

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 8th September, 1936.

	PAGE
Electoral—Swearing-in of Members	394
Question: Albany Freezing Works	394
Leave of absence	394
Chairman of Committees, Election of Hon. J. Cornell	394
Address-in-reply, sixth day	394

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

ELECTORAL—SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT: I am prepared to swear-in the Hon. J. Cornell who was returned for South Province at the biennial election.

Hon. J. Cornell took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in West Province caused by the acceptance by the Hon. W. H. Kitson of the office of Chief Secretary showing that William Henry Kitson has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear-in the hon. member.

Hon. W. H. Kitson took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTION—ALBANY FREEZING WORKS.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What amount of capital has been subscribed to the Albany Freezing Works? 2, What is the amount advanced to this project by the Government?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Information not available. 2, Nil.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. A. M. Clydesdale (Metropolitan-Suburban) on the ground of ill-health.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Election of Hon. J. Cornell.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West [4.39]: I move—

That the Hon. J. Cornell be re-elected to the position of Chairman of Committees.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East)

[4.40]: I should like to preface my remarks with an expression of sympathy for those of our number who lost their seats in the recent elections. I should also like to wish the new members, Mr. Heenan and Mr. Wood, a useful and happy career in this Chamber. I have already extended my congratulations to them personally. In the few remarks I have to offer on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, I intend to confine myself to matters mentioned in the Lient.-Governor's Speech. Early in the Speech reference was made to the Premier's Conference. It is pleasing that the Minister for Works, Mr. Millington, was able to go to Adelaide at very short notice and do what he could in the interests of this State. We have reason to be pleased with the successful efforts of the Premiers to recover some of the money contributed by way of the petrol tax. Judging by the remarks of the Prime Minister, the Federal Government apparently intend to continue exploiting every avenue of taxation as they have been doing in the past. We may not like the system of accepting grants from the Commonwealth; they are too much like begging, but we shall have to continue to accept them. Last year we received by way of grants from the Commonwealth something like £900,000. As all the States are clamouring for grants, we shall have to do the same, even if this system leads to unification, which is the last thing we wish to see. I am afraid it will come to unification unless we go on pegging away at the Commonwealth year after year. I hope that the Government realise the disabilities being suffered by the farmers, more particularly those in the northern areas, and I hope that the assistance for them will be increased. Provided rain comes very soon, the farmers will certainly get some relief from the increase in the price of wheat, but unfortunately most of the farmers are so involved that any relief they get from the enhanced price of wheat, or most of it, will go to their creditors. When visiting the farming areas, I have been struck by the number of very

old horses in the teams used by farmers, and also by the large amount of worn-out machinery. How some of the farmers have been able to put in their crops under such difficult conditions, I am at a loss to understand, and unfortunately their difficulties will be increased when harvest time arrives, because anything in the way of stoppages, which must occur through using old horses and worn-out machinery, will cause incalculable loss. The farmers must receive assistance from the State and from the Commonwealth, and that assistance should take the form of long-term loans bearing no interest, or very little interest. The Government have congratulated themselves on the employment position. So far as I can judge, they have done well in coping with the problem of unemployment during the last three years. It is pleasing to find that so few men are on sustenance or part-time employment at present. During the week before last I listened to speeches by Government supporters in another place, and from them it appeared that the policy of the Government is to provide full-time work for all sustenance men during the coming year. Certainly no one will be more pleased than I shall be if work can be found for everybody, provided that at the end of the three years we are not again faced with a hopeless deficit, which would react unfavourably not only upon the unemployed but also upon persons in employment. I should like to ask, where are the present unemployed? I know that farmers trying to get men to work on their places cannot secure them. Recently I myself tried to get a man, and although I was successful in the end it took me quite a long time to obtain one. Half of the men from the Labour Bureau are incapable of doing farm work. As regards women and girls, one can advertise in the Press until one is blue in the face almost, but they will not leave Perth. They will not go into the country. This morning I heard of a case where a notice was put in the window of a shop stating that a girl's services were available, and I understand that hundreds of people applied for this girl to come to them for domestic work. Presumably she got a job. If unemployed persons and sustenance workers applied to the Government for positions, they should be told for a start that they must go into the country

for some of the jobs offering there. Even married men should not be kept in the city on work which is not entirely reproductive. If money is to be found to place everybody in work—and this will require a large amount—I hope a good deal of it will be spent in the country for the purpose of improving conditions among the farming community. There are railways which could be built, thus absorbing many men. I am one of those who have been rather opposed to the reclamation work being done on the Swan River. I must confess, however, that when one goes out along Mounts Bay Road one cannot help admiring the difference this work has made to the appearance of the city of Perth. Moreover, mosquitoes have disappeared in a most remarkable manner; they are not anything like so bad as they used to be a year ago. In fact, I have not seen a mosquito net for over a year in the district where I live.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The season has been against the mosquitoes. That is the main thing.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I repeat, it is quite a long time since I have seen a mosquito net. Undoubtedly the pest has been minimised to a large extent. I hope the Government will not proceed further with reclamation work either at the Causeway or further down the river—I saw in the Press recently that more reclamation work is to be done in the latter locality. So much reclamation having been done at the Causeway, it should stop now. I would be sorry to see any more work of that kind carried out further down the river. While I would not like to see a great deal of money spent in the city, I am certainly not opposed to the construction of essential bridges and public works there—provided they are essential. The girls' school to be opened this week, it has been ascertained by Mr. Thomson, has cost something over £70,000. I agree that that school is an essential work. Unquestionably it is a fine building. I have heard, however, that extensive swimming baths are to be added. That I consider would be wrong, especially as the school is within a stone's throw of the river. Like other members who have spoken in the debate, I am strongly of opinion that a new building should be erected to roof the

