President or a magistrate might have been unfair. I once broke an award, and I never forgot it. However, we got all our money back, and later on 1s. a day more. That was in 1905. When questioning the men, one of whom I put in the box, the judge interrupted the proceedings and said to me, "That will do, Mr. Wilson; I know what it costs a man to live." I said to the judge, "How much does it cost a man to live?" His reply was, "A single man 26s. or 28s. a week." "But," I continued, "what about a man with a wife and children?" His reply was, "I cannot take a man's wife and children into consideration in assessing an award." Then I told him that miners' wives were the most prolific getters of children, and if they were destroyed, the destroyers would have to appear before another court. The award of that court was a reduction of 1s. 6d., but we got our 1s. 6d. back, in nine days and a year later we got 1s. a day increase. The present case of the Collie miners is not to be compared with that one. In conclusion, I should like to say that I stand second to no man in my admiration of the President of our Arbitration Court, but, after all, a president is no more infallible than is an Arthur Wilson.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [5.10]: If the congratulations that have been extended to you, Mr. Speaker, have not by this time become monotonous I wish to add mine to those of members who have preceded me. I feel sure you will worthily uphold the traditions of your high office. I should like also to congratulate the Minister for Mines and Health on his elevation to Ministerial rank. We know that he has had wide experience of mining in this and the Eastern States, and that experience will be of great value to him when dealing with problems associated with the mining industry. He should also make an admirable Minister for Health, because of his long association with health matters in the State. I am convinced, in that direction, that he will be a worthy successor to

the late Mr. Munsie who always took a deep interest in questions affecting the health of the State. Whilst on the matter of public health, I might state that so far I have not made any request to the Minister, but I intend to do so now. I trust he will grant a bigger subsidy to the Fremantle Dental Institute. At the present time the amount of the subsidy allotted by the Government is £200 per annum and that has been given for two years, and has done considerable good. The institute was inaugurated by the school teachers of the West Province in order to deal with the teeth of children whose ages were between five and nine years. Now the work has extended to children up to 15 years of age and quite recently it has taken in the Salvation Army Home at Buckland Hill. By dealing with the children in this way the institute has relieved other clinics of a considerable amount of work, and therefore I trust the Minister will take that into consideration when the request is submitted to him for an increased subsidy. During last year the receipts did not equal the expenditure and consequently it will be a difficult matter for the clinic to carry on its good work. The Lotteries Commission has rendered valuable help. In the first place it provided money for furnishing the institute and the purchase of instruments, while last year the Commission gave a donation of £100. The local bodies have also contributed to some extent and that money has been supplemented by donations from the school teachers of the West Province. The whole of the work of the institute is carried out by a committee, a secretary and auditors, all working in an honorary capacity. I assure the Minister that if he gives favourable consideration to any request made for an increased subsidy of, say, £300 or £400, the money will be used to the best possible advantage. There is great need for an extension of the scope of the clinic. I believe other members have had experience similar to mine and are aware that a lot of people are on relief work or are on wages below the basic rate, that they have children over the age of 15 years, and that those children are not able to secure dental treatment in Fremantle, and if they need it they must go to the Perth Dental Hospital where they sometimes have to wait a considerable time. Thus, if more money were made available for the Fremantle institute, I have no doubt that the committee, now doing such good work, would extend the scope of the clinic's operations

and the Minister could rest assured that the money would be wisely and properly spent. I would like to give the House some figures showing what has been done by the clinic since it was inaugurated. The attendances for two years up to the 10th April have been 16,215: fillings 4,187; and extractions, close on 6,000. Members will therefore see that much good work is being done.

I regret that the boys' prospecting scheme fell through. It was performing a useful service. When it closed down, about ten youths were employed at Kalgoorlie. I know one of the supervisors and he told me the boys were very disappointed when the scheme was stopped. It is much better to have those young fellows doing something for themselves on the goldfields; it makes them self-reliant and they gain a wealth of experience. Some of them, as I have said, have succeeded in obtaining employment on the goldfields. I would like to see the scheme started again. If a motor runabout were supplied to the supervisor, the boys could prospect over a much larger area under his supervision and so have a better chance of success. A period of 12 months is rather short for a number of boys to find gold. At least that time is required to train them. A question has been raised as to whether sufficient boys could be found to take up prospecting. If the scheme were re-started, I would undertake to get 20 boys at once. I have had no difficulty in finding boys in the Fremantle district who are prepared to take up this prospecting work. Some of them made applications, but when they arrived there they were told they would be included in the next batch to be sent out. One young man who went up waited for eight months before taking part in the scheme.

I am pleased the Government has raised the subsidy for prospectors to £1 per week. This will give numbers of single men in the metropolitan area an opportunity of securing employment. I consider that prospecting work is preferable to a part-time job under the Government. The Minister might also give some consideration to supplying these men with tents. A tent is a very useful part of their equipment, and of course the men find it very hard to provide themselves with all the equipment required to set out on a prospecting trip. I also trust the Minister will not be too hard on the inexperienced men. Numbers of men have not been able

to join a prospecting team because they cannot find a practical prospector to guide them. The Minister might let up a little on this point, because experienced miners on the goldfields are only too ready to give assistance to anybody in need.

Mr. Marshall: It is not a matter of assistance; they can get the advice they want.

Mr. FOX: That is the kind of assistance I mean. Dealing with unemployment, I am pleased to note that during the past two or three years the Government has effected a considerable improvement. There is, however, still much to do. While the Industrial Arbitration Act provides that a man, his wife and two children shall receive at least the basic wage, I feel that the people who are on Government relief work are not being fairly treated. They should receive at least the basic wage. In my opinion, the Government should plan work sufficiently far ahead so that when one job is about to be completed, the men will be available to take on another that is being started. Often the men have to wait for a week or two, or longer, before they can start on another job. The Government should plan a comprehensive policy of public works so that the difficulty I have mentioned will be overcome. We shall always have an unemployed problem while we live under our present conditions. The Government will always have to make provision for 5,000 or 6,000 unemployed.

Mr. Marshall: More.

Mr. FOX: I suppose the Government will. As the efficiency of machinery increases, the Government will have to make provision for the unemployed and it would be a good thing if the Government planned the work at least 12 months ahead in order to meet the position when it arises. While speaking on the subject of Government relief work, I suggest a good idea would be to place a number of unemployed men on land adjacent to the metropolitan area. I know this suggestion has been made in past years; it was made by the late Mr. McCallum. In the Bibra Lake district, adjacent to Fremantle, there is much land suitable for sub-division into two-acre blocks. Men who are standing down at any time could be placed on this land in order to cultivate it, and so supplement their income. They would be able to keep a cow and produce at least some of their requirements. At present, the district

is being kept back because of the lack of electric light and electric power. Recently, a deputation waited on the Fremantle Electric Lighting Board and requested that the service be extended to the district. If the deputation is not successful in having its request granted, I ask the Government to extend the service from Applecross near the pine plantation to Jandakot. That would give an impetus to settlement in the district. I might mention there is a large wool-scouring works in the district. The company now controlling it has done more work in the last five months than the previous company did in 12 months. The district is admirably suited for woollen mills, and I understand there is a possibility of a woollen mills being started there. The water in the district is peculiarly suitable for wool scouring; I am given to understand that the water has been analysed and found to be 99 per cent. pure, with one per cent. of colouring matter. If steps are taken by private enterprise to establish a mill in the district, I trust the Government will give all the assistance it possibly can to the establishment of the industry. It seems ridiculous that we should be sending nearly all our raw material out of the State to be manufactured, while we have such a large number of men unemployed. We send the raw material away in ships and it comes back to us in ships as manufactured articles, so that the shipping companies get the advantage both ways. Very often the manufactured articles come back to us not so pure as the raw material we exported. We have too few manufacturing industries in this State and we could very well do with some more.

Mr. Marshall: I am told that most of the products of the Albany Woollen Mills are exported to the Eastern States.

Mr. FOX: That may be so. On the subject of the housing scheme, I am pleased to note that the Housing Trust will soon be in a position to provide more houses. I understand the late Sir Chas. McNeill left a considerable amount of money that can be used for this purpose. The Government should make a liberal donation to the Housing Trust and that, in turn, could be supplemented by a generous donation from the Lotteries Commission. Many widows receiving relief from the Child Welfare Department—they receive 9s. per unit per week—have to expend it in rent, money that is badly needed for food and clothing. I would support some-

form of taxation, now that the Government has a fair sum of money in hand, that would provide sufficient to build homes for all the people now being supported by the Government. I think the public of Western Australia would willingly pay such a tax, provided they knew the money so raised would be used for that purpose.

I do not wish to say much about the farming industry, because many members have already spoken on that subject. They have mentioned the parlous condition of the people working on the land. I agree with the members who say that farmers are entitled to a fair standard of comfort, but they themselves must do a little organising. The seemingly good conditions that workers are enjoying under our Arbitration Court awards are the result of much organisation and hard fighting. When the machine age arrived, the workers had to organise, and many of the early pioneers suffered imprisonment and were transported because they strove to secure better conditions for themselves and their comrades. It is time the farmers realised that they will not better their present condition if they continue with their present policy.

Mr. Marshall: Or with their party.

Mr. FOX: Yes. I think the best thing the farmers can do is to join the Labour Party, so that we can assist them to get better conditions for themselves.

Member: They have associated too much with the exploiters.

Mr. FOX: Many of their descendants are associated with our party to-day.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The sins of the fathers are being visited upon the children!

Mr. FOX: Some plan must be evolved to better the condition of the farmers. We have a few prolific seasons, when there is a large carry-over; then there is a slump and the farmers leave the land. When production is low and crops are small, the farmer gets a better price. The next year he has bigger crops and a lower price, and so the cycle goes on. We have only to look back to the years from 1928 to 1930—and the farmers know this better than I do—when wheat production reached 50,000,000 bushels. Then it came down to 21,000,000 bushels. If the price of wheat is low this year, there will be a slump next year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Tell me what the remedy is.

Mr. FOX: I told the Leader of the Opposition before that the farmer must do something for himself. We should use a little common sense. Great inventions and discoveries do not seem so far to have greatly benefited the farmer. If it is desired to achieve the economic salvation of the farmer, we must look to somebody other than bankers.

Mr. Marshall: You certainly must.

Mr. FOX: My opinion is that we should use a little common sense. The farmers should come over to our side so that we might help them to organise control, distribution and exchange, otherwise they will get nowhere.

Mr. Warner: You will have a good opportunity of helping the farmers by supporting a home price for wheat.

Mr. FOX: As regards the Collic coal trouble, I am quite satisfied with the action taken by the Minister for Employment. I am not much concerned with the legal points raised by the legal luminaries on the Opposition side of the House. The Industrial Arbitration Act was designed principally to prevent and settle industrial disputes. The Minister did the right thing when he took the steps he did, leaving out altogether the legal aspect.

Mr. McDonald: Say no more.

Mr. FOX: The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) waxed eloquent concerning the sanctity of awards and agreements. I know from long experience that men, like the Collic coalminers, who are living a hand-to-mouth existence, do not care much about the sanctity of awards and agreements.

Mr. Doney: That is a nice thing to say.

Mr. FOX: If the hon. member were in the position of the miners, he also would care very little about the sanctity of awards and agreements.

Mr. Watts: Of what use is it to have awards and agreements?

Mr. FOX: We have some very good precedents. If in times gone by brave men had not on occasions broken the law, we would not have advanced as far as we have done to-day. What about Magna Charta? The House of Commons was born in sedition. What about John Hampden, to whom there is a statue in London representing the bravest leader of the Parliamentary institution? We need not go outside Australia for an example in Peter Lalor of Ballarat.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Those people were not breaking the law.

