

at these are not according to the standard. The Collie scheme will be proceeded with on the present cycle and present voltage, which is not in conformity with the Eastern States standard.

The Minister for Lands: Our advisers and those in Victoria have said that 40 mile is the best for power and light.

Mr. NORTH: I am not attacking anything that has been done here. We are thin our rights in developing the 3ft. 6 in. gauge, and developing our power supplies upon our present basis. Seeing that the Central Government has a surplus, and has arrived at a definite policy in regard to transportation and power, it should either keep silent, or give definite bonuses to the States to bring their own schemes into conformity with the other States. The proximate cost for Western Australia of making the new connections would be about £1,000,000, outside the cost of the plant. When there was the change over at Perth from the direct current to the alternating current, a good deal of plant had to be replaced.

The Minister for Lands: That cost about 0,000.

Mr. NORTH: If the Central Government means what it says, this is what it should do. If we could have a completely standardised railway system and power system throughout Australia, we should come into line with the United States. We would have our climatic conditions to favour us in the economic struggle against the United States, and otherwise be placed on an equal footing with them. We have hamstrung ourselves in regard to our railways, and are now about to hamstring ourselves in the matter of power and voltage. I am sure a State Government will be unable to depart from the existing cycle and voltage unless funds are given by those who have initiated a different policy. I commend these two subjects to members, convinced that they are worthy of notice. They will not be of any practical effect unless we can bring Queensland, or any other State that is suffering from the same disability, into line with ourselves. It makes my heart bleed politically to think that we, as a country, should have to suffer from these terrible economic difficulties, which are going to get worse instead of better. Within the next five years we may have another 2,000 or 3,000 miles of railway. This will double our disabilities and render the cost more prohib-

itive. In looking through the letter in regard to Europe, I find that there are light railways in those countries just as we have here, and a big mileage of them. In Italy they have the sense to build their light lines on exactly the same gauge as the heavy lines. They can run their rolling stock from the light wheat lines on to the main lines throughout the country. That is an important factor. I hope the Premier and the Minister for Railways will consider these matters. Unfortunately, power is still handled by the railways. If I had my way, there would be a Minister for Power, or a Commissioner, who would be divorced from the Minister for Railways. I hope these matters will be seriously considered, not that one penny can be spent towards them out of State money, but in order that they might be brought before those who have collected money through our Customs, and from whom money is due for these purposes to carry out the pledges they have given on the platforms in the Eastern States. My desire is that we should remind them that what they have said about the Eastern States does not apply to Western Australia.

On motion by Mr. Chesson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 17th August, 1926.

Address-in-reply, seventh day PAGE 269

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [4.38]: After every biennial election a few of the older members of this House are missing, and we all regret that some of those who were here

have fallen by the wayside. After we have worked with men for five or six years, most of us are sorry to lose them. However, it is part of the political game, and whilst we regret the loss of the old members we welcome those who take their places. No doubt as time goes on we shall find those members also regretting the loss of some with whom they have worked. The most important question before us to-day is that of Federal and State finance. Special attention is paid to it in the Governor's Speech, although members of the Council were not consulted regarding it. In the circumstances I fail to see why another place should send up a resolution and ask us to agree with them in it. However, I think we can state in this debate our opinions upon the proposed discontinuance of the capitation grant. Looking at the matter all round, I do not see that anything can be done except to support the Premier and the Government in the stand they are taking of trying to prevent the grant being withdrawn at present. The changed outlook of the various parties upon Federal and State problems is absolutely bewildering. I doubt if any of the parties to-day know where they are, considering what they advocated 15 or 16 years ago. Indeed, we are in such a bewildering maze regarding Federal and State politics that it is very difficult for the average man to express any opinion on them. Looking back upon the history of the capitation grant, we know that the anti-Labour party tried to make that grant a part of the Constitution. In that endeavour they were defeated by the Labour Party, helped possibly by the left wings of some other parties. Now we find the anti-Labour party trying to take away the grant and State Labour Governments opposing its withdrawal. All this change has come about in 15 years. When we observe what is happening in regard to the referendums, we realise that the same state of affairs obtains there. In 1911 the Labour Party made almost the same proposals to the electors as the anti-Labour party are submitting to-day. In 1911 those proposals were resisted by the anti-Labour party, and with success. To-day we see the position reversed: Labour is against the proposals and anti-Labour is supporting them. Therefore it is extremely difficult to know just where we are, and the average outsider must be puzzled to form any opinion on the matter. To me it looks as if each party has marched up the hill to see the promised land, and, having looked

from the summit and seen they were mistaken, have now marched down again. manoeuvre around the other party's base. It seems to me that there is only one course open to any patriotic Western Australian, namely, that of supporting the State Government in their opposition to the withdrawal of the capitation grant. While saying that, however, I am not sure whether it would be altogether calamity if we were forced to rely on direct taxation to raise our State revenue. If we could only make certain that the Federal Government would withdraw from all direct taxation, it might not be a bad thing for the States to accept the Commonwealth proposals. But the trouble is that we cannot be sure. Indeed, we are already told by the ablest man, I suppose, in the Labour movement that if the Labour Party get into office the direct taxes, in the event of their having been remitted, will be reimposed. Therefore if we agree to the present proposals, there is no guarantee that the next Commonwealth Government will not reimpose the direct taxation now proposed to be surrendered. Like the Leader of the Country Party, I feel that the Federal system has no regard for the needs of the States. No matter what the special position of a State may be, under the present system it gets the same proportion of Federal revenue as any other State. The sooner some constitutional effort is made to bring about a more equitable adjustment of Federal and State finances, the better it will be. Direct taxation is very easy to impose, and not very costly to collect. If only the people had more direct and less indirect taxation, there would be a tendency towards economy in administration. At present we in Western Australia are paying something like half a million in taxation on sugar. Suppose the individual consumer had to pay that tax apart from what it costs in distribution and collection, in the same way as he has to pay the tax on entertainments I am certain he would begin to take greater interest in the administration of the country, and would see to it that more economy was practised. So I do not regard direct taxation as a calamity. The trouble to-day is that we do not know where we are in respect of Federal and State finance. It is peculiar that while we are situated as we are, the Commonwealth is in a position to spend enormous sums in assisting industry, in playing the part of a sort of

Lady Bountiful. So, as I say, the sooner we have some readjustment of these problems, the better will it be for all of us. I should like to say a few words respecting the mining industry. That industry was never in worse condition than it is to-day; in fact, it is in danger of extinction in Western Australia. Possibly in the course of another two years to all intents and purposes it will be extinct. I am not unmindful of the help given to the industry by the Mitchell Government and by the Collier Government. These Governments certainly have done something for the industry; but some Government, perhaps the Federal Government, will have to do very much more if the industry is to be saved. When we think of the immense sums raised through the Customs, and the immense sums paid in Federal bounties, and realise that the mining industry has never had any help from any Federal Government, we begin to see that it is by no means equitable that the gold mining industry should have to help pay for all the bounties being distributed, notwithstanding that of all the industries it is the hardest hit through the Customs. It is monstrous that we cannot get better consideration for the industry than we are getting. Looking through the Federal "Hansard" for this session I find that quite a number of bounties paid to various industries are being extended. Under the Shale Oil Bounty Act £139,000 has been paid already, and there is still £144,000 to be spent. That bounty, it is said, must be paid to keep the industry going. The same arguments are used in respect of the cotton bounty. Those are only two out of many. I contend that the need of the gold mining industry is just as great as that of either oil or cotton. Gold perhaps may have no real economic value, and it might be better for the community at large if gold mining could be cut out altogether, having regard to the sacrifice of human life entailed in its continuance. But we have to take things as they are, and consider gold mining as it exists to-day. There is no gainsaying the fact that gold is just as necessary to the community under present conditions as is shale oil, or any of the other bounty-fed products. Why, then, is gold mining being throttled in the process of paying all those other bounties. Being so far from the coast, the gold mines have to pay, not only the immense Customs duties on material and machinery used, but also railway freights over a journey of 360 miles. There are wheels

within wheels: the Railways have to charge increased rates to meet increased wages and increased Customs dues, and so gold mining is being hit up all round. I like Mr. Harris's suggestion that the State Government and the Federal Government should combine in paying a valuable bonus to the gold mining industry. Had it not been for gold mining, Western Australia would not have been nearly so far advanced as she is to-day. I have culled a few striking figures from page 4832 of Federal "Hansard" of this session. The figures were given by Senator Millen, chairman of the Commission dealing with National Insurance, who, I should say, knows what he is talking about. Senator Millen gives the production per head in primary and secondary industries throughout the Commonwealth in 1901, in 1914 and in 1923-24. I propose to quote only those relating to 1901 and 1923-24. In New South Wales in 1901 the production from primary industries, including gold mining, per head was £21 6s. 3d. while for secondary industries it was £7 8s. 10d.; in Victoria the figures were, primary £7 17s. 3d., secondary £6 4s. 5d.; in Queensland, primary £25 19s. 10d., secondary £8; in South Australia, primary £20 9s. 2d., secondary £8 6s. 5d.; in Western Australia, primary £57 2s. 11d., secondary £10 19s. 8d. It will be remembered that gold mining was at its height in this State in 1901. Obviously it was because of that industry we had so tremendous a production in primary industry, more than double that of any of the other States. In 1923-24 the figures were as follows: New South Wales, primary £45, secondary £24; Victoria, primary £39, secondary £28; Queensland, primary £50, secondary £10; South Australia, primary £52, secondary £20; Western Australia, primary £57 10s. 10d., secondary £12 11s. 11d. In primary industries our production per head had increased not at all, or by only a few shillings, and in secondary industries it had increased by 30s. only. From the figures given, members will see what an immense toll the Eastern States are taking from Western Australia. New South Wales has increased her secondary production from £7 to £24; Victoria from £6 to £28; Queensland from £8 to £16; South Australia from £8 to £20; while Western Australia has increased only from £10 19s. 8d. to £12 11s. 11d. So with the toll we are paying to the Eastern States through the Customs, it will be seen that, as somebody suggested the other day, we must be keeping 50,000 or 60,000 people at work in the other States.