Agricultural Department; but before that is done I would like it to be definitely ascertained, once for all, whether a sufficiently large block can be secured for the erection of buildings of this kind as they are required. It would be absolutely criminal to go on putting up separate buildings on blocks just large enough to hold one set of premises. Every effort should be made to find sufficient land to carry all the Government buildings required.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about raising the height of the present buildings?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That might serve, but even then a huge block of land would be needed. Such a block should have been secured ever so long ago. There has been lack of foresight on the part of successive Governments. One of the most substantial monuments of lack of foresight in Western Australia is the railway communication between Perth and Geraldton. In the early nineties, when the Midland Railway was finished, the company ran it for a few years and lost a considerable amount of money. If I remember rightly, the railway was then offered to the Government on reasonable terms. The Government then should have bought the line and built feeder railways over the country through which the Wongan Hills line now runs. For many years the Midland Railway Company paid no dividends. It only started to pay dividends after the Wongan Hills line had been constructed. Geraldton, as the result of the Wongan Hills railway, lost most of the northern goldfields trade, which, instead of going through the port of Geraldton, went from Perth over the Wongan Hills line. The Government built the harbour at Geraldton—too late, of course. Had that harbour been constructed prior to the Wongan Hills railway, Geraldton would now be a happy, prosperous, flourishing town, and the decentralisation policy for which we are all looking would be well in operation. Recently I was told that even the Geraldton harbour is not wholly a success, that ship masters are dissatisfied with it. I think I remember that when the harbour was first opened, a couple of ships—some of the very first ships to come in—were damaged not outside the harbour but inside it. What is it that is wrong with Western Australian harbours, except that at Fremantle, which

we know to be a success? Apparently there are no intricate problems connected with the Geraldton harbour, which has been built in a perfectly good roadstead, one protected by Point Moore and a thoroughly well-defined line of reefs except in the north-western aspect, where it is open to strong winds and swells. In the case of Geraldton the engineers employed may not have been expert harbour engineers, though probably good road or bridge engineers. Whatever happened, they built a harbour which apparently is not a success. Being Western Australian born, I am somewhat ashamed to say I have never been to Bunbury. True, I have seen Bunbury on my way to Collie for the purpose of inspecting machinery.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You have never been to the Mecca of Western Australia!

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I hope in the near future to have a look at Bunbury.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Better make a pilgrimage there as soon as possible!

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Anyway, I understand that the same thing as applies to Geraldton applies also to Bunbury. Everything seems to be wrong with Bunbury harbour, from what I have been told. It is stated that Bunbury harbour is silting up, and that unless dredges are kept employed, there will speedily be no harbour left. It is also stated that unless a bigger dredge is sent there, the harbour will be lost altogether.

Hon. L. Craig: Your information is about three years old.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The information was given to me well within three years.

Hon. L. Craig: Yes, but it was three years old when you got it.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Bunbury harbour appears to have been built without the advice of an expert harbour engineer being obtained. Such an engineer might have got over the silting, which means the expenditure of a terrific lot of money on the harbour. Surely the Government could get hold of a harbour engineer who could stop the silting, or scheme out another harbour. As we know, both Geraldton and Bunbury need harbours. In one season Geraldton sent away 2,000,000 bags of wheat, and Bunbury sent away a large quantity of wheat besides other exports such as timber. As regards Albany harbour, I am indeed pleased to be able to state that up to date the mistakes which I have men-

tioned have not been made there, the reason being that nothing has been done at Albany.

Hon. A. Thomson: And that is the only reason.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: At Albany the shipping is served by a couple of old jetties—very old jetties indeed. In the long jetty one sees hardly a pile which has not been duplicated. Certainly, though, the new wing is all right. The Albany jetties can berth five vessels with drafts up to 32 feet. The lowest depth is that alongside the town jetty, 25 feet. At present, therefore, facilities at Albany are comparatively satisfactory. Nevertheless, the Albany harbour, like our other harbours, requires a great deal of maintenance, which represents a big drag on the railways. The Albany jetties will not last much longer, and meantime will cost a considerable amount for renewals. That is a point which must receive careful consideration, as shipping at Albany is likely to increase very fast indeed. The freezing works which will be opened there shortly will certainly attract a good deal more tonnage as the years go on. The same factor will mean the opening-up of a great deal more land in that district. Thousands of acres of new land will be needing superphosphate. There is no doubt that before long one of the superphosphate companies will be erecting works there, as has been done at Bunbury.

Hon. L. Craig: You mean that you hope so.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I say so definitely. Of course we know that it will not be long before bulk handling facilities will be available for that port as well. I hope the Government will give careful consideration to the future of this harbour. I do not suggest that all these improvements should take place at once, but that an engineer should be sent there to plan out facilities, such as wharves, which will cope with the extra shipping we know will come along. There is no problem whatever at Albany, no silting or big swells. I said there had been no dredging. As a matter of fact, a dredge did come to Albany on its way from the Eastern States to Fremantle 16 years ago. It dredged the harbour to 32 feet, and I can tell members that the harbour is still 32 feet.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The entrance is only 30 feet, is it not?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That is quite wrong. It is one of the finest natural har-

hours in the world. What is needed is a comprehensive scheme that will provide for improvements in a small way at first—something that will provide facilities for a couple of ships to begin with, and will allow for berths to be added from time to time. Now I want to refer to the position of vermin in this State, more particularly dogs and foxes. The reason I wish to refer to this matter is that, as far as I can gather, the Government intend to do away with the bonus on foxes altogether and to reduce the bonus on dogs. I hope that is not the intention of the Government because the mortality amongst sheep and lambs from the depredations of these vermin is growing worse every year, and if not checked will interfere a great deal with the growing fat-lamb industry. Men have complained that they go on to their blocks in the morning and find from five to ten lambs destroyed. The only way to deal with these pests is to retain the present bonus or to increase it.