Mr. FOX: They all rebelled against the law. I am pleased the Minister took the steps he did and prevented the trouble from spreading. It was the correct thing to do. When an industrial dispute occurs we do not expect the rank and file of the unions to have the legal knowledge of the members for West Perth, Nedlands or East Perth. It is the province of the Minister to settle industrial disputes as quickly and effectively as possible.

Mr. Marshall: To prevent them above all things.

Mr. FOX: I notice in the report of the Education Department a reference to school grounds. It says—

The present condition of many of the metropolitan grounds must be regarded as unsatisfactory and in some cases dangerous. The use of gravel for grounds with a pronounced slope cannot be recommended either on the score of efficiency or economy. With every heavy downpour gutters are worn and much of the material is carried by storm water into the streets.

I believe the gentleman who wrote that paragraph must have been standing in the Beaconsfield schoolyard, for that is exactly what has happened there.

Mr. Marshall: Or in some of the schoolyards on the Murchison.

Mr. FOX: I pointed out to a Minister of the Crown the dangerous condition into which that school ground had fallen. A number of accidents have occurred there in the last seven or eight months. A few days ago a little girl fell over a stone and broke her leg. One of the teachers also fell over a stone and injured her ankle. Several black eyes have been caused by children falling over stones, apart from a number of minor accidents.

Mr. Marshall: I got a black eye at school, but it was not caused by falling over a stone.

Mr. FOX: I trust the Minister will give consideration to this particular schoolyard, which has been in a bad condition for a long time. When the rain comes everything is washed into the streets, and the yard falls into a bad state. The report of the Education Department also speaks of the beautiful condition of some of the schoolyards. It says:—

In country schools where the wear and tear are not so pronounced the use of gravel will

still prove most suitable. There are great differences to be observed in school grounds. Some are models, not only of beauty in arrangement of trees, seating accommodation and lawns, while others are the reverse. In the case of the former the head teachers have secured the willing co-operation of parents themselves and of the Parents and Citizens' Association. Their activities show their keen interest in the welfare of their children and of the school as an integral part of the community. The civic authorities also show keenness in this respect, and have done much useful work in assisting in laying out grounds and giving advice when required.

I also wish to thank the civic authorities for a lot of work that has been done in South Fremantle. I would stress the necessity for water supplies being provided at some of the schools outside Fremantle. In one or two cases the only water supply available is contained in a couple of tanks, which are in a bad state of repair. To get water at those places it is necessary to sink only about 50 feet. There is a lot of loose sand around the Bibra Lake school, but because of the lack of water, the children are unable to make a garden. I believe that £50 would pay the cost of sinking a well and erecting a windmill. The parents and citizen's association would be quite willing to co-operate and to do a lot of the work.

It is time the Government gave consideration to the question of a shorter working week. Something could be done to initiate that throughout Australia. When we see what is being done in other parts of the world I confess we in this State are lagging behind.

Mr. Thorn: One section cannot have it without another.

Mr. FOX: I realise that a shorter working week cannot be given to an industry that may be in competition with another industry in the Eastern States. There should be co-operation between all the States with the object of bringing the shorter working week into general operation. Two or three years ago an inquiry was held into this matter in Victoria, a most conservative State. The conclusion arrived at there was that Victoria would be prepared to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government if it was desired to bring in the shorter working week. If the Government of Western Australia were to communicate with the Premier of Victoria, and the matter were discussed, something might be done to bring about the shorter working week. The shorter

working week operates in many industries in Great Britain, and in Canada, France, New Zealand and the United States. There is no reason why we should lag behind the rest of the world. I trust the Government will give consideration to this question in the near future.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.37]: I propose to address myself to two or three items, which I feel will not be regarded either as parochial or of a party nature. For once I think I shall be able to claim the attention of all parties. I was very interested in the remarks of the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) concerning the giving of assistance to wheatgrowers. The three stable industries of this State are goldmining, woolgrowing and wheatgrowing. Because of low prices the wheatgrowing industry is causing grave concern. On a previous occasion I ventured to express the opinion that the industry should be reviewed, and that, wherever men were growing wheat alone, some arrangement should if possible be made to convert their holdings to mixed farming propositions—wheat and sheep. During the last few months the price of wheat has fallen greatly. These periodical falls occur and there are comparatively brief periods of good prices. The time has arrived when the whole of Australia should assist the industry and endeavour to place it upon a more stable basis. On the 1st November last the price of wheat was 4s. 3¾d. per bushel, whereas on the 15th July of this year the price had dropped to 2s. 11d.

Mr. Wilson: It is now 2s. 4d.

Mr. CROSS: Anyone with knowledge and common sense must realise that to give to the wheatgrowers the amount of assistance necessary to place the industry on a sound basis, would be more than this State could afford. Nothing less than a guaranteed price of 3s. 6d. per bushel would be of any use, if we are to expect men on the land to make a living out of growing wheat. I do not think wheat can be produced at a figure lower than that. The fixing of a home consumption price is not the only remedy. It may be a partial remedy, but can be of use only if it is applied on an Australia-wide basis. For years past Western Australia has paid an enormous toll to Queensland per medium of the price charged for sugar. This amounts to hundreds of thousands of pounds per annum.

Mr. Patriek: An effort is being made to work the same joke with cotton today.

Mr. CROSS: Yes. The whole of the people of Australia should assist in placing the wheatgrowing industry on a sound basis. The wealthy manufacturers in the Eastern States, who are heavily protected, should also help to maintain the industry throughout Australia.

Mr. Doney: How can that be done?

Mr. CROSS: I believe it can be done by fixing a home consumption price, together with a bounty. A long view should be taken of the matter by the Commonwealth and State Governments. It would be easy to form a pool, but no opportunity should be given to the farmers to gamble on the price of wheat.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You have been reading Fitzhardinge's pamphlet.

Mr. CROSS: No.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You are quoting him word for word.

Mr. CROSS: I have yet to learn that the gentleman in question has said anything about a wheat pool. If the wheatgrowers received assistance from the people of Australia when prices were low, then when prices rose above a certain figure some of the money should go back to the Commonwealth for having assisted the industry in bad times. If the farmers had a guaranteed minimum price all the time they would be better off than they are at present. What is needed is a Commonwealth pool so that all the wheat may be sold by the nation in the interests of the whole of the people.

Mr. Thorn: That is a national speech.

Mr. CROSS: There is one industry that the State Government could well assist, namely, the egg-producing industry. The egg producers are in a position similar to that of the wheatgrowers, excepting that in some respects it is worse. I have seen dockets showing that though eggs forwarded to the Perth market were of similar grade, they were sold at several different prices.

Mr. Thorn: On the same day?

Mr. CROSS: Yes.

Mr. Warner: Were they of the same age?

Mr. CROSS: Yes; all the eggs had the date stamped on them. In my opinion a board should be appointed to control the egg industry in the interests of the producers. I hope that, although the Speech makes no reference to this industry, some-

thing will be done by the Government this session to afford assistance.

I was interested to hear the answer given to the question asked by the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) regarding the move by the film interests to increase admission prices to picture shows, particularly in the suburban areas. During the last few months, even in the city, there has been an upward trend of admission prices. The city interests contend that their business has declined because of the introduction of six-penny picture nights in the suburbs.

Mr. Patrick: Yet they can afford to spend £40,000 on altering one picture theatre.

Mr. CROSS: Yes. I propose to read a brief extract from the "Exhibitors' Monthly" to show that, as a result of the introduction of cheap picture nights, the suburban exhibitors reaped the benefit. When American picture exhibitors endeavoured to prevent Western Australian theatres from getting their films, I took some hand in the matter. Incidentally, a repetition of that action is again threatened. If necessary, I shall support the Government in any effort to retain cheap film supplies for the people.

Mr. Thorn: The member for Subiaco was the first to raise this question.

Mr. CROSS: I had mentioned it long before. The "Exhibitors' Monthly" for June states—

This month's W.A. notes show that Perth suburban exhibitors take a different view, being loath to close a famous chapter of Australian picture business for the depression years, because the concession-night business in the West was well conceived and organised, and kept many a theatre owner solvent. The gift and other practices rampant elsewhere in Australia and abroad never sullied the showmanship reputation of the Westralians, who weathered the worst by this method instead. One thing is certain: they've established a precedent in survival over hard times which will probably come in for a lot of attention when Old Man Depression creeps around the corner to put on his next heavy act.

I wish to warn the exhibitors, because an attempt is about to be made to increase the picture charges by over 100 per cent. This move is being engineered from the city, and city interests are seeking the assistance of American picture interests in order to attain their objective. I am of opinion that if admission prices are increased, the people who have patronised the theatres on the nights of cheap pictures will take definite steps, and the loss of business will be such

that the picture interests will regret their action.

I was pleased to note in the Speech a reference to the Government's intention to amend the Workers' Homes Act. It is high time that legislation was amended. The law at present is not in the form in which it was first introduced. Assistance granted under the Act is confined to those people in receipt of an income not exceeding £400 a year. When workers' homes legislation was originally introduced, the board was given independent borrowing powers, but 12 months later those powers were taken away. Independent borrowing powers should be restored to the board. At present there is an acute shortage, particularly in the greater-metropolitan area, of what I term cheap houses—those that can be rented by the lower-income families for 10s. to 17s. or 18s. a week. Other metropolitan members must have daily experiences similar to my own. The poorer people are confronted with gradual increases of rent, and it is almost impossible to get a house anywhere in the metropolitan area for less than £1 a week. Thousands of families cannot afford to pay so much for rent. The Government should undertake a five-year plan of house construction to make good the shortage of homes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Government has had a plan for a long time and has been carrying it out.

Mr. CROSS: Workers' homes are being built all the time, but not in nearly sufficiently large numbers. The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that, particularly in the greater-metropolitan area, there has been a tendency for road boards to prevent the erection of cheap wooden houses, notwithstanding that they might be good houses. That is detrimental to the provision of cheap homes, and detrimental also to the timber industry of the State. If the Act were amended to give the Workers' Homes Board independent borrowing powers, I believe that sufficient money could be raised by the sale of debentures and by borrowing backed by the Government to build enough houses to meet the existing demand. This is one of the greatest problems facing Parliament at the present time. The shortage of houses is not confined to the metropolitan area. Similar conditions prevail in Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, and other country towns.

The construction of wooden houses is permitted at Katanning. Quite a number of workers' homes have been built there in the last few years. The member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) must have been extraordinarily active to get so many homes built for the poorer people in his electorate. I have the interests of the poorer sections of the community at heart. The problem could be tackled successfully. Our duty is to solve it and provide the cheap houses required.

Many advantages would accrue from the inauguration of a set plan to build a few thousand houses. Work could be provided for some of the young men that have never had a chance to learn a trade. Vocational schools could be set up to teach them trades while the houses were being built.

Mr. Sampson: Would you allow it?

Mr. CROSS: That would be far better than having our young men idly walking the streets, as they are doing at present.

Mr. Sampson: It is a good idea.

Mr. CROSS: Other advantages are that it would relieve the rent problem, would assist almost every trade, and would provide comfort and happiness for a considerable section of the people. I am reminded of one section particularly that such a policy would materially assist. I dare say my remarks will offend the Minister for Employment, but I cannot worry about that.

The Minister for Employment: I promise not to get upset, but to remain calm.

Mr. CROSS: A comparatively large number of families are in the unfortunate position of having to rely upon assistance granted by the Child Welfare Department. I propose to give some examples of the assistance given by this parsimonious department. I was informed recently that the department had been considerably more generous during the last year or two, because the Minister desired it to be as generous as possible. I propose to explain just how generous the department has been. My remarks do not apply to one Government more than another; all parties have been equally to blame, and it is time that some improvement was made. On Monday I was informed of a sick woman having three children to support; she was on the Child Welfare Department, which was paying her the sum of 28s. a week. The woman pays 10s. a week rent for a hovel, leaving the princely sum of 4s. 6d. per unit to provide food, clothing,

firewood and other necessities of life. Under the existing policy the officials of the department, who knew all the facts, could have granted her 9s. instead of 7s. per unit. As soon as I made representations to the department, the officials promptly raised the amount by 2s. per unit.