Again, consider what, our gold production has meant: In 1901 the production for all Australia was £21,000,000, of which over 60 per cent. was produced in Western Australia. In 1923-24 we were down to £3,000,000. That shows which way the industry is moving, and the great need there is that State and Commonwealth should combine to put the industry on a better basis. Had it not been for the immense progress made in the agricultural industry in Western Australia, I do not know where we should be to-day. When I say that to a large extent agricultural progress has been made possible by the gold production in Western Australia during the early years, I think we are justified in asking the State and Commonwealth to combine in coming to the aid of gold mining now that it has fallen upon evil days. I was sorry to read Mr. Glasheen's remarks in respect of gold mining. He was referring to the help given to be tubercular men, and he suggested that something more should have been done on the goldfields to stay the decline of the industry and also to encourage the men in insuring themselves against disease. We all admit that something more might have been done. I agree with the hon. member to this extent: that those companies once turning out a ton of gold per month might well have done more to place their mines on a better basis. But whose fault was that? It was not altogether the fault of the mining companies. In all industries all companies are out to get as much as they can, and if the State was so foolish as to allow them to do that I do not think we can blame the companies altogether. It would be more to the point to blame ourselves for the position we are in. Let us blame not the goldfields, but the legislature of the State. If Parliament had enacted laws and insisted upon certain things being done on the goldfields—as advocated by many of the leaders up there, and particularly by many unionists—the industry would not have got into the parlous condition it is to-day. So I do not think we should harp too much on what the companies might have done. We all might have done more in many ways. The fact remains that gold mining is nearing extinction and that if something is not done quickly it will go out altogether. I also wish to refer to the question of the incidence of the Workers' Compensation Act and to the examination of men taking place in Kalgoorlie, as well as the attitude of the Government towards those

who are suffering from tuberculosis. During the recess many statements were made in regard to this matter that ought not to have been made. There is one in particular to which I wish to draw attention. First of all, a Nationalist Government, of which Mr. Scaddan was the Minister for Mines, brought forward a Bill to provide for the examination of men employed in the mines. There was also provision in the Bill that all men suffering from tuberculosis should be prohibited from continuing their work. The first proposal of Mr. Scaddan's did not provide for any compensation, but as the result of considerable agitation, especially on the part of members of this House representing the goldfields, Mr. Scaddan altered the Bill so that those men who were debarred from working in the mines should receive the full rates of pay, that is to say, the men who were tubercular and who were a danger to the community, as well as a danger to the men with whom they were working. That proposal was received very sympathetically by this Chamber. There were no amendments to the Bill, at least no amendments of any serious consequence. There is nothing materially wrong in regard to a proposal of that nature. If we resume land for the public good we must pay compensation for it. If we do not pay that compensation, we can be taken before the courts and the matter of compensation will be decided there. The men to whom I have referred were taken from the mines for the public good and also for the good of the others engaged in mining operations. Unfortunately for those who have contracted tuberculosis, their lives are not of long duration. As I have stated, the Act was introduced by a Nationalist Government and it passed this Chamber. Last year the Labour Government brought forward a Bill to remedy a defect, and that was that those tubercular men, who were removed from the mines, who were broken down and for whom work had been found, should be paid compensation at not less than the Mine Workers' Relief Fund scale. We took exception to that and I can repeat what I said to the Honorary Minister in my speech, that while it was not my intention to move any amendment, the position was altogether too tragic for any suggestion of political bias in any shape or form. I suggested further, that the Honorary Minister should see the Minister for Mines and induce him to alter the Bill to provide that those men who were taken out of the mines, who were able to do some light work, and

hen failed, should receive the full rate of wages they were previously drawing. That was not asking too much. Why in the name of goodness the Mine Workers' Relief Fund payments were fixed as a basis, I do not know. That fund pays the least compensation of all, something like 25s. a week. The Workers' Compensation Act which this House also passed provides for bigger payments. Why was not the rate fixed by that Act adopted as the basis if the Government did not wish to pay the full rate. If those men were working in the mines after the Act was proclaimed, the companies would have been compelled to pay the rates receivable under the Workers' Compensation Act. The particular statement to which I wish to refer was made by a Minister and the excuse he offered was to my mind one of the paltriest I have ever heard. The excuse was that the Government were afraid of the Legislative Council. I would like to take members back to the session of 1920. In that year, the Mitchell Government sent a Bill to this House providing for certain alterations to the Workers' Compensation Act. Those alterations were very good; they had been before the House on several occasions, but had been defeated. The Mitchell Government sent them along but they left out the essential need; that was an increase to the men who were injured; and to the dependants of the men killed. I was the first speaker after Mr. Colebatch had introduced the Bill and drew attention to the fact that no provision had been made for an increase in the compensation to be paid. I was followed by Mr. Hickey, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Cornell, but unfortunately the then President, Mr. Kingsmill, ruled that the Legislative Council could not increase any burden that might be placed on the people. Mr. Colebatch thereupon promised to see Sir James Mitchell as to whether something could be done to get over the difficulty. The next day the President reversed his ruling and Mr. Cornell moved that the payments be increased by 25 per cent. That amendment was carried unanimously by the Council, and Sir Edward Wittenoom, who represented large employing interests, was one of those who supported the proposal. Dr. Saw also came to our help. Let me take members further. In the year before last the Workers' Compensation Act was passed. This is an Act that has been applauded even by the Minister for Works, who has declared that it is the most up to date of its kind in the world. That Act was passed

by this Council; it gives greater benefits than any other in existence to-day. Yet we find that a Minister uses the paltry excuse for a similar measure like the Miners' Phthisis Act in order to cover up a blunder—and it was a blunder—that he was afraid of the Legislative Council. I am sorry that that statement was ever made. Knowing Ministers as I do, and particularly those who have worked underground—Mr. Hickey, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Munsie—nothing would lead me to believe that any one of them is antagonistic to the interests of the men on the goldfields, or that any of those Ministers would go out of his way deliberately to do harm. But the Government certainly did make a blunder in regard to the Miners' Phthisis Act, and instead of accepting the advice tendered sincerely, some of them turned round like schoolboys and called those who tried to help them all kinds of names. If the Government had brought forward a Bill to provide in the way that I have suggested for those men for whom work had been found, and who could not carry on, not one member of this House would have opposed it. I have made that statement outside and I repeat it here, and to advance an excuse about being afraid of the Legislative Council is utterly mean.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It was only a subterfuge.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I wish also to refer to Mr. Glasheen's statement that he did not think any more should be done for the miner than for any other member of the community who should fall ill from an occupational disease. I do not think there is one goldfields member who would desire or ask that anything more should be done for the stricken miner than for any other man affected by reason of his working in some occupation. As a matter of fact, the Legislative Council have already passed, in the Workers' Compensation Act, a measure that does provide for compensation to be paid to any man stricken down by illness resulting from his occupation. The only difference is that tubercular miners are prohibited from working before the proclamation of the Workers' Compensation Act. In this respect I notice that up to date 106 have been prevented from returning to their work.

Hon. J. Cornell: The total is 114.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I wish to give the Government credit for the effort they made in regard to those men who have been

warned to leave the mines by reason of having contracted symptoms of miners' disease. I hope those efforts will prove successful. Very many of those men will be able to work in other occupations for many years to come. I know of one who was in the sanatorium for six months and who was looked upon as a dying man. He has been battling at Denmark for 16 years and is doing well on the land. Yet that man was doomed to die some 15 years ago! Fortunately for him, he had not contracted tuberculosis, but was suffering from some other form of miners' phthisis. Mention of Esperance affords an opportunity to draw the attention of the Government to the great need for hospital facilities at that port. I believe the Esperance people are seeing what they can do to provide funds for the erection of a hospital, and it must be gratifying to the Government to know that they are desirous of helping themselves before seeking the aid of the Crown. Should there be anything that they can do to assist in the provision of hospital accommodation, I hope the Government will render that assistance, for the people need it badly. I would also draw attention to the necessity for adequate water supplies throughout that area. Last year an Honorary Minister in the Legislative Assembly promised that dams and reservoirs would be constructed, I do not know what progress has been made in that direction, but the Honorary Minister in this House will be able to give us some information when he speaks. Some day Esperance will be a great port; there is no question about that. Any expenditure that can be spared to make the position more satisfactory at that centre will represent money well spent. I would also draw attention to the need for schools at Newdegate and Red Lake. People in the back country, whether in gold mining districts or in farming areas, certainly need all the assistance that can be rendered them. I am sure the Government will be considerate regarding their needs. I desire to refer briefly to the policy of the Government relative to preference to unionists and employment. I would like to make a re-statement on this question of preference. I have been a member of a union since I was 15 years of age, and I am a member of a union to-day. I know why the demand for preference to unionists arose, and also why it has been sustained. First of all, the demand arose through victimisation. I think