Hon. L. Craig: Taxation would have to be increased.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: But not from the farmers and pastoralists. A few years ago pastoralists used to pay a tax of 1d. on the unimproved value of the land and farmers a halfpenny. That brought in a big sum of money to pay these bonuses. Later, when the depression came, the farmers could not afford to pay and the amount was halved, with the result that fewer scalps came in. Later the tax was raised and more scalps were secured, which shows that the only way to deal with the animals is by getting the money from somewhere and rewarding those people who bring in the scalps. It should not be left wholly in the hands of the pastoralists and farmers; that would be wrong. It should be a national matter, the money coming partly from the State and partly from the Federal Government. The reason I suggest a contribution from the Federal authorities is this: Some years ago the reward for dogs' skins in the Northern Territory was 5s., whereas in Western Australia it was £1. The consequence was that hundreds of skins came from the Northern Territory to this State and we were thus paying for the destruction of dogs in Commonwealth territory. Referring to the fat-lamb industry, I should like to say that it is going to become increasingly important with the passage of time. The year before last

140,000 sheep and lambs—nearly all lambs—were sent away. Last year the season was not quite so good, and it was anticipated that fewer lambs would be exported. It was expected that about 70,000 would be despatched. Nevertheless, by the end of the season 170,000 had been exported, mostly lambs. Everybody knows that these lambs have had a wonderful reception in the markets abroad, and have been favourably compared in every way with lambs from New Zealand and Victoria. I mention this to impress upon members what an important industry this is, and to point out that there is no doubt it will develop into one of the biggest export industries in the State as time goes on. Amongst other things its growth will create a market for our surplus stock. It will also create a demand for labour, not only at the freezing works, which will employ many men, but on the railways, and will provide employment for lumpers, truck-drivers, and, in fact, for people of almost every trade. The growth of the industry has done a great deal for New Zealand. If these works at Albany are developed, as I am sure they will be, it will increase the value of the land down the Great Southern and even in the south-western areas. It has already increased the value of land in the vicinity of Albany. People will be induced to come from the Eastern States to Western Australia, where they will be able to make their homes under climatic conditions such as exist only in the southern parts of Western Australia. Initial difficulties in the growing of suitable pastures have been overcome as a result of experiments carried out by the farmers from Geraldton to Albany over a long period, but more could be done, and I suggest that an experimental farm should be established chiefly to afford farmers some knowledge of crossbred sheep, and the development of pasture. A farm of that sort could be established at Mt. Barker, which is in a favourable position, and which I feel confident is going to be the centre of a great lamb-producing area. I want now to refer to the Albany freezing works. Last week a member in this House tabled a question as to how much money had been supplied to the freezing works by the Government. The answer, of course, was "Nil," and I can assure members

that we have not asked for any. But I have pleasure in informing that hon. member that we have asked the Government for something—not finance—and the Government have given us assistance within reason. I take this opportunity of expressing the appreciation of the directors of the services rendered by the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. F. J. S. Wise) and the assistance given to us now by the Transport Board.

Hon. L. Craig: I am not sure you are not accepting an office of profit.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: One of the chief difficulties in connection with the transport of lambs which we have experienced has been that of moving them from the farms to the freezing works, and in this respect I am going to quote one instance—although there are others—that of the transport from Borden and Ongerup. These towns are approximately between 72 and 80 miles from Albany. The road is perfectly good and the conveyance of the lambs by motor lorry involves a journey of about four hours. By rail, however, the distance is 132 miles and the journey takes as long as 12 and even up to 16 hours. We applied to the Transport Board for permission to convey the stock by road and having been granted permission, the difficulty was partly overcome. This the directors of the freezing works appreciate very much. It was recognised that it would take two or three years to build the necessary trucks owing to the distance of the Midland Junction abattoirs from the port of Albany, and consequently the people of the Great Southern have been rather shy about going in for the raising of lambs. Anyway, we are very pleased with the encouragement we have received and with the promises of support. The works at Albany will begin operating on Monday, though, of course, we will not receive the number of lambs that, under better conditions we might have expected. Another matter I wish to bring under notice relates to hospitals. When the hospital tax was imposed a few years ago, it was generally thought that there would not be any need for further begging. What do we find? Take the Albany hospital. It is an entirely Government institution, but the position there is about as bad as it could possibly be.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is one of the worst hospitals in the State.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That is quite true, though it is not the fault of the staff.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It may be the worst in the southern portion of the State.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The few wards that are there are totally unsuitable, while the quarters for the staff are worse.