Mr. Thorn: Of course they would do so, seeing that you made the representations.

Mr. CROSS: It should not be necessary for a member of Parliament to have to chase up practically every case to the department in order to get the people what they are justly entitled to receive, especially when the department has a scheme of inspection under which full information is obtainable. That is only one case.

Mr. North: The department does not as a rule spend the vote.

Mr. CROSS: I will deal with that in a moment. I will refer now to another case, for which I could not obtain an increase. The man to whom I refer is a cripple who receives an invalid pension and who has a wife and three children. In State relief that family receives 31s., to which is added the £1 a week invalid pension. The total on which the family of five has to live and pay rent is thus £2 11s. They are getting the maximum. That man could not receive any more because in making the payment to him the department takes into account the pension he receives. He should be attending the Perth Hospital but is unable to do so because he cannot afford to pay the fares. I know another man who is an invalid and who has a wife and four daughters. The ages of the children are respectively ten, eight, seven and four years. Those people do not pay rent. They own their shack, which is constructed of tin and is not lined. The four girls sleep in a room measuring ten feet by nine feet, and the building is a disgrace to the community. It must be very cold in winter and roasting hot in summer. The Child Welfare Department allows that family £1 1s. a week. To that is added the £1 a week that the man receives as a pension, and the total of 41s. a week has to keep them and provide firewood, light and everything else.

Member: What is everything else?

Mr. CROSS: All the other necessities of life. I propose to tell members something about the Child Welfare Department, which they can verify for themselves by referring to page 16 of the department's re-

port. In 1934-35, the department spent £83,640 on relief. It was more generous—so it says—in 1935-36, when the expenditure was reduced to £75,353! This year the amount was still further reduced to £72,320. This assistance was afforded to women on whom children were dependent and on outdoor relief for sick and infirm people. In the same period, however, administration costs increased from £12,871 to £15,505. Even the travelling allowances for the department rose from £1,193 in 1934-35 to £2,336 in 1936-37. Yet the number of children dependent on the department had not altered very much, not more than 100 additional children being cared for in the last three years as compared with the first year. That is how the generosity of the department has been displayed—in the cutting down of relief.

The Minister for Mines: Not all the cases are in the metropolitan area.

Mr. CROSS: No, they are not all in the metropolitan area. I am not speaking of the metropolitan area only, but am advocating the claims of all those not in a position to speak for themselves. No Government can take credit to itself for having reduced the expenditure for relief in a department such as the Child Welfare Department. The Government is able to assist boys coming from Great Britain, but the best migrants are those born here, and it is our duty to see that those of our own people, unfortunate enough to require the assistance of the State, are properly cared for and not kept on such short commons as at present. I know the Minister is considering a change, and I propose to make a suggestion as to the direction in which a change is desirable. Where the breadwinner of a family is an invalid, and his wife and children have accordingly to seek the assistance of the State, the pension received by the invalid should not be taken into account at all when relief is being dispensed. That pension is given to the invalid for his own use. When the department is about to afford relief to the wife and children of such a man, it should first of all allow a certain amount for a good mother, that is, a mother who has to stay at home and look after her children—she is the right person to do it, and does it better than anyone else could—and to such a woman an allowance should be made of 15s. a week. An allowance of from 5s. to 10s. a week for

rent should be made, and then 9s. should be provided for each other unit of the family. Who will say that a woman with three children would be receiving too much if she were provided for on such a scale? Does anybody contend that we are doing a fair thing by the widows of this State in giving a woman with three children 36s. a week as a maximum? The average amount left to people coming under the Child Welfare Department after they have paid the rent is 4s. 6d. a week per unit, or less than 1s. a day, and I would draw attention to the fact that the low unit cases are infinitely worse off than the large unit cases, because a woman with one child can obtain only 18s. a week while a woman with six children gets a maximum of £3 3s. Consider the case of a woman with two children who receives 27s. a week. She has to pay as much rent as the woman with six children and she has still to buy firewood and pay for light. There is no allowance for everyday items. No provision is made for her to buy medicine, or a pair of shoes, or clothes, or any of the hundred and one items that have to be bought. I hope all parties in this House will co-operate in seeking to obtain an improvement. That is all I have to say about the Child Welfare Department.

I have now to deal with another problem which, while affecting my electorate to some extent, is also of interest to many others. I refer to the traffic and transport arrangements on both sides of the river. That the Albany-road, because of its narrowness and length, is one of the most dangerous roads in the metropolitan area, cannot be disputed. That road carries an ever-increasing volume of vehicular traffic, and hundreds of bicycles. Motor vehicles are able to park on both sides of the road, and do so. There is a double tramline to Victoria Park, and vehicles cannot pass on the off-side of the trams. All traffic is consequently slowed down.

The Minister for Mines: There is not much harm in that.

Mr. CROSS: What is of importance is that more people have been killed on the Albany-road than on any four roads of a similar length in the metropolitan area. That is a problem that needs to be tackled, and it can be solved in a comparatively simple manner. There ought to be a by-pass road, so that traffic could go around Victoria Park instead of through it. The problem is easier

of solution than most people think. It is time a review of the transport arrangements on the other side of the river was made. In this connection I have a map that will demonstrate how simply the problem may be solved. The Perth City Council has constructed a road as a continuation of Berwick-street, Victoria Park. That goes right around Victoria Park and emerges a few yards beyond the Edward Millen Home. In my opinion, the Public Works Department should make a survey of the transport facilities—I am referring to the bridges and roads over the river—with a view to finding a solution of this difficulty, because it is safe to assert that the volume of traffic along the Albany-road has doubled in the last five years, and I prophesy that the number of cars and vehicles passing along it from the city will again be doubled in the next ten years. For that increase provision will have to be made. The department should consider whether a bridge should not be built about 15 chains on the city side of the Causeway, straight over the river to Berwick-street, and thus make that the by-pass road I suggest. The map which I have exhibited will demonstrate what I mean. That is one proposal to which consideration should be given. There is another. After the survey I have proposed, the department might consider it more advisable to construct a bridge at the edge of the island that would lead towards the Hurlingham Hotel and into the centre of South Perth.

The Minister for Mines: I thought there was a catch in it.

Mr. CROSS: There is another point that should be considered. Already the Minister has been asked to complete the dredging operations between Mends-street and the work already done on the foreshore. When the sandbar has been removed from the river, preparations could be made for the construction of a steel bridge over the Narrows, to give a direct route from the city to Canning Bridge, Applecross and Fremantle.

Mr. Hegney: I hope a bridge will not be built across the Narrows. I hope a tunnel will be constructed.

The Minister for Mines: Now comes the opposition.

Mr. CROSS: The time is opportune for a survey to be made of the river with a

view to providing adequate transport facilities.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CROSS: It is an indisputable fact that the Causeway has outlived its usefulness. I have discussed with engineers the question of providing a better way over the river. They say that obviously a new bridge must be built somewhere in the vicinity of the Causeway. It is imperative that the position should be reviewed by the departments concerned. I have indicated the advantage of building a bridge at certain points.

Mr. Patrick: You have consulted the member for Victoria Park, have you?

Mr. CROSS: He is not here just now. Numerous advantages can be gained.

Mr. Warner: Would you run trams or trolley buses over the bridge?

Mr. CROSS: The bridge would obviate a good deal of traffic that is going through Victoria Park to-day. Because of the great cost, it would be impossible to widen the Albany-road, particularly through Victoria Park.

Mr. Thorn: Where do you intend to have the bridge?

Mr. CROSS: I have indicated the crossing of the river at a spot 15 to 20 chains distant from the Causeway, straight to Berwick-street, half a mile to the south of the Causeway. That would not only lessen the traffic along the Albany-road, but should shorten the distance between Perth and South Perth and Cannington. It would also improve the traffic facilities for Victoria Park.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: What has the member for Middle Swan to say about it?

Mr. CROSS: I shall be able to show the Minister for Railways that his department will also gain an advantage.

Mr. Sampson: Is the Business Men's Association of Victoria Park in favour of this?

Mr. CROSS: Linked up with passenger transport facilities over the river is the transport of people and commodities to South Perth.

Mr. Patrick: What about a tunnel under the river?

Mr. CROSS: Despite the interjections, it cannot be disputed that a single-line tramway service is obsolete, and can never give satisfaction. The present tramway service

to South Perth is showing a considerable loss. It would be a business proposition to convert it to the trolley-bus system, particularly in the case of South Perth itself. If that were done, the loss would be replaced by a profit. The bridge could be known as the Berwick-street bridge. It would effect a saving of three-quarters of a mile if a trolley-bus service were run over that bridge to South Perth.

Mr. Thorn: It has been suggested that it be known as the "Cross" Causeway.

Mr. CROSS: It would never be named after a thorn. South Perth is in a peculiar position geographically, and it is imperative that the whole question of transport between that suburb and Perth be reviewed. A large section of the people in South Perth is almost entirely without transport facilities. The Minister has been asked by deputation, strongly backed by public opinion, to provide a new transport service through the heart of South Perth. Last Friday we took a further step and had an inspection made by the Transport Board. I hope when the report of that board is submitted to the Minister, he will take immediate steps to remedy the present unsatisfactory position. If the Government is not able to provide a trolley-bus service immediately, I do not see why it should not put on the run two or three petrol-driven buses, and give the people the service they are so anxious to have. The citizens of South Perth will not any longer tolerate the present inaction. If the Government will not provide the necessary facilities, the people do not expect it to stand in the way of private enterprise, which is prepared at once to put a service on the road.

Mr. Sampson: Come over here.

Mr. CROSS: I hope the matter will receive the earnest consideration of the Minister. With respect to facilities for the district south of the river, I hope the department will give attention to the necessity for widening the Albany-road through Victoria Park to Cannington. The road is altogether too narrow for the increasing traffic. The matter should be attended to at once. I also wish to touch upon another matter before a mistake is made. Some time ago the Minister for Education was asked to provide a central school on the south side of the river.

Mr. Thorn: You have been a terrible charge on the taxpayers already.

Mr. CROSS: I may have been worth that charge, which is more than can be said of

the hon. member. I understand some action will be taken, although no announcement has yet been made by the Minister. The Education Department is recommending that some land on a Class A reserve at South Perth be resumed. I hope the Minister will prevent such a step being taken. If that land is resumed, I feel certain the people of South Perth will say they do not want a school, and that it would be better to allow the children to go to the city, than to build a new school there.

Mr. Sampson: Leave South Perth?

Mr. CROSS: The central schools in Perth are overcrowded to the extent of over 500 children. South Perth sends every day about 500 children to the central schools. The land it is proposed to resume is more than a mile from the Perth-Fremantle-road, now known as Canning Highway. There are no means of transport to it, and the children who would have to go from the Como or Forrest-street school would have to walk more than a mile by the time they crossed the main road to reach the proposed new school. It is suggested that the school should be built just off the Fremantle-road.

Mr. Thorn: Have you studied the position of the country children, who have to walk long distances to school?