I have mentioned once before that I knew an old man, who was the president of the union during the first year when I joined. That old man was victimised in the mine where I was working, and he was never allowed to enter it again. By a strange coincidence, both the president and the vice-president of the union came to Western Australia. They had had to go all through Australia looking for work, and finding it where they could. Ultimately, they both came to Western Australia and the one-time president died here four years ago, while the vice-president died a few months back. It seems a strange coincidence that both should have come to Western Australia, and to-day both lie at Karrakatta. Those men were as good as any who ever came to Australia. They were representatives of the old Cornish miners and were good men and good miners. In those days the demands of the miners were not great, and yet, in order to get rid of them, the employers victimised both. They were married men and, after being driven from the mines where they had been working, had to journey throughout Australia hoping for work. They were practically exiled from the place where they had established what they had considered would be their permanent homes. I remember also the Broken Hill strike in 1892. On that occasion the men were badly beaten, and fully 1,000 men were victimised. They were not allowed to go back to work. It was because of such happenings that there arose the cry for preference to unionists. At that time it was thought that preference to unionists would be the antidote of victimisation; it was thought that if the employers were compelled to engage unionists, there would not be so much victimisation. We advanced from that stage with the initiation of industrial arbitration. But here again another cause for preference arose. The unions had shouldered the whole of the expense, and it was thought to be fair that other men who gained advantages from the work of the unions should bear some part of the financial burden. Up to that point, most hon. members will agree that the unions had good cause to ask for preference. I do not say that from the moral standpoint it could be defended in all cases. At the same time, the men had good cause to ask for preference, seeing that unionists could be victimised at any time and also that they had had to bear the whole burden of ex-

pense. When we look at the position to-day, however, we find a totally different set of circumstances. The industrial wing and the political wing of the Labour movement have become united. I remember well when that was accomplished. To-day men are compelled to pay a certain amount of their dues into the political fund. I am not one of those who object to any union having political ambitions, but I have always objected to compelling a unionist to pay portion of his dues to a political fund for purposes to which he does not subscribe. Further than that, some unionists are compelled to contribute towards newspapers, with the views of which they may not be in accord. To me that is an absolute negation of liberty. Yet that is what is happening. If we are to compel men to contribute to a particular brand of newspaper, it is equally right to compel them to contribute towards a particular brand of literature. One is as unjustifiable as the other. Last year, when discussing the Primary Products Bill, I made a statement that no majority law could make a law binding upon a minority in relation to some matters. Some questions are above human law, such as religion, politics and the sanctity of the home. I was surprised to hear Mr. Glasheen, who followed me, say that evidently I did not believe in democracy, because I did not believe in the rule of the majority. Because 66 per cent. of those concerned in an industry decided upon a certain matter, that decision would not necessarily be right. I am sure the hon. member would be the last to agree to certain things being submitted to any human tribunal. If 99 per cent. of the people decided in favour of slavery, he would say that those 99 per cent. had no right whatever to do so. As I have already stated, some questions are above human law, and it seems to me, in the policy of the Government to-day regarding preference to unionists, they are doing something above human law altogether. If we can judge from what we see in the newspapers—I do not know whether the statements are correct, and if I am wrong, I trust the Minister will correct me—men are being compelled to join a union before they can get work. Part of the money they pay in goes towards the political movement.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A very small part of it.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I submit that that is not right, and it is an absolute injustice to

compel any man to do it. If the Government insist on all men engaged upon Government work being in a union, no one, perhaps, could blame them for that, because that was their policy at the last election. But they go further. Many of the men engaged at the Labour Bureau are not for Government work but for private employers; yet the Government are insisting upon those men paying so much to join the union and a certain amount of those dues has to go to the political funds! We all remember that last year, when the Labour Exchanges Bill was before us, I supported the measure to the best of my ability, and would do so again. I supported it for two reasons. The first was that it represented a recommendation of the International Labour Office of the League of Nations, and I gave what appeared to me good reasons why we should endeavour to carry out, as far as we possibly could, the recommendations of that International Labour Office. I also supported it because I did not believe in any employee paying anything to secure a job. This latter practice appears to me to be absolutely immoral. I was twitted on this point by Mr. Holmes, who turned the tables on some of us by saying that already at the Labour Bureau men were being compelled to pay into a union in order to secure their jobs. I pointed out at the time that that question was not covered in the Bill, and had nothing to do with it. The hon. member said that was so, but it was a question of administration and, under the then Administration, that was the practice. When I read in the newspapers what is going on, I am inclined to think that the fear expressed by the hon. member was justified. I can see no warrant for the position as it stands to-day. Here we have men seeking employment at the Labour Bureau, most of them being individuals without trades or professions, or any handicraft at their finger-tips. A large number are casual men, and in the winter months they generally find themselves without employment. It is not right to say to any such individuals, "Before you can obtain a job in the country, or anywhere else, you must pay 5s., 10s., or whatever fee we like, to join a union."

Member: Some have to pay 25s.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I am certain that many men I have in mind, who made sacrifices in the past, would turn in their graves if they thought that what they had striven for was being prostituted in this way.

Hon. J. Cornell: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. E. DODD: It is utterly wrong and should not be allowed to continue. I go further and say that no member of the Government believes in that policy. I am certain that the two members of the Government in this Chamber do not believe in it. During the discussion on an amendment to the Labour Exchanges Bill, Mr. Hickey said—

No man is asked to pay 25s. per annum before getting a job. If a unionist happens to be there when a job comes, he will get preference—that is all. It is not insisted upon that non-unionists shall become members of a union.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The same position obtains to-day.

Hon. J. E. DODD: When we come to consider what was said to the deputation that waited upon the Premier recently, I do not think that statement can be borne out. To-day men are being compelled to join a union before they can get a job. We gained freedom in the past, and gained it from kings, nobles, religious domination, and captains of industry, and I am very much afraid that we are handing back that freedom to tyranny again. If men are to live, they must work. Men cannot live without work; in order to get employment they must join a union and must pay into the union's political funds. Then they must take the literature prescribed by the union. That seems to be going back to the days of tyranny and probably will lead to a worse dictatorship than has ever been known before. I have always done my best to induce me to join a union. In these days of arbitration every man should do something to help the union who have succeeded in getting better conditions for him, but personally I could not tolerate the position that exists to-day at the Government Labour Bureau. We are living in a wonderful country and almost everything that a man needs is to be found here. We are often told by visitors from other parts that their's is God's country, but I think we have just as much of God's own country in Western Australia as is to be found elsewhere in the world. All we need to make this country great is the application of labour and capital, and if we can get them to work in unison we shall be on the road to prosperity. I consider that a worker is entitled to every penny that industry can afford to pay him. As I have said before, I am of opinion that the worker will secure yet greater control over industry and that it will be well for industry if he does. If

we had had more control over the mines in the early days of the goldfields—not legislative control, but control by the workers—it would have been better for the industry. There are many things a worker sees in the course of his employment that could be done for the benefit of industry. I know of scores of things underground that men see and that the foremen do not see, and better work could be done and less loss would be sustained if the workers were taken more into the confidence of the captains of industry. I repeat that the worker is entitled to all that industry can afford, and it will be better for all when greater co-operation exists between the captains of industry and the workers. We have no time for millionaires, for slums, for the old-time arrogance of money power, or for class hatred. We should live and let others live. The old union motto at Kalgoorlie was "Justice for all." I cannot see that justice is being meted out at present. We should all enjoy a share of the bounties that Nature has provided.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.34]: I congratulate you, Mr. President, on the position you now occupy, a position that your experience and natural ability well fit you to fill, a position that I am sure you will occupy with credit to yourself and advantage to the Parliament of this State. I congratulate Mr. Cornell also upon having attained the right to occupy the Chairmanship of Committees. From what I know of him I am satisfied he will discharge the duties efficiently and satisfactorily. I welcome the new members. I am in rather a quandary to know whether I am a new member or an old one because, though I came back with the rest of the new members, I have a record of 22 years' Parliamentary service behind me. It might be said that the electors made a mistake in not returning some of the candidates who sought re-election. That is a matter entirely for the electors. One cannot be associated with members in this Chamber for many years without feeling a kindly regard for them and a regret for those who have been defeated. Looking around the benches of this Chamber and the intelligence there displayed, I think we can safely say the House has lost no prestige and that the new members will do credit to the provinces they have been returned to represent. I wish to direct attention to what happened at the opening of this session—a condition of affairs that I hope will not

be repeated. One-third of the members of this House were excluded from the Chamber during the period that the Speech was being read by His Excellency the Governor. True, seating accommodation was provided for them in the back row of the President's gallery, but after His Excellency had summoned members of another place and they had walked to the bar of the House, some of us were not prepared to occupy the position allotted to us. We therefore stayed out of the House, but a casual glance through the door revealed Sir William Lathlain and other new members sitting in the back row trying to get a view of His Excellency, who occupied the President's Chair.

Hon. J. Cornell: Through a mountain of humanity.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, with some very hefty members from another place standing between them and His Excellency. Even a new member would not consider those hefty gentlemen to be transparent because there is no transparency about them; it is necessary to keep an eye on them from Monday morning to Saturday night. I look to you, Mr. President, to see that such a condition of affairs does not recur. True, the ex-President was in an unfortunate position—I have looked up the correspondence—but there is plenty of time between now and the next election to rectify this matter. Anything might have happened on the opening day; anything might happen if the rights of this Chamber are to be wrenched from us in that manner. It would have been easy for a few members to remain outside the Chamber, and so there would have been no quorum and the business of the session would have been held up until the new members had been sworn in. Further, let me suggest what might happen after the general elections next year. According to the ruling given, there will be no members of another place when His Excellency comes to this Chamber, because they cannot be members until they have been sworn in and they cannot be sworn in until Parliament has been opened. That will be the position if the ruling is correct. The members of another place cannot be sworn in and cannot take their seats until Parliament has been opened, and immediately Parliament is opened, the Governor sends for the Speaker and members of another place to attend here. The thing is too ridiculous.

Hon. E. H. Harris: According to a statement in "Hansard" made by the Premier.