Hon. A. Thomson: The building is entirely out of date.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: It has not been altered in any way. The Lotteries Commission, consequent upon an application being made to them, have given us £1,000, but that is insufficient. The hat is still being passed round, as we require another £1,000. A little while ago, an appeal was made, known as Stew Sunday. We were asked to forgo our roast duck and put the difference into the fund. People all over the place were invited to do this, but only a paltry amount was raised. This shows that people object to paying the tax and having the hat passed round too. In all the circumstances, seeing that our hospitals must be maintained, the only way out seems to be to increase the tax. When the hat is passed round, it means that only a few people subscribe, and the rest give nothing. I wish to make one or two remarks about the position of pastoralists. From my experience, and information I have gathered, I should say we are passing through one of the worst droughts ever known in Western Australia. It extends from below the Lower Murchison to the Kimberleys. Most of us, except young members, will remember the bad drought of 1891, and also the bad one of 1914, but the losses which growers have sustained this year are greater than were sustained on either of the other two occasions, despite the fact that the stations are better divided up, have more wells, and are probably better managed. In the case of one station which shored 18,000 sheep last year, the owner will be satisfied if he can shear 5,000 this year, and half that number will be shorn at the wells on tarpaulin sheets. There are many stations between Yalgoo and Cue, where the comparatively few sheep are shorn at the wells on sheets. The sad part is that in many instances station-owners have been breeding up some of the finest flocks in Australia for the past 30 or 40 years. They have been doing their best to save their flocks, and have spent thousands of pounds on chaff, oats, Meggitts nuts and the like in the hope of saving

a fair percentage of their well-bred sheep. Unfortunately nearly all the pastoralists are suffering in the same way, some more acutely than others. When the drought is over, it will be difficult to buy sheep with which to restock the properties. In normal times there are supposed to be 5,000,000 north of Geraldton, but it is suggested that only 3,000,000 are now left. That may be an exaggeration.

Hon. A. Thomson: I do not think it is. Probably not more than 2,000,000 sheep are now left up there.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: It is suggested that two-fifths of the number have died. We know there has been great mortality amongst farmers' flocks in the south, owing to the late season and lack of water.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The greatest losses in the North have been amongst the ewes.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: We know the Government are giving this matter very grave consideration, and are working in conjunction with the Pastoralists' Association, who know all the details. They are also providing cheap freights on the railways and steamers for the transport of chaff, oats, Meggitt's nuts, etc. That help is much appreciated. I do not propose to suggest what the Government should do. I take it each case will be considered on its merits. In some instances, rents will have to be remitted, and some pastoralists will have to apply for assistance from the Agricultural Bank. Mr. Piesse referred to a certain apparatus which is attached to motor cars with the object of limiting their speed to 45 miles per hour. Many accidents, collisions and the like have occurred recently through people exceeding a reasonable speed limit. I am in accord with what Mr. Piesse said on the subject. The other day I travelled from Katanning to Wagin with him. His car had this apparatus on it, and I found the speed quite fast enough. I support the remarks Mr. Piesse made about the Albany High School. The institution is a great credit to the headmaster and staff, and the people of Albany are fortunate in having such a good school in their midst. I am strongly in favour of high schools. I hope that when money is available one will be established at Narrogin. The position there is an ideal one, and the climatic conditions are all that could be desired.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about Katanning?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That is only a hundred miles from Albany, and already many children from there go to the Albany school.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: There is no water at Katanning.

Hon. A. Thomson: And there is not much at Narrogin.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Places along the Great Southern railway line, with the exception of Wagin, are in a terrible state for want of water. Pingelly was in a bad way last year, and will be in a dreadful condition this year if sufficient rain does not fall. Not only is there very little water there now, but such water as there is, is bad. Last year Narrogin was practically on its beam ends, and the town was almost at a standstill for lack of water. Albany is well provided with good water, but the pipes are not big enough to convey from the reservoir all the water required by the town. The scheme is also over-capitalised. The Government should render to these people all the assistance they possibly can. I was in Katanning the other day and had a look at the dam. The capacity of the dam is 32,000,000 gallons, but it had only 2,000,000 gallons in it when I saw it, although we are almost at the commencement of our summer. What the town will do during the ensuing summer I do not know. I know what things were like there at the end of last summer. It is not for me to make suggestions to the Government, but I do think these towns should all be considered by the authorities in respect of their water supplies. When there is anything in the way of a shortage of water, these towns suffer very much. I hope earnest consideration will be given to this very important matter.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [5.25]: I wish to associate myself with the sentiments that have been expressed concerning his late Majesty, King George, and our present Sovereign. I also desire to offer my sincere congratulations to Mr. Drew upon his return unopposed for the Central Province. I congratulate the new members upon their election and sympathise with those who were defeated. I also congratulate the Chief Secretary, both upon his return and his elevation to Cabinet rank, and congratulate Mr. Gray upon his being made Honorary Minister. My first reference to the Speech will be in regard to the mining in-

dustry. The Central Province shares with the Kalgoorlie field in the revival of the industry. It is causing a great deal of activity and prosperity on the Murchison. I wish to quote from some remarks of Professor Whitfeld, Vice-Chancellor of the University. These appeared in the "West Australian" of 5th August last. The Professor is quite outside politics. His record shows that he has a thorough knowledge of the industry, and his opinion should be accepted without question. He says—

There is no reason to suppose that more than a very small fraction of Western Australia's gold has yet been discovered. I cannot help thinking that if Signor Mussolini, Herr Hitler, or M. Stalin had control of our goldfields they would produce a great deal more gold than we are producing from them.

In the first instance we have a great deal of waste and inefficiency in mining finance. Unfortunately, it is far easier for mineowners to make money out of company promotion and share-dealing than out of the gold actually produced. What seems to be required here is something on the lines of Canadian legislation of 1930-31. I understand that about that time Canada was badly infested with "wild cats" and the mining industry was consequently in very bad odour with the investing public.