Mr. CROSS: I know that is so, but, where transport facilities can be provided, there is no need for children to walk long distances in the metropolitan area. It is a common practice with the Education Department to place schools in inaccessible positions. Take for instance the Kensington-street school at South Perth. It is built in a sand basin, simply because the land there was cheap, whilst plenty of good high land was available within 200 yards, although costing a little more. Now the department seeks to resume portion of a recreation reserve rightly belonging to Victoria Park, which already has too little land available for parks. If the proposed resumption is carried out, it will be a public scandal. The City Council is making a protest, and I hope the responsible Minister will see that endowment lands are reserved for the people and that a new school is built on high land in the centre of South Perth, where the necessary area can be obtained at reasonable cost. At Applecross the residents have been dissatisfied with the local school for years. That school was built in the wrong place. Now the department agrees that the school should be pulled down,

the site sold, and another, more central, site purchased. In suggesting land for resumption, the department again goes right on the fringe of settlement. It is proposed to construct golf links in the same locality, alongside a large reserve. The Education Department recommends that the school should be built alongside the golf links. Everyone knows that there will never be houses on golf links. In the opinion of the people concerned, the school should be built centrally, quite near to the Perth-Fremantle road. For this purpose, as the result of my representations, Mr. T. M. Burke has offered to sell to the department land at a very low figure. Some of that land will have to be repurchased by him from the people to whom he sold it and he will be compelled to pay four or five times the price at which he will offer it to the department. The department should take advantage of that generous offer, and locate the school where eventually it will be right in the middle of settlement.

I wish to point out to the Minister that it is important to give further consideration to the provision of a new class-room at the Kensington-street school, where the children are still taught in the hat room and in the wash room. In fact, in the drawer of my table here I have a petition for an entirely new school, to be built on a site off Campbell-street. South Perth is growing so rapidly that in making this request the people are on the right track. The Kensington-street school, even after another room has been built, will be overcrowded in the new year. The Forrest-street school is full, and in its vicinity numerous houses are being built. The department must resume land in the central portion of the district, so that another school may be provided.

Mr. Styants: The birth rate seems to be all right over there!

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member does not seem to realise that during the last five years at least 15 new streets, which are now practically filled, have been constructed in South Perth, and that plans for houses in at least another dozen streets there are in course of preparation. In the last three years the adult population has increased by 2,000. Large numbers of the new residents of South Perth being young people, it is clear that population will increase still further.

There are numerous other matters connected with my electorate to which I would like to draw attention. Electric light exten-

sions are needed at Riverton and Mt. Pleasant. The people at Bateman's, one of the oldest settlements in the State, have lived there for 50 years and are still without electric light. I have a long list of such needs here, but there will be ample opportunity to bring them forward later. My requests involve a good deal of expenditure, but I doubt whether other members represent growing and progressive electorates such as mine in the outer metropolitan area. It is my duty to place before the House the requirements of my constituents—not mere desires, but essential requirements. So long as I am here I shall not trouble about what may be said on the other side of the Chamber, but shall advocate proposals which I hold to be right and just.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [7.46]: May I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your elevation to the Chair, and may I express the hope that you will have a happy term of office. In the Lieut.-Governor's Speech no mention is made of something which, to my mind at all events, is a question vital to the welfare of the people—the question of starting price bookmaking. We have read your comments on that subject, Sir, as reported in the "West Australian." To-day the State is tolerating something in the nature of a vice.

The Minister for Mines: Do you too train a horse?

Mr. MANN: No. Some weeks ago I was in Perth on a Saturday, and in company with another man took the opportunity to visit some starting price betting shops. In going through those shops I was astounded at the open way in which gambling was being carried on, and at the type of persons engaged in gambling there. In the eight shops I went through in the city block, the majority of the persons gambling appeared to be absolutely penniless. They seemed to be comprised of invalid pensioners and a class of men who to-day are down and out. To my unbounded surprise, amongst the gamblers were three women of about 70 years of age. The sight of such places makes one realise that the people in them are definitely obsessed with the idea of making a living cheaply. The enormous fines inflicted on and paid by the owners of the premises prove that the profits must be enormous. Some people may say, "Why should not the working man have the right to

gamble in such a place?" I contend that if there is to be gambling, it should be restricted to one place, the racecourse. The starting price betting shops have a most demoralising effect on youth. Many boys 16 years of age live to-day solely for gambling. Every Saturday the wireless gives a description of Eastern States racing. In fact, on almost every day of the week races throughout Australia are broadcast in the running. If the chairman of the Broadcasting Commission considers that the mentality of the Australian people generally has been brought down to the level of mere gambling, he is mistaken. It would be far better in the interests of the welfare of our youth that the control of wireless should be political, rather than under the present system.

The Minister for Mines: You can always switch off the wireless.

Mr. MANN: Yes. People say you can switch it off if you do not care to listen to the racing news, but the trouble is that to-day the young people want to listen to it. This is the era of sport, and the young people are taking to this particular vice for all it is worth. Surely it is the responsibility of the Government, in the interests of the future welfare of the youth of the State, to take a hand in controlling this frightful curse. The question is sometimes asked, why does not a private member introduce a Bill with that object in view? The trouble is that if a private member were to do so, it would be of no avail. Such legislation must be in the form of a Government measure if it is to secure the support of the House generally. In other States it has been realised that something had to be done, and that applies particularly to Queensland. I sincerely hope the Government will give consideration to this matter and face the situation that confronts us to-day. Many people say we are afraid to handle the problem because of the forthcoming general elections. If we are to hide ourselves behind that objection and permit our youth to participate in these cursed get-rich-quick schemes—

Hon. C. G. Latham: And get poor quickly!

The Minister for Mines: More get poor quickly than get rich!

Mr. MANN: That is quite correct. There are some young men who are in Fremantle gaol to-day because of indulgence in the wretched vice of gambling. Once they start

on that downward path, they are content to go to any length. Surely it is for us to assume some control over the position in order to stop the growth of this vice.

The Minister for Mines: Which laws are the better—those of Queensland or those of South Australia?

Mr. Coverley: He does not know.

Mr. MANN: I think the Queensland legislation is the better. I would go further and abolish starting-price bookmaking altogether. I would make the penalty extremely severe. For the first offence I would impose a fine of £50 and for the second offence I would inflict 12 months' imprisonment.

Members: Oh!

Mr. MANN: We must take drastic action. That is not being done to-day. There are police raids from day to day.

The Minister for Mines: There is only one way by which we can stop it.

Mr. MANN: Instead of the fines being increased, they are being reduced.

The Minister for Mines: No fear!

The Premier: Of course not.

Mr. MANN: In the latest records of cases dealt with, the fines imposed upon the majority of the men amounted to £30 each.

The Minister for Mines: For first offences.

Mr. MANN: Certainly the number of those arrested is increasing. But the trouble is that so often the man who is arrested is merely a dummy in the shop, and he is the person convicted. I know of one young man who is prepared to face that position rather than take work. What concerns me is the fact that this sort of thing tends to encourage men who are content not to look for work and, in fact, do not want it. They prefer to participate in assisting in starting-price shops. I appeal to the Premier to take some action. I am not a racing man, although I have attended race meetings. What concerns me is that I have children of my own. One man told me he has a girl 12 years of age and she listens in to the broadcasts of racing from the Eastern States. There is one man who describes the races over the air, and he seems to get very excited over the results. This child is carried away, and is wrapped up in the racing results. Are we to feed the rising generation on that sort of stuff? What a dreadful outlook!

The Minister for Mines: What is that child's father doing to allow her to be fed on that sort of stuff?

Mr. MANN: He is not always at home. He is a farmer and has to be out in the paddocks. We should certainly take some action. It is a responsibility in which each of us is involved. I have sons of my own. Are we to rear our children with this idea of gambling ever before them? If we do, we will fall short of our job. To me it is most deplorable that in the country towns we find the same evil in existence. The men who earn their few pounds on the farm go into the town and spend their money in pursuit of this kind of life. I hope it will be checked.

The Minister for Mines: There is one way only by which we can stop betting on horse races, and that is by cutting out horse-racing altogether.

Mr. MANN: I would even go as far as that if it would mean putting a stop to this curse.

Mr. Withers: And then you would have imaginary races on which gambling could take place.

Mr. MANN: I would take the most extreme measures possible. The argument is advanced that the working man cannot afford to go to race meetings. If that is so, then why not control the race-courses? If men must gamble, then let us provide that instead of having to pay heavy admission fees, they will be able to go to the race-courses and do their betting there, but let us confine gambling to that one place, the race-course.

Mr. Marshall: I thought you said gambling was an evil.

Mr. MANN: Yes, I did.

Mr. Marshall: Then why allow it at all?

Mr. MANN: At any rate, I would confine it to one centre. We find the evil I refer to in the suburbs and in the country towns as well, and it is having an evil effect upon our youth. If a man will gamble and deprive his wife and children of food, that is his responsibility. That sort of thing does happen. We know that the punter does not always win.

The Minister for Mines: Too often he has to walk home.

Mr. MANN: I am pleading in the interests of the future generation. The young men of from 16 to 21 years of age who congregate in those cursed holes in the town and country centres are the people we should seek to protect. We will fail in accepting our responsibilities to the future

generation if we allow this curse to continue. That is all I have to say on this matter.

I have listened to the various speeches delivered during the Address-in-reply debate, and was rather struck by the speech of the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) in defence of arbitration and the attitude of the Collie miners. I was astounded, however, at the speech delivered by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox), who said that unions had a perfect right to defy the Arbitration Court for their own ends.

Mr. Sleeman: Did he say that?

Mr. MANN: For many years the Labour Party has held the respect of the people of Western Australia, and that has been indicated by its long continuance in office. I would be very sorry indeed to know that an element was allowed to creep in and preach such a seditious idea as that indicated by the member for South Fremantle, which was that if the working man could not get what he wanted, he could defy the arbitration laws and force the position. I hope that the Labour Party, which now sits on the Government side of the House, will not adopt that attitude generally, for if that type of extreme advocacy is to be permitted to creep in, it will be a sorry day for this State. To-day the party is respected, but the argument indulged in by the member for South Fremantle went to extremes. The member for Collie went almost to the limit, but with his Scottish shrewdness, he pulled up in time. The member for South Fremantle would defy the laws of the country.

Mr. Sleeman: Did you vote for a conference the other day?

Mr. Patrick: Don't you be drawn.

Mr. MANN: I wish to touch on a matter of great importance to this State, one affecting the farmers generally. Reference has been made to the position of the farmers and the wheatgrowing industry. There is no doubt that shortly we shall face another crisis in this State. It will confront us from two standpoints: one, that of reduced values, and the other, I am afraid, that of low yields. We are certainly not out of the wood yet. In Beverley, where usually we enjoy one of the safest rain-falls, we have not yet had 10 inches, whereas the average is 17 inches. Anyone who lives in the country must appreciate the fact that the season appears to be cutting

out quickly. The grain is running to seed, and so I am afraid we shall be faced with a bad season and low prices. If that should prove to be the position, the community generally will have to face a very serious situation. Some people have referred to the wheat position throughout the world. I give the House this assurance—and the Premier will agree with me—that the day the farming community fails, that day will see the State as a whole in a parlous condition. Prior to the July rainfall, the feeling in the city was exceedingly pessimistic. The basis of the wealth of this State is drawn from the soil and comprises wheat, wool and gold. To-day the farming community is in a precarious position. What the world position will be regarding wheat I will not attempt to say. The person who can solve that riddle with any exactitude will be hailed as a great man. Something will have to be done to solve it. In the Great Southern, South-West and Eastern districts the raising of fat lambs has become profitable because of the introduction of subterranean clover. To-day we are exporting 300,000 fat lambs, and a large number will be exported next year. It looks therefore as if we shall before very long reach saturation point. I have had considerable experience of sheep breeding and I say we must adopt a policy of exporting only the best possible lambs. I am afraid that is not being done at the present time. In our eastern areas, where the 3,500 farms scheme was put into operation, we are breeding the right class of ewes and lambs. This statement can be borne out by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) and the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs). That breed is typical of the export lamb. I hope the Agricultural Bank will give every encouragement to its clients to raise lambs of this class, as they will always be payable. Questions have often been raised about the development of the State, but I have every faith in the State if we breed the right class of lamb. A few years ago the raising of fat lambs was regarded as hopeless, but the position has been entirely changed by the introduction of subterranean clover and top-dressing. The bonus of 10s. per ton granted to farmers has played a very big part in this particular industry, because the average farmer has applied the bonus to the purchase of additional super.