Parliament will be opened in the Legislative Assembly next session.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This brings me to another point. I have been looking up the Governors' Speeches for some years past and I observe a departure in the Speech this year to which attention should be directed. I look to you, Mr. President, to follow up this matter also. Hitherto His Excellency has come to this Chamber and has summoned members of another place. When they have arrived and he has declared Parliament open, he has addressed us thus: "Mr. President, and hon. members of the Legislative Council; Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly." On this occasion, however, there was a transposition. This may have been due to design on the part of someone who wishes to under-rate the value of this House, or it may have been due to an oversight on the part of His Excellency. If it was due to either cause, I presume that attention will be directed to it. In the latest Speech His Excellency began, "Mr. President and hon. members of the Legislative Council; Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly," and after declaring Parliament open, proceeded to address "Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly" only, ignoring entirely members of the Council. That was an important departure, and there is more in it than appears on the surface. It does not matter to me personally how we are addressed, but there are certain rights and privileges that we are here to maintain, and I for one shall not tolerate any outside autocrat endeavouring to usurp our functions. The Speech itself is full of hope and promise; there is perhaps more hope and promise than there will be results. Still, the Speech provides food for thought. There is a great amount of important business ahead of us, regardless of what may be said about the scanty references to legislation that the Government propose to introduce this session. Mention is made of the Federal Government's proposal to take over the northern portion of this State. It is somewhat peculiar to follow this matter; fortunately some of us have good memories. I well remember that prior to the last general election Labour candidates went North and condemned all previous Governments for their neglect of the North. They promised that if returned to power nothing would be left undone that would tend to make the northern part of the State a paradise. In due course the elections were held, and La-

bour representatives came into power. They were hardly comfortably seated in their Ministerial chairs when they discovered that the North was too big a problem for the State. It was a Federal matter, an Imperial matter. That was all right. We then reached another stage. A suggestion came from the Prime Minister that the Federal authorities might deal with this important matter. No sooner had the Federal people stepped in, although they came in at the invitation of the State Government, than this was made the opportunity for kite flying, to show the Federal Government that they were not going to be allowed to take away the best part of our heritage. Political capital was made out of a proposal that the Federal Government had put forward practically at the invitation of the State Government. This is politics. It does not matter whether it is a Nationalist or Labour Government that is in power in the Federal arena, or Nationalist or Labour Governments are in power in the States, the welfare of Australia should not be lost sight of. If the Nationalist Prime Minister visualises the position from the national standpoint, the Labour Government and the other Governments are up in arms immediately, and can see no good in it. We are reaching the stage when those who are in charge of the affairs of the Commonwealth will have to view these questions more seriously, and the State Governments refrain from looking at problems from the political standpoint. They will have to look at them from the standpoint of how best to help the Commonwealth as a whole. I shall quote figures to show the necessity for united action. I think they will also show that these problems cannot be solved by preference to unionists, or by building additional tramways in Perth and suburbs. The great northern portion of this State is an Imperial matter. The position is such that it cannot be delayed. The territory is a huge one with hundreds of thousands of miles of unoccupied country, and hundreds of miles of coast-line tenanted only by savages. Within a few days' steam there are millions of coloured people. The Imperial Government and the Commonwealth Government know that the position cannot be allowed to remain as it is. The State Government have to understand that if they cannot do the job themselves they should not hurl insults at those who in the Federal arena have offered to come here, and help us from the national

and Imperial standpoint. The Speech indicates that the operations of the Federal Loan Council are satisfactory. Some member in authority said that government is finance. I think that is fairly accurate. I propose to give a few figures to indicate how the financial affairs of the State are proceeding. Members will, I think, agree that we have reached the stage when the financial problem has to be faced and considered not from a party standpoint, but from the point of view as to how best we can pull this State out of her difficulties. On the 30th June, 1925—I have nothing later—the gross public debt was £64,493,260, the gross disbursements on account of works and services was £56,895,031, leaving a difference of £7,598,229. The difference between what was borrowed and what was spent is made up of the deficit, the cost of loan flotations, etc. Approximately £7,600,000 were borrowed from which we have nothing in the shape of public works to show. The gross public debt in 1916 was £39,193,676, the accrued sinking fund was £4,528,432, and the net indebtedness was therefore £34,611,244, or £110 per head of population. The gross public debt on 31st December, 1925, was £69,733,611, and it is found after deducting sinking fund, £10,306,000, that the net debt was then £59,397,549. The net indebtedness in 1925 was therefore £160 per head of the population as compared with £110 in 1916. This shows the rapid rate at which expenditure grew between 1916 and 1925. Out of the net indebtedness at the end of December, 1925, £69,703,311, inscribed stock represented £49,469,083, leaving £20,234,520 in debentures, Treasury bills, etc. Here we have altogether twenty millions and a quarter floating around somewhere, borrowed from anywhere or everywhere, but presumably chiefly from the Federal Government, who are now being abused. For this sum no sinking fund has been provided. The Auditor General has something to say on this subject. I was under the impression that the Government were bound by the Act to provide a sinking fund on inscribed stock. It seems from the Auditor General's report that this can be evaded. In that official's report for 30th June, 1925, we find—

The setting aside of a sinking fund for the £2,150,000 raised under Acts No. 17 of 1917 and No. 7 of 1918 has again been postponed by the Governor until the 1st July, 1926.

Although by Act of Parliament it is provided that a sinking fund shall be set aside,

an Administrative Act this is postponed until the 1st July, 1926. The Auditor General continues—

The issues which carried no sinking fund contribution at the close of the year amounted to £2,944,742 16s. 7d. The original Act provides that a sinking fund shall be accumulated to repay loans raised for efficiency purposes within a period of 30 years. The first issues were made in July, 1917, and as the earlier issues carry no sinking fund, and where a fund is being set aside it is only at the rate of 10s. per cent. per annum, it is evident that the original intention of redemption for a sinking fund within 30 years will not be given effect unless contributions are considerably augmented.

When we come to look at the revenue per head of the population we find that in 1916 it was £17, and in 1926 it was £24. The population in 1916 was 313,000, and in 1925 it was 368,000. In these nine years we only added 55,000 to the population of the State, but we added to the indebtedness £24,786,000.

Hon. J. R. Brown: There was a war on.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: During that period the birth rate averaged about 8,000 per annum, and the death rate about 5,000 per annum. There was an actual increase of about 3,000 per annum. In nine years, the natural increase amounted to 27,000, leaving only 8,000 persons to come from overseas, the Eastern States and elsewhere in nine years. The birth rate in 1916 was 27 per thousand, and in 1925 it was only 22 per thousand. Anyone looking at these figures must see that we have passed the stage of solving our problems by preference to unionists, and matters of that kind. It is time some one visualised the position from the point of view of statesmanship. The figures I have quoted will emphasise that. Whilst the population of the State is 368,000, approximately half of this number, 179,388, are located in the metropolitan area. That is not a healthy condition of affairs. The cost of establishing the 313,000 people who were here in 1916 was £110 per head. The cost of establishing the 55,000 people who have come here during the last nine years—27,000 of them by natural increase and 28,000 imported—has been £450 per head. If hon. members work out the increased liability of 24¾ million sterling and the increased population of 55,000 during that period, they will find that my figures are practically correct. The Labour Government of some years ago hoped to solve the problem by the establishment of State trading concerns. They thought that by ruining established industries through the setting up of industries of their

own, they would simplify the problem. By bankrupting existing industries they hoped to create a prosperous country. Then Sir James Mitchell came along with a solution which was group settlement. Before I sit down I hope to show that neither State trading concerns nor group settlements have as yet done much towards solving the State's difficulties. Now let me deal with the State trading concerns. The Wyndham Meat Works close their financial year on the 31st December. We should have the figures to the 31st December, 1925, but they are not here yet. The latest figures, issued about 12 months ago, show that the capital expenditure on buildings was three-quarters of a million and the loss half a million. That loss, instead of being brought into profit and loss account, as it should have been, was added to the capital cost of the works, with the result that the Wyndham proposition, although it cost about three-quarters of a million, now stands in the books at 1¼ millions. For the State Steamship Service I have figures to the 30th June, 1925. The loss then totalled £400,574 16s. 9d. Since then the State Steamship Service has been through a bad year. The manager's report for 1925 predicted a bad time, and stated that new ships were the only solution of the difficulty. We shall be told, no doubt, that during the war period the "Kangaroo" earned a tremendous lot of money, which went into general revenue. That I am prepared to admit, but it must be borne in mind that the "Kangaroo" was during that period the only free ship on the high seas. The ships of all merchants had been commandeered for war service, and the only reason why the "Kangaroo" was not commandeered was her being a State-owned ship. She was carrying oil for an American combine when she should have been carrying food for the people of the State. She also found employment in carrying flour out of the country. Being a free ship on the ocean, she could charge any freight she liked, and hand it over to the State Government. The State Government profiteered with the "Kangaroo." Therefore, I do not want to be told any more about her profits. I consider that we have been told often enough. The State Sawmills stand in the books at £625,000, and the net profit according to the latest balance sheet was £25,000. We know how that profit was made. Correspondence has been read in Parliament showing that the manager of the State Sawmills speaks about "our association" and says "our association has already quoted, and we refuse to quote

you." These are the State Sawmills which were established to burst up what is known as the Timber Combine. No sooner do they become established than, in order to make ends meet, they have to couple up with the combine and join in raising prices. Even under those conditions they are only able to show a profit of some £25,000. For the same year, 1925, the State Brickworks show a profit of £3,000. We know what has happened in the brick industry. Prices have gone up, and the demand is greater than the supply. Nobody will increase the brick-making plants. Nobody will put money into the business, simply because nobody knows how, when, and where the Government will land him by enlarging their plant or cutting down prices. As a set-off there is a loss on the Boya quarry of £2,400 for the same year. The State Implement Works appear to have got £400,000 of public money tie up, though presumably they pay interest on a much smaller amount, as a former Minister for Works—I think it was Mr. George—wrote down their capital by £100,000, saying that the affair was over-capitalised and that interest would be charged only on the lesser amount. The State Implements Works, according to their last balance sheet, made a loss of £650. The State hotels, another monopoly, show a profit of £8,000. I venture to suggest that any publican in this country, having the same monopoly under the same conditions, could give the same service and make a profit of, not £8,000, but something like £100,000. The latest figures available, those for January, February, and March of the present year, show that the debits of the trading concerns for those three months were £1,303,477, and the credits £1,189,583. Only debits and credits are shown; the profit and loss account is made out at the end of the year. It appears, however, that in those three months the debits exceeded the credits by £113,894. On that basis it appears that we are at present financing the State trading concerns to the extent of half a million per annum. The question arises, where do the Government get the money with which to finance their trading concerns? That takes me back to the Auditor General's report, in which there is a paragraph headed "Trust Fund" and reading—

The balances included in Return No. 1 as "Trust Fund" total £19,188,750 15s. 1d. A perusal of the return shows the following debit balances:—Commonwealth advances, wire netting advances £92 6s. 9d., State Im-

plement and Engineering Works £37,456 19 3d., State Quarry £2,246 17s. 5d., State Sawmills £134,854 3s. 3d., State Shipping Service £311,688 12s. 6d., Wyndham Freezing, Canning, and Meat Export Works £193,428 13 5d.; total £681,767 12s. 7d. No provision has been made for these overdrawn accounts in regard to the State trading concerns, the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916, provides that the money shall be taken from the "Advance to Treasurer" or a Parliamentary appropriation.