Until a few weeks ago I had not met the Minister for Mines (Hon. S. W. Munsie), but on that occasion I accepted an invitation from the ex-Chief Secretary to meet Mr. Munsie at Wiluna. I have watched the career of that hon. gentleman, and heard him speak on that particular tour. I think the opinion I have formed of him is shared by a great many other people. In the Minister we have a man who pays a great deal of attention to the department and understands a great deal about the industry. I believe he is genuinely desirous of doing the best he can for it, and for the State. No matter how much he knows about the industry, or how great his interest in it may be, I feel that the remarks of a man like Professor Whitfeld should be taken notice of by the Minister.

Hon. J. Cornell: Put not your faith in professors.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Since Professor Whitfeld made his report, the manager of one of the mines on the Golden Mile, Mr. McGeorge, has made a contribution to the controversy. Although he criticised some of the proposals set forth by Professor Whitfeld, he gave expression to several constructive suggestions. It does seem right that when the con-

dition of the industry is prosperous, attention should be given to minimising the number of dreadful accidents that occur in the industry. I have listened with great interest to speeches delivered by Mr. Cornell in this Chamber, and I am always prepared to give him credit for the years he has given to the study of miners' complaints. The goldmining industry has been, and still is, a great asset to Western Australia, but I believe the Minister for Mines has not sufficient time at his disposal to go into these phases adequately.

Hon. A. Thomson: What are his officers for?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It might be suggested that we should secure the services of a competent commissioner to inquire into these matters. It will be remembered that one was appointed from overseas some years back, and his report was of considerable value to the industry. Now after a lapse of years and the report of Professor Whitfeld that the auriferous belt has not been subjected to a properly exhaustive examination, the time is ripe for a thorough investigation regarding the latent possibilities of the goldfields areas. The next matter dealt with in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech is almost as important as that of mining, and certainly affects a very large area. I refer to the North-West. There are members here who directly represent North-West interests, but I hope that I will be permitted to express my opinion that there is urgent necessity for something to be done immediately to open up and develop that huge territory within our State. We know what is happening in connection with Japan, and we realise that for years we have been told that unless we take steps to open up and develop the North and North-West, someone else will step in and do it for us. I believe the task is too big for any State Government, and it is high time that some endeavour was made to interest the Commonwealth. That is not a new suggestion, and probably I will be told that the Commonwealth Government have not made much progress in the Northern Territory, although they have spent millions of pounds there. I wish you, Mr. President, could be heard on this subject, because you have travelled and have met people with capital. The pastoral industry has been

referred to already by various speakers, and there is no need for me to stress its importance. As the Central Province includes some of the finest pastoral country in the State, I certainly have a right to refer to the plight of those engaged in the industry, particularly those operating in the Murchison. I admit the Government have done quite a lot to ease their position by the reduction of freights and so forth, and I do not know what else could be done apart from a reduction of the rentals. While our sympathies alone are not much use to them, members must realise that the position of the pastoralists is indeed serious. I am sure the Government will do everything possible to assist them. One direction in which assistance could be rendered is in connection with the vermin rate. When I was at Wiluna recently, I heard one gentleman complain bitterly about the vermin rate and the position regarding dingoes. I do not think his complaint was so much in respect of foxes. Unless the pastoralists are rendered assistance promptly, it will be difficult for them to carry on. Certainly some attention should be given to their interests, but here again the problem may be too big for the State to tackle. For instance, wool is grown throughout the Commonwealth, and once more we come into conflict with the powers of the Commonwealth. In my opinion, some steps should be taken regarding the marketing of the Australian wool clip.

Hon. L. Craig: Do you advocate a pool?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Something should be done. When I speak about this matter, people say that I am not a practical wool grower. That is so, but I have had the opportunity of discussing the matter with a member of this House who is a practical woolgrower and has been in the industry for years. He tells me that Australia has an undoubted advantage over every other country because of the quality of merino wool we can produce. I have no hesitation in believing that statement, and with that advantage why should not steps be taken to secure the best price for our merino wool, seeing that it is of a quality that cannot be produced elsewhere? The credit of Australia has been pledged to an enormous extent in connection with wheat, and the

expenditure of that money has brought prosperity to Australia. To-day nearly every country produces wheat, with the result that the world's market is glutted, although certainly prices have improved recently. We never know where we stand with regard to wheat. On the other hand, if Western Australia can produce a quality of merino wool that others cannot, we should devote attention to that phase and secure a proper return for our product. In my opinion the matter is too extensive for the State itself to handle. Surely it is time that men interested in the wool trade should be encouraged to get together and do something about it. It is not good business to continue as in the past and take whatever price is offered. We should see to it that people from overseas are not able to come here and enter into a friendly business arrangement to give us what they like for an article that cannot be produced elsewhere. Next I will deal with the wheatgrowing industry, the encouragement of which has opened up parts of the State that at one time were regarded as incapable of development. While the pastoral industry may be regarded as the pioneering activity, it must be admitted that wheat has played an important part in the development of the State, and scores of towns have sprung up because of the development of the wheatgrowing industry. Millions have been poured out by various Governments to encourage the industry, but, owing to the collapse in prices, the growers have been in a dreadful position for some years past. I realise that much has been done in their interests, but we must not forget that the State, believing wheat could be grown here as cheaply, if not more cheaply than elsewhere, borrowed huge sums of money, and have spent those funds in developing the wheatgrowing areas. It seems to me that the State must continue to assist suitable growers on their holdings in order that they may continue producing wheat. That deals with a phase respecting which it is beyond the power of any Government department to conduct the necessary inquiries as they should be carried out. Surely the Government could appoint one representative and two others could be selected on the recommendation of the road boards, and those three men could make inquiries regarding the benefit of wheat production and the efforts of individual farmers. I do not suggest that matters of that description and importance