I much regret to learn we are losing the services of an extremely competent Government officer in the person of the Plant Pathologist, Mr. Pittman. He is still a young man, but he has done wonderful work, particularly in regard to pastures. Mr. Pittman was receiving only £600 a year; he is now going to Dookie College as principal at a salary of £1,000 a year. I feel convinced that had the Government offered Mr. Pittman a small increase, even £50 a year, he would have remained in this State.

The Minister for Mines: I am doubtful.

Mr. MANN: That is the truth. To the majority of scientific men, money is not such a great object. They become wrapped up in their profession and are prepared to devote their life to it. The greater the scientific mind, the more the man lives for his work. He is not out for money. We are losing many valuable public servants who are securing positions in other parts of Australia. It is not a good policy for us.

Another matter to which I desire to make reference is the subject of schools in country areas. A constant cry is heard in the city for further school accommodation, but the fact that there are children in our country areas must be borne in mind. They are entitled to every consideration from an educational point of view. We are living in an age when education is necessary, and country children are not receiving the education that is given to the children in the metropolitan area. I know that from the experience of my own children. Even in average country schools, the children do not get the same chance as do the city children. I appeal to the Minister for Education for a school at Corrigin. That is a very large centre and there is a possibility of buses being introduced into the district. I therefore hope the Government will give every consideration to providing a school there. The present facilities are not at all suitable for the children. We require to-day a definite rural education policy. I hope I shall not be charged with narrowness of mind, but country people who frequently visit the city can endorse what I have told the House. I have had a boy at the Perth Boys' School for three years: he boarded in Perth, and is now attending the Modern School. I have noticed a vast difference in the education he has received as compared with that which is given to country children. The trouble is that children in the country do not get the chance that is

given to city children of being educated. Country children have an advantage from the health point of view; they are just as intelligent as are the town children, and if they had the same opportunities of receiving education as the city children have they would become even better citizens.

Mr. Patrick: All the great men of the past came from country districts.

Mr. MANN: I hope consideration will be given to this matter, although I realise the Government's shortness of finance.

Mr. Thorn: The Government has to spend the money in the city.

Mr. MANN: Probably. Complaints are frequently made respecting the administration of the Department of Native Affairs. I quite agree with what the member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) had to say upon this question. No doubt it is a problem. That the present administration is unsatisfactory, I think every member will agree. We do not seem to be solving the problem. It is becoming increasingly difficult as the years pass by. The native population is increasing, whereas our own birthrate will, as Mr. Wm. Hughes said, in 40 years' time become stagnant.

The Minister for Health: Mr. Hughes should have done a bit towards it himself in his day.

Mr. MANN: Possibly, if the administration of the Department of Native Affairs were in the hands of the Minister for Health, we would have better conditions. I would like the Minister for Health to test himself out on the administration of that department. In one area of my district there are about 250 natives and the number is very rapidly increasing. I am prepared to take the Minister to those areas and show him the conditions under which the natives live, and then invite him to see what he can do. The control of the natives should be undertaken by the Department of Public Health. Why the Chief Secretary was given control of the Department I do not know, because the question is really one of the health of the people, and I cannot see how the Chief Secretary can adequately look after that. For many years the Minister for Health has taken a keen interest in the Perth Hospital, and so I think he would make an ideal Minister to control native affairs.

The Minister for Health: What have I done to deserve that?

Mr. MANN: I think your administration would be much better. I am flattering the Minister by making the suggestion.

The Minister for Health: I would appeal against it straight away, resign, and try to get another job.

Mr. MANN: The native problem is a serious one. I feel sorry for those unfortunate people, who are born either black or half-caste, who are ostracised—wanted by no one—and who are hotbeds of disease. In some cases they draw rations. It is our responsibility to do something for them. Unfortunately, everywhere one goes one hears criticism of the department. In my opinion the Act should receive further consideration this session, and I hope that, if it is reviewed, the Minister for Health will have charge of the matter. I congratulate the Main Roads Department on the excellent work done in the last few years. We have some wonderful main roads in our State to-day. The use of bitumen has lessened the cost of upkeep to a tremendous extent, and I am glad that Beverley is at last connected with Perth by a fine bitumen road. I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Tindale, the present chairman of the board, for his splendid work. He and his officers have played a prominent part in the development of transport facilities, and have had a lot to do with the removal of the severe criticism that existed some years ago. I would also pay a tribute to the Transport Board. When Mr. Millen took over the chairmanship from Mr. Munt, he undertook a serious responsibility, but it is safe to say that a good deal of the dissatisfaction that existed has now disappeared owing to his wise administration. In these matters administration plays an important part.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.12]: May I be permitted to preface my remarks by offering to you, Sir, my congratulations on your elevation to the Speakership? I feel confident that your long experience in this Chamber as a private member, and as a former Minister, will stand you in good stead. I have no fear that you will not always be just, and am sure you will exercise wisdom in conducting the business of this Chamber. To the Hon. A. H. Panton I extend my congratulations on his elevation to the portfolios of Minister for Mines and Health, and I welcome the two new members of this House. I warn the Minister for Mines that he has

taken charge of a department in which obsolete and involved Acts are the order of the day. I am not going to attempt to worry him for a while, but I can assure him that he has a good deal of work to do.

The Minister for Mines: I have already found that out.

Mr. MARSHALL: His work will be fully acceptable to those representing the gold-fields electorates, provided that any move he may make is based upon present-day conditions in the gold mining industry as we know it, and provided he does not try to pick the eyes out of old Acts and from the lot of them make one that will be of but little value. I warn him that I do not want him to introduce measures based on the opinions of departmental officials, of whose theoretical ability I would speak in high terms, but many of whom I do not think are in close touch with the methods adopted in the industry to-day. No amendment of the Mining Act ought to be made unless the Minister himself is in close touch with the industry, and brings to bear his knowledge and experience in the framing of up-to-date legislation. I hope and expect that the two new members will be an acquisition to the Chamber. Their contributions up to date have been worthy of new members, and I expect that, when they find their feet, they will show improvement, and make excellent contributions to the debates that will take place during the session.

I do not propose to discuss parochial matters. That has not been a practice of mine for a considerable number of years. I desire to review the contributions made to the Address-in-reply debate. In reviewing those contributions, we must come to the conclusion that there has been an organised effort to stress certain features of the Government's administration. Having heard what has been said, however, I feel almost envious of the Ministry, and somewhat disappointed that I did not aspire to Ministerial office. If the criticism that has been levelled embraces all the faults the Opposition can find with the Government, I congratulate the Government upon the huge success it has achieved in the last few years.

Mr. Mann: You have found fault with the Government on many occasions.

Mr. MARSHALL: When I criticise a Minister, or the Government, it is usually on a matter well worth while; but the

Leader of the Opposition, in the whole of his speech, mentioned only three acts of the Government to which he could take exception. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) made a rather statesmanlike speech and I exclude him from my criticism, but the Leader of the Opposition found only three matters for comment. The first was the appointment of Mr. Wolff to the Judiciary, the second was the appointment of Mr. Dunphy as Crown Solicitor, and the third was the settlement of the Collie coal dispute.

Mr. Thorn: What do you think about that?

Mr. MARSHALL: That was all the Leader of the Opposition found to criticise. All his criticism was based upon those three points. If the Opposition has no more basis for criticism than those three points, the Government has done really well.

Mr. Sleeman: And the Opposition ought to be in opposition all their lives!

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. As the member for Fremantle says, the Opposition should be in opposition all their lives.

Mr. Thorn: That is only your opinion.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but my opinion is worth while. In that respect, I am different from the hon. member. It is remarkable how the members of the Opposition hasten to hide behind what they call Parliament when we on this side refer to certain legislation of a harmful nature, while, on the other hand, they hasten to take credit for having enacted legislation of a beneficial character.

Mr. Mann: Oh, no.

Mr. MARSHALL: Oh, yes. If there is a piece of legislation on the statute-book of this State that can be said to be beneficial either to the community as a whole, or to a section of the community, the Opposition is eager to take credit for having introduced it. The Opposition hastens to take credit. It wants the kudos for having initiated such legislation. But when we on this side of the House refer to such measures as the 1931 Financial Emergency Act, the Opposition rushes away from the charge. The members of the Opposition say that Parliament passed such measures. But who initiated the legislation contained in the Premiers' Plan that was introduced in this Assembly? Who schemed for it and framed it?

Mr. Sleeman: The Opposition.

Mr. Mann: And your Government would have done likewise had it been in office.

Mr. MARSHALL: Let that not be mentioned here. No Labour Government, at any rate, with my support, would pilot a piece of legislation of that character through this Assembly. But what this Government may or may not have done is beside the point. What I wish to draw attention to is that the Leader of the Opposition hid himself behind the cloak of Parliament when accused of having done a wrong thing. He cannot, however, get away with that. He was a Minister of the Government that introduced the Financial Emergency Act and his Government had the majority. It was he and his colleagues who schemed for and framed that legislation. What is more, as you, Mr. Speaker—and other members then in opposition, including myself—know, this particular Government, of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member, introduced into the Financial Emergency Act something that did not appear in any other similar Act in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Thorn: Can somebody not persuade the hon. member to speak up a little?

Mr. MARSHALL: It is of no use the Leader of the Opposition castigating the Government for doing something within the law, ostensibly to make political capital out of it, and then trying to shield himself behind the statement that Parliament did certain other things, when he himself was a member of the organisation that initiated those things. No other part of the Commonwealth introduced, with the Premiers' Plan, a proviso giving individuals or industries the right to go to the court and have the basic wage reduced 18 per cent. below what the court awarded. Western Australia was the only State to do that, and the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the Government responsible for it. When we tackled the then Attorney General (Mr. Davy) about it he said he wanted all to be in it.

Mr. Sampson: When was that?

Mr. MARSHALL: In '31.

Mr. Sampson: In 1831 or 1931?

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member makes a bigger fool of himself when sitting down than when standing up. It is no use the Opposition offering this criticism when, more than anyone else, it has inflicted hardship upon the people. At worst the Minister for Employment merely prevented an industrial dispute. For the edification of the member who has just sat down I would

say that irrespective of the remarks of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) about the laws being broken, we have only to take up the newspaper any day in the week to find that dozens of employers of industrial organisations of this city are being brought before the court for breaking the laws dealing with awards of the court. They do not go on the platform and preach the things they do, but they carry them into effect.

Mr. Thorn: And they are dealt with and fined.

Mr. MARSHALL: Only when they are caught.

Mr. Thorn: Just as the Collic miners should have been.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is of no use members opposite criticising these happenings when they know in their hearts that people of the same political views as themselves are doing the same thing every day.

Mr. Mann: Nonsense!

Mr. MARSHALL: I understand that the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) has an inside knowledge of banking from the fact that he was at one time employed in a bank. In the light of that experience his statement was rather interesting. He said we could not go on borrowing money. That is true. One would expect a man who had had experience of banking to know that no money goes into circulation other than as a debt to the banks. It is impossible for industry to exist without gradually going into debt. We have only to look around to see that this is so. Is there a single industry that is free of debt today? Take the farming industry—

Mr. Thorn: Of course that is not in debt!

Mr. MARSHALL: —and the woolgrowing industry, which is in a still worse position. Every unit of the commercial life of the country is heavily involved in debt. All Governments are in debt. We cannot continue like this unless, side by side with this form of borrowing, we tax the people to keep the debt stable and give a guarantee that we will one day repay the money. If we have to borrow in order to pay our debts, and persist in such a policy, we shall only get further and further into debt. I am addressing my remarks just now principally to the Country Party. With the exception of the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), every member opposite has stressed the deplorable position into which certain indus-

tries or institutions have fallen. Almost every member of the Country Party has deplored the condition of the wheatgrower. When the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) was speaking, I interjected that the position as we find it in Western Australia was world-wide. He retorted, "Oh, no, look at England." The hon. member must know there is no permanency about the prosperity of England. He cannot imagine that, because the Imperial Government advanced three millions to assist the primary producers there, because the Government is carrying out a programme of rearmament and employing a considerable number of people, and because it has thereby increased the purchasing power of the people and provided a ready market for the producers, that state of things is going to be permanent.