According to the Auditor General, nearly £700,000 of trust funds have been taken for the purpose of carrying on these trading concerns. That brings me to the proposal for State insurance. I understand that the Government, in their wisdom, have started a State Insurance office. I fail to understand how any Government, in face of the State Trading Concerns Act, could establish a new State trading concern. Section 3 of the Act refers to "State trading concerns mentioned in the Schedule to the Act," and sets out what those State trading concerns are and what is the amount of capital involved in each of them. It goes on to say—

This Act shall apply to trading concerns mentioned in the Schedule.

An insurance office is not mentioned in the Schedule. Then there is Section 6, which provides that—

No trading concern other than those in which this Act applies or shall apply shall unless expressly authorised by Parliament be hereafter established or carried on by the Government of the State, or by any person acting on behalf of such Government, under its authority.

I shall not enter into the pros and cons of a State insurance office, or into the necessity for such an office. If such a necessity existed, then it was the clear duty of the Government to come to Parliament for authority.

Hon. E. H. Gray: We are coming for authority now.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: There is a right way and a wrong way of doing it. The Government are now carrying on a State insurance office.

Hon. H. Stewart: Illegally.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes. They are carrying on that State insurance office in face of the Act which provides that no State trading concerns shall be established except with the express approval of Parliament.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Government have to do it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is all very well. If the matter was so urgent, Parliament should have been called together.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And then you would have objected.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That may or may not be; but to set up a State trading concern and then come to Parliament for ratification is to ignore Parliament and to take authority out of the hands of Parliament. If the Government, having established a State insurance office during the last recess, are allowed to bluff us into the belief that because the office is established we are bound to endorse their action, I would not like to say how many new State trading concerns will be embarked upon during the next recess. The Government would be able to say to us, "You found the State insurance office established, and you endorsed it. We have adopted the same course with other concerns, and you will have to endorse them." Let Mr. Gray say what he likes; we have to uphold the authority of Parliament, and we must not allow any outsider, whether he be a member of the Labour Party or whoever he may be, to usurp the functions of Parliament. Parliament has said that this shall not be done. If Parliament follows me—and I hope it will—Parliament will declare that the establishment of the State insurance office is illegal, and that there is a right and a wrong way of doing things.

Hon. E. H. Gray: This House must stand by its own legislation.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Of course; and its own legislation is what?

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Workers' Compensation Act.

Hon. J. Ewing: There is no analogy.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Does the Workers' Compensation Act provide for State insurance?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am sorry Mr. Gray is not present, for when we went to tea he interjected that this House must see to it that the laws it passes are enforced. That is what I am aiming at. Parliament said that no additional trading concerns were to be established, except by its expressed will. Without entering into the pros and cons of State insurance, I am bound to follow Mr. Gray and see to it that the laws passed by this House are enforced. It is said of me

that I endeavour to uphold the traditions of the House. It matters not to me who may be in power, whether Labour or Nationalist; all I desire is to see that the business of the country is conducted properly. To establish any new trading concern without the consent of Parliament is to set Parliament at defiance. To my mind there is only one way to deal with that. I think I have shown that the Government's proposal to rectify the finances of the State by the establishment of trading concerns is only a myth. But for the fact that the existing trading concerns have joined with private concerns in raising prices, the deficits of the several State trading concerns would have been much larger than they are. I have indicated that Sir James Mitchell's proposal to rectify the position of affairs was the group settlement scheme. I do not put the blame for that on anybody in particular; everybody was to blame. When Sir James Mitchell came back from England with his agreement, people met him with brass bands and banquets, and declared that everything in the garden was lovely. Anybody attempting to criticise that agreement was looked upon as a croaker. Nevertheless, as a member of this Chamber, I analysed it. When I put the facts to the House, a dispute arose as to whether or not I was quoting from the correct agreement. Mr. Colebatch, the then Leader of the House, stood up and declared that the agreement from which I was quoting was the right one. From the Auditor General's report for 1925—we have not yet seen that for 1926—I find that the Peel estate was purchased for £55,000, and that at the end of June, 1925, the expenditure on that estate was £1,154,000, making a total of £1,209,000. That expenditure has been incurred for some years now, and we are still waiting to see the result of the investment. If any member had put so much as £5,000 into a proposition three or four years ago, he would want to see some return for it by now. When we know that on the 30th June, 1925, £1,209,000 had been expended on the Peel estate, we should begin to look at the market reports to see what we are getting for that expenditure. Group settlement expenditure—which, I presume, includes the Peel estate expenditure, although it is not made clear—to the 30th June, 1925, was £2,237,000. The Governor's Speech sets out that 135 groups have been established, with a population of 9,232 persons, but it is silent on the subject of how

many farms have been established. The proposal was that the Agricultural Bank should take over some of those farms and finance them, but I understand the trustees of the Agricultural Bank rightly took up this position: "If we are to take over those farms, we are not going to take them over at the cost set out in your record. We have to protect the interests of the bank, and we can only take over the farms at what they are worth, not at what they cost." The Mitchell agreement, signed in 1922, provided that in five years we should bring 75,000 people to the State. On that basis the loan expenditure was allocated. Moreover, we were to establish 6,000 farms for six millions of money. There was talk also of 15,000 migrants per annum not being sufficient, and at one stage it was suggested that we should take 25,000 migrants. Some cables passed between the Mother Country and the Premier of this State for an additional quota, and we held a special session to deal with the construction of a railway from Pemberton to Denmark. That was three years ago; yet, as far as I know, not much progress has been made with the construction of that line. Twelve months ago nothing but a little earthworks had been built.

Hon. H. Stewart: They have a lot of men down there now, in view of the general elections.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I thought all available men were at Geraldton, making a harbour in view of the general elections. However, we set out on a loan expenditure to bring 15,000 people to the State each year. According to the Speech, the number of migrants that came here in 1925 was 3,304, while in 1926 the figures rose to 3,730. The expenditure had proceeded in anticipation of an increased population of 15,000 per annum, but the population has not come, and so the individual resident of this State is now carrying a per capita indebtedness not equalled in any other part of the world. These problems have to be faced. We cannot face them by doing less work and giving work only to those who join the unions. These problems have to be faced from the standpoint of statemanship. If there is one man in this country with whom I sympathise, it is the present Minister for Lands. Very few know the difficulties he is faced with in respect of group settlement. The officers of the department also are very much worried; in fact, whereas three years ago we were employing brass bands and shouting "Hur-

rah" over group settlement, to-day the subject is avoided by every person associated with the scheme. The whole trouble has been due to our endeavour to put on the land men that did not know their job. The land in the South-West is very much better than any of us used to think. I was born there, and I have since acquired some knowledge of land, notwithstanding which until a little time ago I did not know we had so valuable an asset in the South-West. The evidence before the Commission was conclusive on the one point, that a man who knew his job would succeed on inferior land, whereas a man who did not know his job would fail on the best land. We have put about £4,000,000 into the group settlement scheme already, which should increase our interest bill to £250,000 per annum.

Hon. J. Ewing: Are they not getting the money at one per cent.?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Not yet.

Hon. J. Ewing: Yes, they have had a million and a half at one per cent.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Glasheen dealt with the danger of this cheap money, and its investment amongst people who do not know its value, and do not know how to use it when they get it. The trouble is that we are endeavouring to develop the South-West with thousands of people who do not know their job. The rainfall is right, the land is right, and I believe we have intelligent administration, but we must have also an intelligent and experienced population down there if we are to get the required results.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And an experienced population, for down there experience counts just as much as intelligence.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No doubt it does. Judging from our statistics, there is a big discrepancy between the number of people brought into the State and our actual population. It represents a leakage that should never have occurred. We hear of thousands of people leaving the goldfields and going to the Eastern States. Those people were acclimatised, knew all about Australia, and knew something about the land. In the South-West they would have been a far greater asset to the State than are those who do not know their job. Reference has been made to the development of the North. I had sent to me the other day an extract from the "Worker" newspaper. This extract contained the news that the present Government had fulfilled all its promises to the North. This was published in large letters.

When I came to analyse the paragraph I found that it was a statement made by the Honorary Minister, Mr. Hickey. It had not been endorsed by anybody. So far as the North is concerned I can say that the present Government have done more to help it than any other Government we have had in office. That, however, is in regard to small matters only. The Government have failed to visualise the position from the right standpoint. We have an empty North which has to be populated. It has to be made productive, and if it is admitted that it is beyond the possibilities of the State Government to do that, then why not encourage the Federal Government to make proposals instead of, when the first proposal is put up, challenging them with an attempt to confiscate the rights of a third of the people of the State. The Minister for Works went into heroics about this matter when he was in the North. He said that before he would hand the people over to the Commonwealth, body, soul and spirit, there would have to be a referendum taken. If you hold a referendum when there are in the North all the employees engaged at the Wyndham Meat Works, and all the shearers are in that part of the State, and many others whose vocation takes them there at certain periods of the year, there will be no doubt as to the result of the referendum. If we have a referendum it should be taken amongst the people who have been battling in the North for 25, 30, or 40 years.