should be delegated by the Government to local boards, but at least the board I suggest could make recommendations to the Government. They would be au fait with all the circumstances surrounding the position of a man, and it would then be for the Minister, on receipt of the recommendation of the board, to determine just how far he could meet them. I think that if some local board of inquiry were established, it would do away with the complaints that we have to listen to from time to time. A man says, "I have been turned out." And when we ask him why, he replies, "For no reason whatever." I made inquiries regarding one instance the other day, and I suppose I may be accused of bringing political pressure to bear. I went and asked the reason for a certain action that had been taken; the case was reconsidered, and a slight grant was made to the settler. That seemed to prove to me that the complaints of the settlers do not receive the careful consideration that they should at the hands of the officials in Perth. The settlers in the Geraldton district, in addition to having the disadvantage of low prices, seem to have a pest peculiar to them to add to their troubles. I refer to the emu. It is most unfortunate that the Minister for Agriculture, in his wisdom, recommended that the bonus of 1s. per head on emus should be discontinued. I think, and many share my opinion, that that was a great mistake. If that shilling bonus had been continued the chances are that to-day we would not have the agitation that there is for the bonus to be raised to 2s. 6d. I am quite satisfied that the present Minister for Agriculture, being a practical man, and journeying through to Carnarvon as he does by motor car, through the country most devastated by the pest, namely, the Ajana district, must have seen evidence of what this pest means. The farmers and settlers of that district have to bear the full blast of this pest.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How are you going to stop it? You are not going to take up another battery of guns?

Hon. E. H. HALL: No. I have just been explaining how it should be stopped, that there would not be nearly so many emus to-day if the bonus had not been discontinued. We have not our old friend Mr. Drew, of the Central Province, as Chief Secretary any longer, but I hope his successor will bring this matter under the

notice of our new Premier. That reminds me that I had meant to express my congratulations to Mr. Willcock on his elevation to the Premiership. I hope his accession to the Treasury will be signalised by his granting the people of his district—Northampton and Ajana are included in his electorate—the raising of the bonus on emus. Before leaving the wheat industry, I should like to say a few words about rural relief. So much has been said and written about this important matter that I realise that anything I may say will not be of very much use and will not help to find a solution or to assist those who have gone before the board. I should like to repeat here a few words I heard from a Federal legislator in this State recently. They seem to me very apropos of the question: That legislator said that it means essentially uniformity, it means relief, and it all means charity. The difficulty is to apply these things, but it seems to me that in the writing down of debts secured and unsecured, there should be absolute uniformity, for without it I do not know just how we are going to get on. I was present at Mr. Drew's meeting at Dalwalinu when this subject was mentioned, and Mr. Drew expressed the sentiment that both secured and unsecured creditors should come into line and reduce their debts.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Surely he did not advocate the coming in of the secured creditor!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Mr. Drew has not spoken in this debate, and since he is now a private member I have no doubt that he will be able to explain what he did mean by those words. This question was raised at the meeting, and Mr. Drew expressed himself as being sympathetically inclined to a reduction of the debts of both secured and unsecured creditors. Notwithstanding the interjection, I cannot see that they have very much to lose if they take the long view. What is the use of sticking out for something if they have not very much chance of getting it?

Hon. L. Craig: You must mean their coming in voluntarily.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It seems to me if it is not done voluntarily, well, with all due respect to the Legislative Council, it is going to have a lot of repercussions.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Who is going to advance money in future?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Nobody; and a good job, too. In other circumstances our progress would not have been so rapid, although it would have been on a more solid foundation.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is no reason for doing something that one ought not to do.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I would say that circumstances alter cases. Whether the creditors are convinced, as they must be convinced in hundreds—I am not saying this irrespective of all circumstances—but has it not been said scores of times in this Chamber that deserving hard-working men have been placed in their present condition through no fault of their own, but through the general collapse that has taken place? They are all partners in this business, so why cannot the others come together and help? Here a phrase comes to me, that immortal phrase of which we have heard so much, "Equality of sacrifice." Why cannot people get together and share that sacrifice? Take the position of the country storekeeper. Of course members know as much about it as I do, but I mention the lowest figure when I say that some country storekeepers have taken a composition of half a crown in the pound.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: I know of one at 1s. 6d.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Is that so? Is there any equality of sacrifice in that? Reverting to Mr. Nicholson's interjection, the people will not stand for it; they will not continue to stand for it. Of that I feel sure. The next matter in the Governor's Speech is that of metropolitan water supply. I have searched through the Speech, but cannot find therein anything about country water supplies. I admit that the Government have done quite a lot for country water supplies. I am not going to raise a question about the metropolitan water supplies, this gigantic scheme out here at the Canning dam, for I say the people of the metropolitan area are entitled to a full and plentiful supply of water. But if the people of the metropolitan area are entitled to that, so too are the people in the country. I knew a scheme—I do not think that you, Sir, were in favour of it—but since then I have realised that it was a perfectly wonderful scheme. It was wonderfully conceived and wonderfully executed, the scheme that was conceived by the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor and carried out by him and Sir John Forrest. I was in Kalgoorlie the day the