Mr. Boyle: There was a home price for commodities before rearmament commenced.

Mr. MARSHALL: Home price is an infinitesimal factor.

Mr. Raphael: There are 45,000,000 people in England against 450,000 here.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is not the point. Had the member for Avon shown that what is being done in England could possibly be done here, and had he submitted a programme that had any semblance of permanence, there might have been something in his argument. But the hon. member knows full well that, within the last eighteen months, England has set about encouraging primary production solely because she is afraid of war.

Mr. Doney: That is not being disputed, of course.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course it is not. All the English statesmen argue that unless the country is made as self-contained as is humanly possible, in case of war with an aggressive nation the English people would be starving within a few weeks. Therefore the life of the English primary producer is to be made as attractive as possible. But there is no permanency about it. There is no stabilisation of prices or of purchasing power. The expedients adopted are merely temporary. Two or three years ago I quoted figures from the United States of America showing the number of farmers who had walked off their holdings there. This happened in one of the most highly mechanised countries of the world, a nation which until recently grasped at every invention for the

reduction of manual service, the most scientific and most up-to-date of all countries. What is the position of the United States? Is there any doubt about that when the country has millions of unemployed and every conceivable monetary problem? America has every kind of degradation and misery, great and all as she professes to be.

The problem to be grappled with is world-wide, and the sooner we devote ourselves to solving it, the sooner we shall relieve those whom my friend from Avon is so anxious to assist. It is useless for the members of the Country Party to declare here that they will have nothing but private ownership in industry. Ever since money was invented, it has been controlled wholly and solely by private ownership. The only country where it has ever been interfered with is Alberta, and even there the interference was merely temporary. The mechanism of the control of money has always been in private hands alone. Private hands have had full sway in that respect. Whenever finance required legislation beneficial to the existing system, it got that legislation from any and every Parliament to which a request was made. There has been no legislative interference in that respect. I repeat, money has been privately controlled ever since it became a factor in communal life. And what has been the outcome? To impoverish every nation in the world. All the speakers to-day have brought forward complaints. In listening to them it was almost an irresistible conclusion that those who hold Ministerial offices are hard-hearted brutes, that they stand idly by while the Treasury is gorged with wealth, that their attitude is one of dog-in-the-manger, denying what is necessary for human existence. Needless to say, that is not the truth. If this Government has one failing, it is a failing that marks all Governments. The trouble is that Governments are too eager to please the people. Listening to some hon. members to-day, one might have believed that our Ministers are positively inhuman, that while having the wherewithal to meet necessities, they sit hard and fast denying human benefits and rights. The truth is, however, that the task is impossible for them, as it has proved to all other Ministries elsewhere.

The only fault I have to find with our Ministers is that they fail to tell the people the absolute truth, which is that this com-

munity, like every other community, is impoverished because of the monetary system. If they would tell the people that, I would forgive them. There has been everywhere a tendency to make people believe that if they are not experiencing prosperity at the moment, prosperity is just around the corner. That is my grievance, and my only grievance. No one who knows the true position should attempt to hide it. We should tell the people that there is an oligarchy holding the universe in its control. In Western Australia, as in every other country of the world, multitudes are starving. I tell the Country Party that private ownership is the cause of this terrible position. Until the Country Party is prepared to amend the private ownership plank in its platform, it is useless for the members of that party to make representations here. Indeed, it is hypocritical to go among the country people, who are practically starving, and tell them the Government is to blame. The Country Party, if in office, could not do any better. In fact, it could not do as well. Yet its members lead the poor unfortunate farmers to believe that if the party occupied the Ministerial benches the farming industry would be safe. People are becoming frantic in the search for relief.

If members of the Country Party were fair, they would not mislead the primary producers. It verges on the damnable that people engaged in primary production should have to accept a weekly dole from the Government to remain on their holdings. In the name of goodness, where are we getting to? All we can obtain from the representatives of the primary producers is a cry for a bounty on this, a bonus for that, a home consumption price for the other. All these things would merely bolster up the position for a further period. There is no stable or permanent remedy to be found in them. The debt around the neck of every man, woman and child, and the taxation necessary to maintain the position of the State, are strangling the community.

Mr. North: How long do you think that state of affairs will last?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know. I do know that Australia is expecting a visit from that wonderful man, Montague Norman. He has foreshadowed a visit to Australia. If the Stock Exchange is any guide, he should be visiting Western Australia within the next 12 months. No doubt his

mission, if he has the courage to carry it out and our people are foolish enough to let him do so, is to induce this community to make another sacrifice like that experienced in 1930. That reminds me of a point I wish to make for the edification of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward), who declared that we cannot continue to borrow. I ask that hon. member, when we ceased borrowing in 1930, when the banks closed down on all loans and called in overdrafts, what happened? Obviously, industry became stagnant and unemployment rife, and poverty increased out of all proportion. Loans to private individuals and private industry and to Governments are as essential to the financial existence of countries as blood is to human beings. There are writers galore on that subject.

If we review the position briefly we will appreciate that fact. It is not expected by all these writers that industry will ever pay enough in salaries, dividends or wages to purchase the goods that industry produces. The only way, therefore, that we can keep industry going is by capital production to maintain operations by means of individual borrowings or by semi-governmental or governmental borrowings for public works. By such means we infuse into the community new capital. That is all we can do to save the situation until, in the end, the inevitable crash comes. Every pound placed into circulation is a debt against the community—either individual, semi-government or government—and by the adoption of the present means of finance we are hopeful that one day we shall be able to surmount all our difficulties and attain prosperity. But that, Mr. Speaker, is a matter of utter impossibility. I have tried to point that out to members. I do not wish them to accept my opinion on the matter. There are many writers on the subject, and they all show clearly that by no stretch of imagination can it be said that the Government can rule this State any more than I can. On the other hand, it is pointed out that the Government can merely give effect to so much of its policy as high finance will permit, not one fraction more.

Those in control of the financial situation determine the standard of living that shall obtain in any country; they determine just how far any Government may go. I have quoted one authority after another to demonstrate that point. I have endeavoured to

make that clear on several occasions in order that members may understand the real position, and my utterances have been directed largely towards Country Party members, because they stand for the private ownership of everything. I warn them that they are sadly misled by the guinea-pigs of St. George's terrace, the men who frame their policy for them, the men who dive in at one door and out at another.

Mr. Mann: What's that?

Mr. MARSHALL: They are the men who frame the hon. member's political platform: they are men who have big interests in the financial institutions of the city; they are those who tell members opposite never to allow money to get out of the hands of private ownership.

Mr. Doney: Where did you learn that?

Mr. Mann: You have a most remarkable mind.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have remarkable ears, and I have heard the hon. member talk about the private ownership of this and the private ownership of that. With all the private ownership and control of money, currency and credit, the hon. member can see what a deplorable position we have reached. It is all due to the private ownership of currency. I warn Country Party members that it is useless complaining to any Government that may be in office, for until we get some true semblance of democracy when the people themselves will rule—and that function will not rest with a financial oligarchy who rule from behind closed doors, paying for their particular policy to be given effect to and advocating it through a Press that they own and control—the State will never truly progress.

Mr. Needham: But have we not sovereign rights?

Mr. MARSHALL: What sovereign rights have we? Years ago we did possess some. Probably the utterances of Mr. Reginald McKenna will carry more weight than mine with this Chamber, and so I will quote some of his statements, for he is a man we all respect as an individual who knows the complexities, intricacies and technical methods of Baghdad. He knows all about the control of credit, currency and money. This is what was said by Mr. McKenna, who is the chair-

man of the Midland Bank, one of the largest trading banks in the world—

I am afraid the ordinary citizen will not like to be told that banks can, and do, create and destroy money.

Later on he said—

And they who control the credit of a nation direct the policy of Governments and hold in the hollow of their hands the destiny of the people.

So much for our sovereign rights.

Mr. Needham: That is, your sovereign rights!

Mr. MARSHALL: Let me quote another writer. Members will accept him as an authority on banking, credit control, and the issue of money generally. I refer to R. G. Hawtrey, Permanent Assistant-Secretary to the British Treasury, who wrote a book entitled, "The Trade Depression and the Way Out." He said—

When a bank lends it creates money out of nothing.

I want the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) to appreciate that point. I have pointed this out before so that members could understand exactly what happened. It is as simple as ABC. The Premier himself knows that when he goes on the market for a loan, not one penny of the amount underwritten is taken into the Treasury. The amount is merely entered into the ledger, which is in credit to the extent of the amount underwritten, and the State operates on that ledger account by way of cheques. Not one penny changes hands, but the State is involved to the extent of the loan. We have to guarantee repayment by extracting cash from the pockets of the people in the form of taxation, in order to keep the amount stable until we are in a position to repay the loan. The only way we can repay it is by further borrowing, and, for my part, I am at a loss to understand how in those circumstances we can ever get out of our present financial position.

Mr. Doney: Does the Premier agree with your version of the situation?

Mr. MARSHALL: I cannot help what the Premier thinks. There are other authorities that I can quote. I can point to one in which it is stated that 50 years ago a Conservative member of the New Zealand Parliament informed the House that he could see nothing for the farmers but that they should become either tenants of the Crown or tenants of the bank. That man had vision.

He could see that, in view of the mechanism of modern banking, it was inevitable that farmers would ultimately get into debt. The banks would never agree to allow the farmers to get out of debt. They would never agree to allow the farmers their full freedom, with the consequent loss of their business and of control of their industry. That would never do! Therefore, while we agree to allow private individuals to group together to direct Governments, as Mr. McKenna has pointed out, it is of little use talking about the sovereign rights of the State. I do not propose to delay the House much longer. I have had opportunities to discuss the requirements of my electorate. All that has been said about schools applies to my electorate; all that has been said about water supplies applies to my electorate; and all that has been said about transport also applies to my electorate. It applies, I suppose, to every electorate. But what is the use of our complaining when there is a chronic shortage of money all over the world? If we went to a doctor, would he not try to diagnose our complaint before he attempted to cure it? Of course he would. Do we attempt to find out the cause of our troubles? No.

Mr. North: We had a Royal Commission on them.

Mr. MARSHALL: You are telling me. That Commission made one or two very bright suggestions.

Member: They will not be carried out, though.

Mr. MARSHALL: Already paid magsmen are out and paid professors are writing matter which is being published very fully in the Press. That is their mission and their job, and they are well paid for it. The bankers must keep this country, as well as every other country, in a state of serfdom and slavery.

Members have been talking about our export trade. In the name of goodness, why should we export commodities that we want here? We have thousands of starving people around us. If I were to take the foodstuff out of my larder that my family required and give it to my neighbour, allowing my family to starve, I would be confined in an asylum. Yet that is the very thing we are doing nationally. If we cannot afford to buy what we produce in our own country, how can we buy the imports that come in for the commodities we export?

Mr. Thorn: Surely you know we cannot eat all we produce?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do know that. I also know there are thousands of people in this State who can eat a lot of what we produce.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: Has the hon. member had time to look at the figures? Does he not know that half our children are suffering from malnutrition?

Mr. Thorn: Yes.

Mr. MARSHALL: What a statesman! How interested he is in the welfare of the community! Three good meals a day, a good bed and a very good job. That is his interest in the welfare of the country.

Mr. Thorn: You will never make a statesman.