Hon. J. Ewing: They could not settle it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not think any of these matters should be settled by means of a referendum. They should be settled by the Parliament of the country. I am pointing out that some of our statesmen would have all these problems settled by referendum, that is, if they had their way. That kind of thing does not appeal to me. There is one matter that will go a long way towards getting us out of our difficulties and it is the development of our light lands. Experience has taught us that we have not yet begun to produce in this country. There are millions of acres of light land that can be bought for a few shillings an acre and cleared also for a few shillings—land that will produce abundance of feed, and as far as oats are concerned no less than two tons of hay to the acre. When with a capital investment of £1 an acre it will be possible to produce two tons of oaten hay to the acre, there is no limit to the possibilities of sheep production in this country. The other day I was talking to a member representing the South-West

who said that group settlement lands would grow two tons of oaten hay to the acre. Then if we spend £40 an acre to clear land in the South-West, we are certainly on the wrong track. It would be far better to spend £1 an acre in some other locality if we knew that in that locality we would get the same result. When moving the Address-in-reply the other day Mr. Gray said that a solution of one of our difficulties would be to bring the men engaged in the agricultural and pastoral industries under the provisions of the Arbitration Act. If one chooses to analyse the position he will see that the only industries prospering to-day are the agricultural and pastoral. If Mr. Gray thinks that he is going to solve the problem by starting out to impose conditions upon those two industries, I am afraid I cannot agree with him. I have had some experience in these matters. If you get men away into the bush and treat them well, and pay them well, you will get good work from them, but you must be firm with them, just as the Government should be firm with the community as a whole. In that way only you will get the best possible results. What we want to-day is to get the men away from Trades Hall influence and look after them and pay them well. My experience is that if we do that they will work as well as they ever worked before. In that way too we can make our industries prosper. It is no use denying the fact that if we are to get out of our difficulties that can only be accomplished by producing more and by asking everybody to do more than has been done in the past. The theory of ruining the boss and having prosperous surroundings is only a myth. The only way to get out of our difficulties is to produce more at less cost. One would think from the Premier's recently published remarks that the State Government had all the troubles and that the Federal Government had not any. When we come to analyse the position we see that the Federal Government have responsibilities and that they cannot afford to give anything away. The Premier complained that the Bruce Government had not carried out the recommendations of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the State's disabilities. We gather from the Premier's remarks that every Royal Commission's report should be adopted. I have been associated with Parliament for 20 years and I have served on several Royal Commissions. There was once a Commission of five appointed to deal with me but the present

Premier was one of the Ministers who intercepted the report of that Royal Commission and it never reached the Governor as it should have done. The Premier is harping seven days a week on the fact that the Royal Commission decided that Western Australia was entitled to certain considerations. I will ask Mr. Hickey to peruse the reports of Royal Commissions appointed by the State, and extending over the last 10 years, to ascertain whether any of their recommendations have ever been carried out. It is an acknowledged fact that the reports of those Commissions find their way into pigeon holes. Surely we should ask the present Premier, if he is insisting on Mr. Bruce carrying out the recommendations of the Disabilities Commission, that he too should pay attention to the reports of the Commissions appointed from time to time to deal with the State's own problems. The Commonwealth responsibilities, so far as I can learn, are great, and what interests me is that the Commonwealth is providing a sinking fund to meet their liabilities and that the States are not. For that reason I am inclined to look with favour upon the Commonwealth proposals because there is a distinct desire and distinct evidence of an attempt on the part of the Federal Government to meet their obligations.

Hon. J. Ewing: We have a sinking fund also.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We have borrowed £20,000,000 without providing a sinking fund, and probably we shall have to borrow in the future to pay back these loans. The Commonwealth is saddled with a war debt of £400,000,000. That is an enormous sum of money for a community of 6,000,000 people. The annual interest mostly on account of the war is £20,000,000 and the Commonwealth set aside a sinking fund of £4,300,000. They are paying war pensions to the extent of £7,200,000, old age and invalid pensions £7,000,000, maternity allowances £700,000, defence £2,500,000, the navy £2,000,000, and then there is the cost of administration of all the departments. The Commonwealth are also providing a road grant of £500,000 and in 1924-25 they had to find £600,000 for the losses on steamships. These are problems that the Commonwealth Government are faced with.

Hon. J. Ewing: The States find all the money.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I will come to that presently. If the States are finding the money, why find it for the Commonwealth

to collect and then pay it back to the State. It is much better for the Commonwealth to say "This is our province and that is your province. You have to finance on that basis." These figures with a few incidentals represent about £50,000,000 per annum that the Commonwealth Government have to find. Customs revenue is about £37,000,000 and land, income and entertainment taxes and probate account for approximately £15,000,000, a total of £52,000,000. Hitherto the Commonwealth collected on behalf of the States indirectly and made refunds on a per capita basis. If I understand the proposal exactly they intend to vacate the field of taxation to the extent of what they refund to the State on a per capita basis. It matters not to me whether we pay our taxes directly to the State Government or whether we pay to the Federal Government and they pay it back. The fact remains that the taxpayers of the Commonwealth have to pay, and so long as the State Government continue their policy of borrowing the money and not providing any sinking fund, so long will the States be faced with difficulties. The time has come when the Commonwealth should say, "This is your province. You can collect direct taxation, and you have to carry on the business of the country in accordance with the revenue that you derive from that source." But so long as we have the Commonwealth Government providing money for the States to carry on, so long I believe the States will continue the extravagant policy that they have been pursuing for many years past. Another danger presents itself, and hence the necessity for facing the position. That danger is that so long as the States can incur this expenditure on the off-chance of going to the Federal Government for a rebate, so long will extravagance continue. If we could reach the stage at which the Federal Government could collect their revenue and spend it, and the State Governments could collect their revenue and spend it, then each Government would know exactly where they were, and each would have to proceed accordingly. It is idle to talk about a referendum as to secession and whether this State shall be allowed to insist upon the 25s. per capita payment by the Federal Government. We all know the conditions under which we entered Federation. I was an anti-federalist and fought in opposition to the Federal proposal for week after week. I was then the member for East Fremantle in the Legislative Assembly and

sometimes I had to address very hostile meetings. I could never see that we would be anything but a junior partner in the Federation. I have had the experience of being a junior partner myself. Hon. members will know that the junior partner is the man who does all the work and receives a small share of the profits. The senior partner is the man who sits in his comfortable chair and collects the bulk of the dividends when they are paid. In the circumstances, I could not see anything but the position of a junior partner for Western Australia as part of the Commonwealth. The conditions under which we entered Federation were explicit. We went into Federation knowing that the only way of getting out of it was by the vote of a majority of the people in a majority of the States. It is idle to talk about seceding from the Commonwealth or of seizing the Customs. It is absurd! Suppose we did seize the Customs, as has been suggested elsewhere. We would have the police on our side, and against us there would be the army and the navy under the control of the Federal Government, who would see that they got what they were entitled to. I have not said a word against Federation since we agreed to federate. We went into it under certain conditions, one of which was that certain payments were to be made to the States "until Parliament otherwise provided." The Parliament referred to was the Federal Parliament, and the members of that body were acting within their province in making any conditions they liked regarding the payments to the States. That was part of the contract we entered into, and I have not yet been a party to repudiating a contract with which I was associated. Our contract contained in the Federal Constitution under which we handed ourselves over to become part and parcel of the Commonwealth. I have indicated the only way in which we can get out of that contract. It is idle to talk about resolutions and protesting against the Federal Parliament acting within their rights. As a matter of fact, the question of a referendum does not come into it at all. I believe that we are getting bigger men in the Federal Parliament than we have in the State Parliaments. In the Federal arena we have men trying to visualise things from a national standpoint, not from the party point of view. If we can help them in any way, we should do so. We should assist anyone who will see that the finances of the State are kept in order and particularly so,

when a Government would make provision by way of sinking funds to meet liabilities as they fall due.

Hon. J. Ewing: We are not as wasteful as the Federal Government. They spend millions where we spend hundreds.

Hon. J. Cornell: Proportionately we are more so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not wish to delay the House any longer. It becomes the duty of each and every one associated with this State to analyse carefully our present position, and particularly the financial position. Anyone choosing to look into that question must realise that we are merely postponing the evil day. We hear a good deal about unification. I am fast becoming a unificationist myself. We have 14 Parliaments and 700 or 800 members of Parliament. Viewing it from the political standpoint instead of the national standpoint, I think we are reaching a state of chaos. It is a question whether unification would not be preferable to the conditions under which the States are carrying on business to-day. We have a National Party in power in the Federal arena, and Labour Governments in power in most of the State Parliaments. No matter how good may be a proposal put up by the Prime Minister, and no matter how much care and thought Mr. Bruce may have given to it from a national standpoint, the Labour Governments and parties in the different States deem it their duty to oppose the proposal and hold it up to ridicule. If we do not desire unification, and if the Government do not see that borrowed money is properly spent and an adequate sinking fund provided to meet liabilities when they fall due, then we will get unification whether we want it or not. There is only one way out of it, and that is for the Federal Government to take over our liabilities and with them they will take us over. I thank hon. members for the attention they have paid to my remarks. Figures are very hard to follow, and not very interesting. I have put up a set of figures to-day that thought I was in duty bound to do. I hope I have not exaggerated the position or been misleading in any way. Before I resume my seat I once more desire to thank the present Government for the attention they have given to small matters concerning the North. We have had more Ministerial visits than ever before, and the present Ministers have travelled more through the North than have representatives of any

other Governments when in power. I hope and believe that they travelled with good intentions. I am satisfied that they travelled in order to see the possibilities of the country and to understand our difficulties. If they consider that the State can develop the North and put up proposals to that end, they can depend upon my support through thick and thin in carrying them out. If they consider the problem too much for them, they are in duty bound to say so, and when the Commonwealth Government, probably urged by the Imperial Government who realise the weakness of the position, submit proposals, let the Government give them every consideration. They should not condemn the proposals but rather should they analyse them and, if necessary, make counter-proposals in order to develop one of the most important parts of this State.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN

(Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.10] Upon this my initial entry into the Parliamentary life of Western Australia, my first duty is a pleasant one. It is to offer you, Mr. President, my hearty congratulations upon your elevation to the Presidential chair, which I am sure you will fill with credit to yourself and with honour and dignity to the Legislative Council. May I be permitted to thank you, Sir, and hon. members generally for the kindly words of welcome and encouragement with which they greeted me upon my entry into this Chamber. It will be a great incentive to me to work in harmony with them and their very kind words of welcome will be to me a great encouragement indeed. During the short time I have been in the House I have been sitting like a disciple at the feet of so many Gamaliels, listening for words of wisdom falling from their lips. I listened in order to equip myself for the great work that I hope lies ahead of me. I listened with rapt attention to hon. members asking the Honorary Minister certain questions and listened with equally close attention to the replies furnished by him. If hon. members gained all the information they desired from those replies, then all I can say is that they possess a much greater imaginative mind than I do. I have also taken part in the debate on the Supply Bill. During my long public career in connection with a big municipality and also during my association with certain commercial concerns, never before had I seen such a large amount of money passed with so little information given to those who had to

authorise the expenditure. Mr. Nicholson called attention to the fact that whilst members did not desire a detailed account of how the money had been spent or was to be spent, the Minister should give members a rough outline as to how the money had been spent or was to be spent. The Minister preserved a Sphinx-like attitude and, considering the enormous sum involved—it represented nearly £2,000,000—very little information indeed was furnished to the House. In all my commercial experience, I have never seen that incident equalled. I understand this Chamber has no rights regarding money Bills, but as a matter of courtesy alone some little information should have been given to hon. members when a Bill involving such a large sum of money was placed before them for their approval. I have been handed a copy of the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor at the opening of the session. I was one of the new members who were not permitted to be present in their seats at the opening ceremony. It is quite true we were placed in the extreme rear of the Chamber. When I was placed there with nine others, it reminded me of my younger days when I was a member—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Of a Sunday school?

Hon. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN: No, of a minstrel troupe. All went well for a time and no doubt the intentions of those who placed us there were good, but when members of another place were summoned to the Chamber and they interposed their portly frames and wide backs, we were entirely hidden from view, and we could neither see His Excellency nor hear the words of his Speech. Might I suggest that if the same procedure is followed on future occasions, the title of the Speech should read, "Mr. President and some of the hon. members of the Legislative Council." Both Mr. Ewing and Mr. Nicholson dealt lucidly with the financial question. I agree with both of them, more particularly when they said that during the past few years there had never been a better opportunity for the Government to balance the ledger. It is true that the revenue has increased by a considerable amount, but it is unfortunately true, also that the expenditure has increased enormously. It is well, not only for the present Government but for all Governments to realise that they are the trustees of the people's money, and that the concessions that might be granted to certain sections of the people can be granted only at the expense of the whole of the people. Concessions

which are granted to only one section of the people are not fair or equitable to the people who have to find the money. While the Government take a certain amount of credit for making financially what they called a fair showing, I disagree with them. The first thing any honourable community must do is to pay its debts. We must endeavour to live within our means and balance the ledger, not once in six or seven years, but, as a commercial organisation has to do, every year. Excuses might be made to shareholders on a few occasions, but excuses will not do when deficits are so incessant in their repetition. Touching the paragraph on the Disabilities Commission, I strongly object to the manner in which it is worded, because it is not a fair statement of what has actually occurred. One would have thought that when the Federal Government had promised the State £450,000 it was a fact of sufficient significance to receive mention in the Governor's Speech, but there is no mention of that very important fact. I was one of the humble citizens who gave an enormous amount of time to preparing evidence which I eventually placed before the Disabilities Commission. I followed the work of the Commission throughout the whole of their sittings and I also followed the deliberations in the Federal Parliament. The paragraph in the Speech reads—

The Commonwealth Government, however, have not accepted these recommendations, and have submitted an alternative proposal much less favourable to this State.

Let us view the facts fairly. As one with no political experience, I may perhaps view the position more clearly from the point of view of a citizen than is possible for those who have been permeated with political jealousies or with the prejudice that I am sorry to see exists so strongly against the Federal Parliament. When the Disabilities Commission were appointed I am sure everyone in Western Australia was delighted to learn that an inquiry was to be made into our difficulties under Federation. Evidence was tendered by a number of citizens and the strong point made by most of them was that we desired to control our own tariff for a period of 25 years. That recommendation was eventually agreed to by a majority of two to one of the Commission and presented to the Federal Government. I am aware that the Federal Government gave serious consideration to the proposal, but every member of this House realises the difficulties that would confront the Fed-

eral authorities when so drastic an alteration of the Constitution was recommended. In the first place it would be necessary to obtain the consent of the other States and we are all aware that that would be an impossibility. The Commission also realised the difficulties attending the carrying out of that recommendation. The principal witness for the State Government, Mr. N. Keenan, K.C., stated in his evidence—

We do not anticipate that we are likely to receive any relief in the form of a revision of the tariff, for the simple reason that whatever our belief is in the matter we are a small community and a great majority of the citizens of Australia are of an opposite opinion.

The Commission were well aware of the difficulties that confronted them and the Government, and they made a second recommendation, also by a two to one majority, that Western Australia be granted £450,000, while the minority recommendation was that we be granted £300,000. The Federal Government took what I believe to be a fair and liberal view of the position by granting us the sum of £450,000. In spite of all the onslaughts directed at the Federal Government, it would have been quite within their province to grant the State the lesser sum of £300,000. There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding as to how that money should be spent. I was present on the platform in Queen's Hall when Senator Pearce first announced that that amount would be granted to Western Australia, and he was definite in his opinion as to how the money should be spent. It was not to be spent in trading concerns or in other ventures of a like nature; in his opinion it should be spent in accordance with the decision of the Commission to alleviate the burdens which it was contended had been imposed upon the State as a result of Federation. I think it will be found that when the amount is paid to the State, there will be attached to it certain stipulations as to how it shall be spent. I venture to say that increased assistance could well be given to the mining industry, because probably no industry has suffered so seriously as the direct result of Federation, particularly through the incidence of the tariff, as has mining. I am one of those people who believe in neither bonuses nor protective duties, and while I maintain that it is fair to give a bonus on the production of gold if it is given on the production of sugar, I consider that neither is good policy in the long run. On the other hand so much has been done to assist other

industries that it is only fair we should get some consideration for the mining industry. There is another important factor to be borne in mind when we consider that the grant has been given to alleviate the burdens arising from Federation. That is the high income tax, particularly on the larger incomes. It is within my knowledge, as I am sure it is within the knowledge of many other members, that enormous sums of money have been taken out of Western Australia as a result of the imposition of high rates of income tax, particularly on larger amounts. When the revision of the income tax was last before Parliament, members are aware that a minimum was laid down, and in order to make up the amount of the estimated loss, it was added to the incomes of people receiving £5,000 a year or more. In theory everyone will agree that that was the best thing to do, but in practice it turned out that at the time there were only 55 people in the State receiving £5,000 and over, with the result that they had to bear an enormous burden. I do not wish it to be understood that I am making any plea for the capitalist class, but I wish to bring home to members the fact that enormous sums of money have been withdrawn from investment in Western Australia, and further that large sums of money which would have been brought here have not been invested because of the high income tax. When the £450,000 is distributed I hope it will be in accordance with the terms on which it was granted. I believe we shall gain nothing by this constant haggling with the Federal Government. By united effort and sincere endeavour to assist to meet our own requirements, we shall gain far more if we come to an amicable understanding than by belittling all the efforts that the Federal Government are making for our benefit. I have been twitted with having championed the cause of the Federal Government because I have the honour and privilege of the friendship of the Prime Minister, but believe me I do not champion his cause on that ground. No one will fight harder for the interests of Western Australia than will I. When the interests of the State clash with those of the Federal Government, my friendship with the Prime Minister will not count, but I believe there are few men in Australia who have a wider vision as to the future of the Commonwealth than has Mr. Bruce, and I say emphatically there is no man in Australia who has a more kindly regard for or a more sincere wish to do well by Western Australia than has the Prime Minister.

The Honorary Minister: He has a peculiar way of expressing it; that is all.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: Dealing with the evidence before the Disabilities Commission: I am aware that Mr. Keenan, K.C., spoke on behalf of the State. Everyone realises the enormous amount of work that was done by Mr. Keenan, and how splendidly the case was put forward from the point of view of the State. I am not sure whether any emolument was granted to him, but I understand he did the work in an honorary capacity. If he prepared that evidence and presented it to the Commission in his capacity as a citizen, without fee or reward, he should be called to the bar of the House and publicly thanked for his services. Many men to-day render signal service to the State. They may receive a letter, or some other intimation, thanking them, but when such signal services are rendered as were rendered by Mr. Keenan, something should be done to show the gratitude of the people towards the giver. Many years ago Chief Justice Higinbotham in Victoria undertook to consolidate all the statutes of that State. He did the work in an honorary capacity, and presented the result to Parliament. He was called to the bar of the House and publicly thanked for his excellent services. I think Mr. Keenan's work should be recognised in the same way. Mr. Holmes has spoken at length upon the North-West. I quite agree we should not adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy concerning North-West problems. The Federal Government, in their management of the Northern Territory, have not yet shown that ability and consideration and progress, that I feel are necessary if the northern parts of Australia are to be populated and cultivated. Until we have some definite scheme showing the Commonwealth Government's intentions with regard to the North-West generally, I prefer to withhold my views as to what should be done. There is only one point I wish to emphasise on the question of group settlement. I have not yet been able to assimilate the figures that have been placed before us by Mr. Holmes. We are told that since the time group settlement was instituted, there have been settled 22,677 migrants. During the debate Mr. Gray interjected as to the number of unemployed we have. There have been these 22,677 new arrivals, and in my opinion there is no more unemployment in Perth to-day than there was in any of the years before any migrants arrived. This shows clearly that the more migrants we receive, the more work is created for others. Mr. Gepp,