water was turned on, and notwithstanding the statement that has been made that there was an abundance of water available from some pool, still that Goldfields Water Supply Scheme considerably altered the conditions on the goldfields. Not only that, but it unexpectedly served a valuable purpose, namely, the supplying with excellent water of the agricultural districts through which the pipe line passes. If members of this House knew the history of the attempts of various Governments, some Labour and some anti-Labour, to supply Geraldton with water, and understood that, not through political influence nor through the mistakes of politicians, but through the mistakes of departmental professional engineers we are to-day saddled with about four or five defunct or blasted hopes or schemes that have gone by the board, I am sure we would have their sympathy. Mr. Wittenoom to-day spoke of the capitalisation of the Albany supply, but he should come up and see the scheme at Geraldton.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Or go to Bunbury.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We have a scheme up there, and the engineer for Country Water Supplies told me a few weeks ago that the Geraldton water supply was giving him a lot of anxiety, that not an inch of rain had run into the reservoir this winter. We are depending on bores, and this with the water at a price of 3s. per thousand gallons. But I gather from the annual report of 1934—I have not seen this year's report—that the distilling plant at Geraldton was costing 9s. 9d. per thousand gallons. Every drop of water used in that system is distilled from that plant, and recently that plant was added to. So that councillor in Geraldton who suggested many years ago that, instead of messing about with a provincial local scheme, the Government of the day would be well advised to conserve the water from where it was running away at the rate of millions of gallons per day, was right in his contention. Only a fortnight ago I read in the "West Australian" that the water there was pouring away at the rate of millions of gallons per day. Fancy a town on the Great Southern being short of water! Right through the country districts when water is asked for, the reply is as to where the money is to come from. Then we wonder why people go into the country when we

have not enough money to supply them with water.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They do not come into the city for water.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The hon. member may know more about that than I do. The time has arrived for the putting in of a scheme for the conservation of the water that is running away to-day. The Lieut.-Governor's Speech contained a reference to education. If the subject of country water supplies is important, I think members will agree that the subject of education is also important. We owe a duty to our children. We have been told that the race will be to those who are best equipped for the battle of life, and that this will apply more so in the future than it has done in the past. I often listened to the remarks of the late Sir Edward Wittenoom in condemnation of the huge expenditure on education. Certainly, when we look about us, we find men who received very little schooling and yet have been successful in life, and when one considers instances of the kind one is tempted to believe that there was some ground for Sir Edward Wittenoom's complaint. On the other hand, members generally will concede that we must, to the best of our ability, give the children a decent education. Some members might complain of the expenditure for the provision of a girls' school at East Perth. Members of the party who travelled to Wiluna recently saw conditions at a country school that might be described as—

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Appalling.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes, appalling. The hon. member saw several things which I believe opened his eyes. He took in his hands a bar of gold and all his strength was required to lift it. I do not intend to speak at length on the conditions in country schools. The Chief Secretary and his predecessor made that trip, and I am informed that action has been taken to remedy the conditions that existed. I hope that similar efforts will be extended throughout the country. We know that it is not possible for the Government to provide in the country all the amenities enjoyed by children attending large schools. When there are so many disadvantages attached to life in the country, one feels in a dilemma to indicate the greatest. People

who are building up the rural industries, which we are told are essential to the progress of the country, make sacrifices for the education of their children. The children have to be sent to country towns and parents lose their companionship. There is also the financial aspect to be considered. We may be told that bright children might win scholarships, and certainly various Governments have endeavoured to lighten the burden of parents by providing scholarships. Not every child, however, can win a scholarship, and a big handicap is suffered by many country children. I am prepared to admit that the expenditure on education is large. I do not know how West Australia's expenditure on education compares with that of the other States, but I know that we do not spend as much per head as is being spent in other countries. Is it reasonable to expect to get anything like satisfactory results from a system, no matter how efficient teachers may be, if they have to teach classes containing 50 children? That figure is well within the mark. I know some teachers have as many as 60 children in their classes.

Hon. J. Cornell: Where do you find 50 children in one class?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: In dozens of places.

Hon. J. Cornell: Not in the country. There might be 50 children in a school but not in one class.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Sometimes Mr. Cornell is serious; sometimes he is amusing. If he wishes to know where a class of 50 children may be found, I refer him to the Geraldton school. I am not standing here to be shot at in respect to any of my statements. Let the hon. member make inquiries from the secretary of the Teachers' Union, or, if he is not satisfied to accept the statement of that gentleman, let him visit some of the schools.

Hon. J. Cornell: The trouble is that there are too many children requiring different classes.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is another difficulty. When the hon. member tries, by means of interjections, which he should know are highly disorderly—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: —to lead me off the train of my remarks, he is not doing

anything of a helpful nature. We are spending a lot of money on education and are not getting the results we have a right to expect, the reason being that in many instances classes are too large. In countries not so advanced as ours, the maximum number of children in any one class is 30. The Lieut.-Governor's Speech referred to the railways. It is pleasing to know that the annual loss occurring in this huge department has disappeared and that the railways are paying their way. That is probably due to the passing of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, and to the activity in the mining industry.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Rather more to the activity in the mining industry.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The railway authorities admit that the passing of the Transport Act has assisted the railways materially. When the State decided to appoint a Commissioner instead of a general manager for the railways, the intention was that they should be conducted free of political control, but there have been occasions when this rule has not been observed. The Government have interfered in matters both of administration and of policy. That being so, I think the people of Geraldton are entitled to ask the Government to assist them to retain the trade that geographically belongs to the port. Many years ago the Government of the day—I forget its political complexion—went to the length of subsidising a private steamer named the "Julia Percy" for coastal trading. Whether it was intended to compete with the Midland Railway, I am not sure, but there must have been a very good reason to lead the Government to take that action. At the time an expenditure of three-quarters of a million was incurred on the Geraldton harbour. In view of that expenditure, it would be only businesslike on the part of the Government to see that some return was obtained for it. Let me give a few figures to show how the introduction of long-distance railway freights is having a very detrimental effect on the trade of the port of Geraldton. It has never been suggested by any resident of the town that the people who go outback to live on mining fields or pastoral properties should not receive the greatest possible reduction in railway freights that the Government can give them. The following figures show the railage on "C" class goods, including galvanised iron, sugar, groceries

and some hardware lines, for a minimum of one ton:—

	Miles.	Rate per ton.
		s. d.
Fremantle-Wiluna ..	721	120 1
Geraldton-Wiluna ..	444	84 11
Difference ..	277	35 2