Mr. MARSHALL: If I had the mentality of the hon. member, I never would. We are always worrying about exporting goods, but we ought to know that our exports must be balanced by the commodities we import. If the balance is lopsided one way or the other, what happens? We raise our tariff and try to force the other man to take our goods, while at the same time we refuse to take his in return.

It is this commercial rivalry that sows the seeds of war, as Woodrow Wilson said a few days before he died. Even a school child knows that the seeds of war are sown in hot commercial rivalry. To-day the whole world is impoverished. We cannot afford to buy our own goods, yet are expected to buy goods that are imported. Every nation is in the same position. The wrangle over markets is deplorable indeed. True, some years ago the Old Country had ready markets in newer countries, such as Canada, Australia, South Africa, and other countries. Now we are all trying to be self-contained and are endeavouring to keep out importations. So in this fight for markets we are individual against individual, nation against nation, and inevitably we must have war. We are not proceeding on proper, sound, sane financial lines, so that we can equate by controlling the issue of credit. Credit belongs to the community, which is entitled to it free. Until we introduce sound and sane measures, and until the people themselves wake up and direct us to do so, we shall always have these various complaints. They have been made for the whole period of 17 years that I have been in Parliament, and we have not made one step forward. We

are going back gradually, but surely. It is inevitable that we shall regress unless we get monetary reform.

MR. WELSH (Pilbara) [8.56]: I desire to join with other members in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your having attained the high office you now occupy. I have no doubt you will fill it with credit to yourself and honour to the House. I also congratulate the member for Leeder-ville (Hon. A. H. Panton) on his elevation to Cabinet rank. His knowledge of the portfolios he holds I feel sure will enable him to carry out his duties successfully. I also congratulate the two new members upon their election.

Reference was made in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech to the pastoral industry. In some parts of the State this industry is still passing through a very serious drought. The Murchison and Gascoyne districts are suffering terribly; the conditions there are deplorable. In many cases more than 75 per cent. of the flocks has been lost. Several years of good seasons will be required to bring the country back to its normal carrying capacity. The most tragic part of the terrific losses, in my opinion, is the lowering of the standard of the flocks. A high standard was reached after many years of careful breeding and heavy expenditure. That high standard has now been lost. Restocking will be costly because of the high price of sheep, and I am afraid the stock will be of a nondescript type. In my district further north, the Pilbara district, conditions are much better. We have experienced a very good season during the past 12 months and have every prospect of another good season. Although our flocks are not so large, owing to the drought, the yield of wool per sheep has been greater this year. So, with the prospects of another good season, we shall be well favoured.

The conditions of the people further out-back have also been lightened by the advent of the aerial medical service, with its pedal wireless sets. This is a great boon to the women rearing families in the outback country. We are also very fortunate in having the services of an enthusiastic flying doctor and a wireless staff that is efficient, capable, and always willing to do everything possible to help the man outback. Without doubt, we are extremely fortunate in having those services. As a matter of fact, the duties of the doctor are becoming

too onerous for him. The district is growing and he has no time for himself. Nevertheless, he is doing everything in his power for the welfare of the people of the district. In that respect Dr. Vickers is a man in a thousand. The progress of the mining industry was mentioned in the Speech. Mining is on the up-grade all over the State. This is largely attributable to the high price of gold and the assistance given by the Government to the prospecting scheme which was initiated by the late Minister for Mines and which has been most acceptable to everyone. That progress has been manifest in my district as well as in other districts. In the Pilbara area mining has advanced to such an extent that the Government intends to add to the State mill another set of five stamps. This will mean that prospectors who cannot afford to be without crushing facilities for long periods will get the opportunity to have their crushing done within a reasonable time. Further assistance could be afforded the industry by the sinking of bores, as a result of which prospectors would be able to venture further back. At present these men are carting drinking water from 14 to 20 miles. The district to which I particularly refer is the Nullagine area which is notoriously badly watered. Men prospecting in that region have no water and therefore cannot work in distant places. Money could be spent with advantage in the provision of bores for the assistance of these men.

Mining operations have progressed to such an extent in the Marble Bar district that the people there are justified in seeking the appointment of a resident doctor. Such an appointment would relieve Dr. Vickers of his medical work and magisterial duties at Marble Bar. The dual position of doctor at Port Hedland and Resident Magistrate at Marble Bar is a difficult one to fill. The Warden's Court at Marble Bar is open only once a fortnight, when the doctor visits the town. If a doctor were selected for Marble Bar he could also be appointed acting warden and could attend to mining matters in that area. Justification exists for requesting such an appointment because Dr. Vickers will soon be unable adequately to attend to all the duties that devolve upon him.

The improvement in the Railway Department's finances is also mentioned in the

Speech. Progress in that direction has probably been occasioned chiefly by the traffic to the goldfields. That applies to the Marble Bar-Port Hedland railway line which is run in a very satisfactory manner. Some of the greatest washaways that have ever taken place on the Marble Bar railway line occurred during the last wet season. I wish to make reference to the splendid service rendered by the fettlers in repairing the line on that occasion. At one particular period during the recent rains, 17½ inches fell in 11 hours—and in one hour five inches fell—and members can imagine the extent of the washaways that occurred on the line. The eight or ten fettlers to whom I have referred worked right through the hot weather, when the thermometer was up to 120 degrees, in order to get the train through. I do not think any other gang in Western Australia could have achieved as much in the same time. Those men were accustomed to the conditions and worked throughout the whole of the hot day so that the train might pass through. While I am on this subject I have a request to make to the Minister for Railways. For two years I have been asking for some concession on the State boats to be afforded those eight or ten fettlers. These men are not in the same happy position as are men in the south. They are not able to use their free railway pass without first of all coming south. To do that they must travel by the State steamer the fare on which, I think, is £8 10s. single or £12 return. They have to spend that amount of money before they can reach the south to take advantage of the railway pass. The least that could be granted to them is a concession ticket on the State boats similar to that provided for members of Parliament. The men take their accumulated annual leave once every three years and it is not too much to ask that they be granted the concession I have suggested. Fettlers in the southern portion of the State can board a train and go anywhere they like in the State. The men of whom I am speaking are unable to take advantage of this privilege on account of having to travel such a long distance by boat. When the Minister for Works was in the district last month he met some of those men and expressed himself as being sympathetically inclined towards their desire. He understood, however that quite a number of men required the concession and

to grant it to the fettlers might be to establish a precedent. I am, however, asking for a concession for only eight or ten fettlers who work hard on the line all through the summer months for a period of three years.

Mr. Thorn: Is that the only place where such a position arises?

Mr. WELSH: As far as I know it is. I desire to make reference to the new State boat, the "Koolama," which is an excellent vessel. The service on the State vessels is excellent and the food is good, but I consider that the boats were primarily purchased for the benefit of North-West residents who, to a great extent in the summer, have been shut out by tourists. From the point of view of tourists, the service along the North-West coast at present is not much good. The boats reach most of the ports during the night and that is not fair to tourists who travel by the vessels in order to see the North-West ports. On the other hand, during the summer months the tourist traffic takes up all the space on the vessels that should be reserved for North-West residents. In some instances residents of the North-West have had to miss two boats before they were able to travel to the south, because the accommodation on the vessels was all booked up by tourists. If the tourist traffic were regulated so that it finished, say, in October and recommenced in May, people of the North-West would have an opportunity to travel to the south by the State ships. The Singapore boats are not permitted to take coastal passengers, and I do not know what will happen if the people from the North-West are unable to find space in which to travel on the State vessels. Some people went overland last year. All sorts of conveyances are used, but the road is bad. The tourist traffic ought to be regulated during the summer months so that the North-West people might have an opportunity of utilising the steamers. In the winter months, when tourists can be catered for without inconvenience to residents of the North-West, the boats should be run to a different time-table so that they could reach the various ports during the day. Most of the ports are reached at night and bitter complaints have been made by tourists because they have not been able to go ashore. It should be possible to arrange the programme so that tourists could see the ports passed en route.

I should like to refer to the medical facilities on the North-West coast. Those facilities are an everlasting credit to the late Mr. Munsie, formerly Minister for Health. The hospitals on the coast and the medical services generally stand as a monument to the late Minister. I do not think I have heard one complaint about the manner in which the hospitals have been conducted since they were inaugurated under the national scheme. There is nothing wrong with the medical service on the coast, except that we need another doctor at Marble Bar, and need him urgently to enable the present doctor to get a respite from his work. I am satisfied that the doctor at Port Hedland does more medical work than does any other doctor on the coast, and in addition he has magisterial duties to perform at Marble Bar, which is asking more than a fair thing of him. I hope something will be done to grant the necessary relief.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [9.11]: I join with previous speakers in offering you, Sir, my congratulations. I cannot wish you a very long term as Speaker because, if I did, you would know that I was not sincere. The high office you occupy is, of course, the gift of the Government, and you appreciate that I am opposed to the Government and hope for a change after the next elections from the cold shades of Opposition to the Ministerial benches. I had intended to move the adjournment of the debate, but as I had already done so once, my conscience pricked me, and I felt that I owed a duty to the Government and the country to assist to get the debate on the Address-in-reply brought to a conclusion. Therefore I decided to set a good example by speaking to-night.

In common with other members, I regret that we are meeting at a time when the outlook is not as bright as could be wished. I have no desire to take a pessimistic view, but one cannot close one's eyes to facts. The international situation is clouded, and the markets for our great primary products, wool and wheat, are anything but promising. Some of our people, I am afraid, are inclined to under-estimate the competition we are receiving from synthetic wools. This presents a real danger, for there is not the slightest doubt that attempts are being made to improve synthetic wools, and that the

nations interested in finding substitutes will not desist from their efforts. The only way to combat this competition is to exert greater efforts to place our wool in those countries that so urgently need it and are manufacturing synthetic wools. I appreciate that the State Government cannot do all we desire, but the Federal Government could do much to help us. I feel that not sufficient is being done at present to combat this evil. Unquestionably competition with our wool or the loss of our markets must seriously affect the national income, and anything we can do to obviate that should be done.

I have heard and read a good deal about a home consumption price for primary products, and I wish to make my attitude perfectly clear. I unhesitatingly say that I will support a home consumption price for primary products. I have been told that the proposition is unsound. After listening to the many arguments advanced in opposition to a home consumption price, I realise that to maintain such a price will, in many instances, be difficult. As a matter of economics, it may not be a sound proposition, but as one who is anxious to help the primary producers of this country I do not know of any better way, and until I am shown a more helpful way, I am prepared to support a home consumption price.

Member: State or Federal?

Mr. McLARTY: I can offer my support only to State action. I realise that the Federal Government could do more to that end than the State is able to do. I am pleased that the Minister for Agriculture visited Ceylon to deal with marketing problems. I regret that on his visit he was dogged by ill-health. We should make greater efforts to find new markets for our products. I cannot help thinking that the countries adjacent to Australia should provide additional outlets for our commodities. I believe it would pay the State if the Premier or some of his Ministers visited more of those countries and gave official information regarding the marketing of our products. Whenever a Minister undertakes such a trip, some people say that he is merely going on a pleasure cruise, but I regard such statements as cheap jibes, as I believe that a visit by a representative of the Government to a number of the Near Eastern countries would be warranted with a view to opening up fresh markets, particularly for our primary products.

Mention of taxation was made in the Speech. I have been a member nearly nine years, and I have not attended one session in which the taxation on the people has not been increased. I have been wondering how long we can continue to increase taxation. Presumably so long as people submit quietly to the imposition of additional taxation, so long will it be imposed.

Member: We can stand a bit yet.

Mr. McLARTY: I am not at all sure of that. A large number of our people, many of whom claim to be responsible citizens, are not taking an interest in the affairs of the country, and it is time they woke up. A cable message from London a few days ago stated that a number of prominent people in England were much more concerned with sport than with the affairs of the country. The same remark applies here. Some of our prominent men are more concerned with their golf and other sport than with the affairs of the country.