the chairman of the Development and Migration Commission, has publicly stated that he is opposed to bringing people into the country; this is going to tend towards reducing the standard of living. We all heartily agree with that. It is satisfactory to note that the Federal Government have written off £756,000, that is to say have cancelled that charge against the State Government, for the revaluation of the properties of settlers established under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. I understand that many soldiers are desirous of reaching finality as to the allotment of the money, so that they may know what their real position is when the revaluations are made. Valuers are at work, but I have been informed that greater progress might be made in the interests of the settlers concerned. I heartily support the proposal with regard to the new road scheme between this State and the Federal Government. We have heard a great deal as to the taxation that will accrue, and the new petrol tax, and the penalty that will be imposed upon motorists. To quote from a speech delivered by Mr. Latham, the Federal Attorney General, as it appeared in "Hansard," I think that motorists are pretty well provided for in the matter of roads. They are not called upon to pay more than a fair proportion that is due from them for the privileges they enjoy. It is proposed that the Federal Government shall raise out of the petrol tax £1,500,000, will pay £700,000 out of revenue, and that the State shall find its proportion, equal to 15s. in the pound. That is a mere fleabite compared with the money that has been spent on roads in Australia by municipalities and road boards. Apart altogether from the £3,500,000 now proposed to be spent, the local authorities lay out annually in this direction between £11,000,000 and £12,000,000. Some few years ago I made a trip to the Fitzgerald River—I was looking for oil and did not find it—and went through Gnowangerup and Ongerup, as far down as Needilup. The roads were almost impassable. I was well equipped, but had the utmost difficulty in getting through. I succeeded in my object in getting through, but had great sympathy for the man who is trying to settle on the land there. Less than 12 months ago I went over the same route again. This time, owing to the great road-making combination, I was able to travel over the route at 40 miles an hour. I had the same experience in my peregrinations through Denmark, Nornalup, and along the coast. Already roads have been constructed in this State as the result of this combination, that would not

have been built for 25 years. I hope the Federal Government will be able to carry out their proposal in its entirety. It will do more than anything else in the way of giving practical assistance to those who are battling so hard in the out-lying portions of the State. Practically in every session of Parliament reference is made to the metropolitan water scheme. I congratulate the Government on having taken seriously in hand this matter of providing an efficient water supply for the city. The whole of the water supply, sewerage and drainage is being worked under a wrong system. Every year sums are placed on the Estimates to provide these facilities for the metropolis, whereas the people should be able to provide their own, and pay for them. The only way to do this is to create a metropolitan board of works. Within three years we shall be celebrating the centenary of this beautiful city. It will be 100 years old but is not yet sewered, and is not likely to be sewered for many years. I live within half a mile of this Chamber, and bought my house 13 years ago. I was told then that the sewerage would be connected in less than 12 months, but it appears to be as far off as ever. It will remain a long way off for most of the districts around Perth so long as the present system continues. The Metropolitan Board of Works of Melbourne is doing magnificent work. It comprises nominees of the Government, and nominees of the various councils within the metropolitan area. The board has full power to undertake all the work in connection with the scheme, and to raise the funds required. My remarks apply particularly to sewerage, because some water supply work is going on. A good engineer informed me that we are not looking far enough ahead in respect of our water supplies. He said we should see that the Whitby Falls are protected and that the Serpentine is also protected. I believe that Perth will grow into a great place, and all these undertakings must be put on a firm basis, otherwise they cannot be successful. We have been unfortunately placed because of the manner in which our water supply has been played with for so many years, and by so many Governments. The rate is now going to be increased by 5d. in the pound. This is due to our adoption of the wrong system. If the whole business were placed under the control of a board, we should have one big scheme and a continuous construction policy would be carried on from year to year, no matter what Government were in power. The people of the

metropolis would not then be under any compliment to anyone for the supply of the utilities that would belong to them. There would not be much difficulty in the matter of finance. There is a big and continuous income. In Melbourne no debentures stand higher in the estimation of the public, more particularly the small people, as a safe and sound investment, than those of the Metropolitan Board of Works. The debentures are easily negotiable and can be readily exchanged and disposed of. They are regarded as a first class investment. I hope the Government will seriously consider the formation of such a board. The suburbs are growing at a great rate. Even if a board were established to-morrow, it would take many years to complete the sewerage scheme. In the meantime the people are suffering from severe disabilities and inconvenience. It is not right that they should suffer so in a city that is about to celebrate its centenary. I congratulate the Government upon having given substantial assistance to the local bodies in the South-West in order that cheap electrical power may be available to them. In England to-day no question is receiving greater attention, or is regarded as of more importance, than that of cheap electrical power. The British Government, realising its importance as the chief factor in cheaper production, contemplate the erection of five or six enormous generating stations in various suitable centres to supply all the requirements of the nation. It is stated that the scheme, when completed, will effect a saving of £6,000,000 per annum, besides giving a great impetus to many languishing trades. I consider that the time is ripe for the undertaking of a scheme on similar lines in Western Australia, because in addition to the South-West there is the Great Southern line as far as Albany and the whole of the Eastern Railway to be supplied. I am not sure how far the current can be carried; but I gathered from Mr. Lovekin, after his last trip Home, that on high power the tension could be distributed over wonderfully great distances. Collie as a distributing centre is most favourably situated, because it stands almost equi-distant from numerous principal centres. Another important factor is that Collie produces enormous quantities of small coal, which as a commercial commodity is now practically worthless, but the whole of which could be used in generating power which would be transmitted in the directions I have men-

tioned. In my scheme I would include the whole of the requirements for the metropolitan area, because naturally it must be cheaper to transmit electricity by its own power than to haul coal from Collie to Perth. Coincident with the Collie scheme I strongly urge the electrification of the railways in the metropolitan area—at any rate, for a start, from Fremantle to Midland Junction. This suggestion will have the support of everyone who has visited Melbourne and seen the revolution in travelling facilities for the people of that city under the electrical scheme. The saving of time in transport which is effected is something almost incredible. The distance from Melbourne to St. Kilda, for instance, takes seven minutes with five stops, whereas the best that could be done by electric tram or motor bus was between 15 and 20 minutes. On the trip from Melbourne to Frankston, a distance of about 27 miles, the electric railway has saved 25 minutes. Electrification means far cleaner as well as far more rapid travelling facilities. The electrification of our railways will certainly cost a lot of money, but so will many other things. Perth is going to be a very big place, and a scheme like this must be inaugurated when the city is in its infancy, so as to permit of expansion as necessity demands. Mr. Holmes has already spoken on the Government's proposal to establish a State insurance office. I shall wait till the Bill comes before the House. If it means the establishment of another State trading concern of any sort whatever, I shall have something very definite to say about the matter. I have looked in vain in the Governor's Speech for any mention of a Redistribution of Seats Bill, and I desire to draw the attention of hon. members to the unsatisfactory way in which the people of the metropolitan area in particular are treated under the present distribution. In the metropolitan area there are 103,516 electors with 12 seats, the average enrolment being 8,626. Fremantle is the lowest with 4,670 electors, and Canning the highest with 14,609. In the agricultural areas and outports the total number of electors is 81,941, and the number of seats 21, the average enrolment being 3,902. In those particular areas the distribution is fair and reasonable. But when we come to the gold-fields areas we find that there are 17,811 electors and 13 seats; the average enrolment being 1,370. Let hon. members compare these with the corresponding figures in the metropolitan area—103,516 electors, 12 seats,

average enrolment 8,626. In my opinion the figures speak for themselves, but I may specially mention Cue with 563 electors, Mt. Magnet with 970, Mt. Margaret with 460, and Menzies with 324. Let hon. members compare Menzies and its 324 electors with Canning, where Mr. Clydesdale represents 14,609 electors. One elector in Menzies has 45 times the power of an elector in Canning. The position is so ludicrous as to call for immediate readjustment. I repeat, that the representation of the metropolitan area is utterly unfair and inequitable. The appointment of the Migration Commission by the Federal Government I regard as a step in the right direction, and I consider that Western Australia is very fortunate in having Mr. Charles Nathan, C.B.E., as its representative. That gentleman's appointment means not only that the interests of Australia will be well guarded, but that the interests of this State will receive fair and equitable representation. Mr. Gray in his speech drew special attention to the Fremantle railway bridge, and I should like to utter just one word of warning. The present Government and previous Governments have had warnings regarding that bridge. The most serious warning has been given to the present Government, but the responsibility falls upon all of us to see that the work of reconstruction is proceeded with as speedily as possible. In that connection I hope special attention and consideration will be given to the growing requirements of the Fremantle harbour. Wherever the new bridges may be placed, they should be so placed as not to hamper the development of the harbour. I thank hon. members for the kindly consideration extended to me. As a member of this House I shall do my utmost to conform with its usages and customs, to work in harmony with all members, and to obey your rulings, Mr. President; and as a citizen of Western Australia I shall do my best to further the prosperity of the great State in which we live.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th August, 1926.

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| Question: Hospital for the Insane, fruit supplies ... | PAGE 291 |
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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, FRUIT SUPPLIES.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham): 1, Is the policy of providing fruit, at intervals, to patients at the Hospital for the Insane being maintained? 2, Will he indicate the number of cases and value of fruit so provided in each six of the months during the past two years?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM replied: 1, Yes; the arrangement indicated was made in 1922, and purchases confined to periods of glut in the fruit market. The matter of further purchases will receive attention when the next glut may occur. 2, July-December, 1924—51 bags oranges, value £19 2s. 6d.; January-June, 1925—83 bags oranges, value £31 2s. 6d., 2,278lbs. water-melons, value £9 9s. 10d.; July-December, 1925—10 bags oranges, value £3 15s.; January-June, 1926—36 bags oranges, value £13 10s.; 3,162lbs. water-melons, value £13 3s. 6d.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [4.37]: If I should happen to wander in the course of my remarks and refer to matters relating to constituencies other than my own, I ask hon. members to realise that it will be merely to express my appreciation of the actions of the people in the districts I shall refer to in formulating schemes for the advancement not only of those particular centres, but of the State as a whole. I will also take the opportunity to indicate my appreciation of the action of the Government in assisting such schemes. In looking through the Governor's Speech, I notice a reference to the offer made by the Government to assist in the establishment of a central power house on the Golden