Mr. Fox: I do not think that any member on this side of the House plays golf.

Mr. McLARTY: I can see one member who does. A policy of putting men into reproductive works has been advocated. That is a sound policy, but our difficulty is to define what are reproductive works. There are certain works from which we receive an indirect benefit, and there are works from which we expect to derive benefit in the future. Nevertheless, it is our duty to endeavour to define what constitutes reproductive work. I consider that one of the soundest reproductive works that could be undertaken would be a housing scheme. It may be said that finance is the difficulty.

Mr. Hegney: Would you not allow private enterprise to do it?

Mr. McLARTY: A board could be constituted with borrowing powers, as is done in many instances in the Eastern States. I had the privilege recently of viewing the housing settlement scheme in Sydney with the Premier. The Government of New South Wales has made some millions of pounds available for this particular purpose. It is one of the soundest schemes that could be put into operation in this State.

Mr. Sleeman: You mean to set up a board?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, with borrowing powers, if we cannot get the money otherwise.

Mr. Sleeman: What about the Loan Council?

Mr. McLARTY: It is possible to get outside the Loan Council in the Eastern States, where numerous boards have been brought into existence. In Western Australia we have fewer boards than are found in any other State. There is a big demand for houses both in the city and in the country. It is extremely difficult to get the Workers' Homes Board to build a house in my district.

Mr. Hegney: Is that a part of your policy?

Mr. McLARTY: Our party has always been in favour of providing decent housing accommodation for the people. Forest regeneration is of reproductive value.

The Premier: But we have to wait a long time for a return.

Mr. McLARTY: That is so, but the return is certain. We hear about posterity having to carry the load of debt. The work that is being done in connection with forest regeneration will help towards assisting posterity to carry the debt. The conservation of water can also be regarded as a reproductive work, and the provision of electrical power, too, is of reproductive value. Throughout Australia electricity is being extended into the country areas. Practically every State is now doing something to widen the range over which electricity is being supplied. Great electrification schemes are being put into operation in other countries so that farmers may use this cheap power in their farming activities, for their milking machines, chaff-cutting, etc.

The Premier: You require a closely settled population to make that of practical economic value.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, that is the difficulty. A start, however, could be made with the more closely settled parts of the South-West and Great Southern, and an exhaustive investigation could be carried out with a view to ascertaining the prospects that lie before the extension of electricity in those areas. Our farmers are at a decided disadvantage in having to compete with farmers in other countries where cheap current is being supplied.

Mr. Tonkin: What do you regard as the correct time to start non-reproductive works?

Mr. McLARTY: No time is right for non-reproductive works.

Mr. Tonkin: In other words, never carry them out?

Mr. McLARTY: I do not say that all works are reproductive. Certain works have to be carried out which do not, strictly speaking, come within that category. At a time like this when we are borrowing money, and will probably continue to do so, the necessity for finding out all those works that are reproductive is a very urgent one. If closer co-operation were brought about between the Government and the local governing bodies, such as road boards, the Government might receive some very sound advice. Works in the country cannot readily be classified. I agree with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) that we should plan ahead. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) referred to the difficulty of obtaining farm labour. I am afraid that difficulty is likely to increase in the future. The man who produces has not so much to offer his employees as has the man who distributes the produce. The attractions enjoyed by the man who is not on the land are very much greater than those available to the man who is on the land. The farmer is unable to give his employees many advantages, such as are granted to men in Government employment.

Mr. Sleeman: Can the farmers pay them?

Mr. McLARTY: Admittedly they cannot pay them the same wages. The difficulty will increase. My experience, and that of all members representing country districts, is that there is a great tendency for the workers in the country to leave the farms and obtain Government employment.

Mr. Fox: It is being made too attractive, evidently.

Mr. McLARTY: It is more attractive than farm work. The worker on the land cannot cease work on a Friday night and have a complete rest during the week-end. He can therefore get more advantages elsewhere, and cannot be blamed for taking them. This, however, means restriction of output, which must be embarrassing to the Government. I suggest to the Premier that this matter should receive immediate attention. The crisis must be reached in the near future.

The Minister for Employment: There is no call for farm labour at present, and there has been no call for it for weeks.

Mr. Doney: What nonsense!

Mr. McLARTY: I am surprised at the Minister's interjection. If there is no call for farm labour to-day the reason probably is that the farmer realises the difficulty of procuring labour when he seeks it. The labour offering for farm work is often unsuitable.

I now wish to deal with the question of urgent public works. There are works in my district that I have been told are on the urgent list.

Mr. Patrick: We are all told that.

Mr. McLARTY: I used to think that was a very good sign. It is easy, however, for works to slip off such a list. When I am told now that one of the works in my district is on the urgent list, I am not very optimistic. I know that circumstances arise when certain work may have to give way to some other undertaking. There should, however, be a list of works proposed to be carried out. If such a list were made available and we could see what works were regarded by the Government as urgent, opportunity would be afforded us to have them carried out in order of urgency, an opportunity that does not exist to-day. I was interested to learn from the "West Australian" that the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) had been requested to move for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the price of milk. So long as that proposed Royal Commission will cover the whole industry, I shall give the hon. member all the support I can. Once the member for Perth and I stand shoulder to shoulder, there should be no doubt of success.

Mr. Marshall: Why do you desire to overshadow that hon. member so?

Mr. McLARTY: A good deal has appeared in the Press during the last few weeks about the price of milk. Producers of whole milk have nothing to fear from the appointment of a Royal Commission. Rather would they welcome it. Every effort will be made, in the event of the Royal Commission being appointed, to demonstrate to consumers the cost of distributing milk, and the hours men, women and children have to work in the industry to produce the milk, and also to prove that unless wider powers are given to the Whole Milk Board it cannot function as it should do. There has been a good deal of criticism of these statutory boards. If we create a board with insufficient powers, it is unable

to function as it should do, and must lay itself open to criticism. I cannot see any other way to enable the board to operate as it should than by giving it power to bring into being a central depot, or central depots, through which the milk must pass. At present milk can be obtained anywhere. Then how can the Act be effectively policed from the producer's point of view? A buyer approaches him and offers a certain price for milk. Rather than lose a whole-milk contract, some producers accept the offer. I hold that a central depot, or central depots, should be established in order that the price may be guarded, that better distribution may be ensured, and that the people may obtain a better supply of milk. I do not want to confiscate the business of any man who operates legitimately. I fail to see that the establishment of depots will affect the private individual. However, I do not desire to say any more on the subject at present. I suppose the member for Perth will move for the Royal Commission.

Mr. Needham: I never said that I would.

Mr. McLARTY: I am anticipating. If the hon. member does not move, perhaps some other member will. I merely wish to stress the fact that milk producers have no objection to the appointment of the proposed Royal Commission.

Mention has been made of the numerous traffic accidents that have occurred in this State during the past few years. I do not wish to quote the figures again, but merely to express my opinion that there are ways and means by which some of these accidents can be prevented. One way would be to pass a law making it compulsory to dip or dim one's lights. On country roads particularly, one constantly meets glaring headlights, which make it most difficult to get along.

Mr. Marshall: That is not considered dangerous.

Mr. McLARTY: I drive a motor car a great deal, and I find that to face glaring headlights is very dangerous. I consider that practically every driver of a motor car would say that he preferred to dim his lights when meeting another car to meeting the glaring headlights.

Mr. Marshall: I do not know of accidents caused through lights. It is through speeding that accidents occur. Has ever an accident occurred through glaring headlights?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes. Most head-on collisions are caused by glaring headlights. In the city we should adopt the same laws as Eastern States cities have. Take busy streets at intersections. When last in the East I noticed that cars had to stop upon coming to intersections. There was a yellow line drawn across the roadway, and printed in yellow letters on the roadway was the word "Stop." Every car on reaching the intersection pulled up, and the driver did not go on until he saw the way was clear. That law should apply here. Our traffic is increasing, and looking to the future we should guard against accidents. Take Pier-street at the busy time, between 5 and 6 o'clock in the evening. Then there is heavy traffic along St. George's-terrace, and many cars are coming out of Pier-street, all trying to get into the line of traffic. In the interests of the public and of motorists, the practice I have described should be adopted in regard to such a thoroughfare as Pier-street.

Mr. Marshall: If the traffic police were given the necessary men and facilities, the control would be all right.

Mr. McLARTY: Unfortunately funds are not available for placing a man at every intersection. The system works well in Eastern States capitals, with their denser traffic; and surely it should work well here. In the metropolitan area, particularly in Victoria Park, one comes across the unlighted bicycle.

Mr. Marshall: Unlighted bicycles are encountered all over the place.

Mr. McLARTY: Wherever they are met with they are a danger, and greater efforts should be made to ensure that cyclists use the regulation lights.

Mr. Marshall: Some of them have neither brakes nor bells.

Mr. McLARTY: I was about to refer to the position of the local butter equalisation scheme.

Mr. Marshall: Another tax!

Mr. McLARTY: No. I am afraid the hon. member's knowledge of the butter equalisation scheme is rather limited.

Mr. Marshall: I have had a look at it.

Mr. McLARTY: In view of the danger of a breakdown the Government, and especially the Minister for Agriculture, should seriously consider what steps can be taken to assist the local Dairy Products Marketing Board to maintain the scheme. If there should be a definite breakdown, undoubtedly

those engaged in the dairying industry of Western Australia would suffer severely. However, I shall have the opportunity to say something more on that subject in the near future.

I wish to conclude by drawing the Government's attention to the serious water shortage in the irrigation areas of Harvey and Waroona. There are two unfinished irrigation schemes in those districts. No irrigation area can function successfully if it has an uncertain water supply. In that respect both these schemes are most uncertain. In all irrigation areas there is now a tendency to use more water, and unless the additional water is used pastures cannot be what they ought to be. In connection with both the Harvey and the Waroona irrigation area a shortage of water is being felt more acutely each year. We did have a deputation to the Minister for Employment, in the absence of the Minister for Water Supplies, urging that those works should be taken in hand. That was about 18 months ago, but nothing further has been done. Certainly we shall now have to face another summer with an acute shortage of water. I know men who have bought land in those irrigation areas and paid high prices for their holdings. They are now told that they cannot get water, though that means a heavy loss, to them. Thus they have bought properties that they would not have purchased had they known water would not be procurable. It will also have the effect of depressing land values. I trust the Minister will make some pronouncement of the Government's policy regarding the additional storage of water in those areas. Much uncertainty exists, and, unless the farmers can formulate plans for areas to be irrigated in future, those districts will suffer certain loss. I hope the Minister will, at an early date, inform us of the policy of the Government on this question.

On motion by Mr. Doust, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.42 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 24th August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—HEALTH, UNDER SECRETARY.

Visit abroad.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have any funds been made available, or promised, to the Under Secretary for Public Health, Mr. F. J. Huelin, in connection with his visit abroad? 2, If so, what is the amount? 3, For what purpose?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, 2, and 3, No, but Mr. Huelin has been granted five weeks special leave to enable him to visit in England institutions of a kindred nature to those under the Chief Secretary's Department here.

QUESTION—RAILWAY FREIGHTS.

Reductions on Fertilisers.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Chief Secretary: 1, During which months of the year is a reduction in railway freight made on the carriage of superphosphate? 2, Does the reduction apply to other classes of fertiliser? 3, Is agricultural lime included in the concession? 4, Does the reduction operate only on the Government railway system? 5, Are there any portions of the State where the reduction applies throughout the year? 6, What is the freight per ton on fertiliser, and what is the reduction per ton when the reduction operates?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Of late years 1st December to 30th June inclusive. 2, Yes. 3, Yes. 4, No. 5, Yes. 6, For the average distance hauled (140 miles), 12s. 8d. per ton ordinary and 4s. 11d. per ton concession rate.