From the foregoing figures, it will be seen, the rail distance to Wiluna from Fremantle is 277 miles greater than from Geraldton. Taking the return journey into account, it is apparent that a railway haulage of 554 miles is incurred over and above the distance from Geraldton. For this service the railways receive 35s. 2d. per ton. Alternatively, if goods are shipped from Fremantle to Geraldton and transported thence to Wiluna by rail, a saving of 554 miles in railway haulage would be effected. Based on present rates, the following revenue would accrue to Government departments:—

	Per ton.
	s. d.
Fremantle handling charge ..	3 0
Steamer freight, Fremantle-Geraldton ..	18 0
Wharfage and handling charges at Geraldton ..	9 6
Cargo on deadweight basis ..	30 6
Add 1/6th for measurement cargo ..	5 1
Cargo, cubic measurement ..	35 7

It would surely be of economic value to the State to utilise the State vessels and the Geraldton harbour to earn this revenue, rather than incur unnecessary railway haulage for a distance of 554 miles. Railway freight under "C" classification for a distance of 277 miles is 62s. 8d. per ton, and for 554 miles 99s. 1d. per ton.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Continuing to quote distances and rates operating as from Fremantle to Wiluna and from Geraldton to Wiluna, let me mention the rates applying to machinery, and particularly mining machinery. From Fremantle to Wiluna the rate is 93s. 5d. per ton and from Geraldton to Wiluna 66s. 6d. The bulk of tonnage would consist of mining machinery from the Eastern States, which, if shipped by through steamer to Geraldton, would not benefit the State Shipping Service in the way of freight. The railage incurred from Fremantle, how-

ever, being 554 miles of unnecessary haulage, represents 26s. 11d. per ton. Railway freight under "B" classification for a distance of 277 miles is 49s. 8d. per ton, and for 554 miles 77s. 5d. per ton. It may be asked, and no doubt it will be asked, why is mining machinery from the Eastern States railed direct from Fremantle to the Murchison in preference to shipment to Geraldton by through steamer. Especially will this question be asked when the following savings by obtaining machinery for the Murchison through Geraldton are taken into account:—the rate from Fremantle to Wiluna is 93s. 5d. per ton, and that from Geraldton to Wiluna 81s. 6d., representing a saving of 11s. 11d. per ton to Wiluna. From Fremantle to Meekatharra the rate is 82s. 11d., and from Geraldton to Meekatharra 70s. 8d., representing a saving of 12s. 3d. in favour of Geraldton. From Fremantle to Cue the rate is 76s. per ton, and that from Geraldton to Cue 62s. 11d., a saving of 13s. 1d. in favour of the latter route. To Anketell, the siding for newly-found mines, the rate from Fremantle is 77s. 10d. per ton, whereas the rate from Geraldton is 65s. 1d., a saving of 12s. 9d. in favour of the latter route.

Hon. G. Fraser: What about shipping freights from Fremantle to Geraldton?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am quoting freights by through steamers. We all know that galvanised iron means a big trade. Why is galvanised iron supplied to the Murchison by direct railage from Fremantle as against shipment by through steamer to Geraldton, especially when the following tolls show a saving in transit via Geraldton by through steamer? Fremantle to Wiluna 120s. 1d. per ton, Geraldton to Wiluna 99s. 11d., or a saving of £1 0s. 2d. Fremantle to Meekatharra 106s. 4d. per ton, Geraldton to Meekatharra 85s. 8d., a saving of £1 0s. 8d. per ton. Fremantle to Cue 97s. 3d., as against Geraldton to Cue 75s. 4d.; a saving of 21s. 11d. Fremantle to Anketell, 99s. 7d. per ton, as against Geraldton to Anketell 87s. 3d.; a saving of £1 1s. 4d. per ton.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is to prevent the vendors of the iron from sending it via Geraldton?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I shall come to that. When Mr. Drew, as Chief Secretary, and the present Premier, as Minister for Railways, attended a big meeting at Geraldton some weeks ago, Mr. Drew with the experience he has gained as Minister

controlling the State Shipping Service asked the members of the Chamber of Commerce who were present why they could not arrange for through shipments from the Eastern States and thus avoid handling charges at Fremantle. Mr. Drew was assured by those present whose business it is to secure these through freights if they want to keep their positions and fulfil their duties to their employers, that they had tried but had found it impossible to arrange this. Among the businessmen present there was a feeling of doubt, when the savings to be effected were pointed out to them, whether some secret rebate was not being given in order to induce shippers to have the goods landed at Fremantle instead of sending them on to Geraldton and thus effecting the savings I have enumerated. Mr. Willcock, as Minister for Railways, gave his assurance that so far as he knew there was no such secret rebate. He promised that on his return to Perth he would make exhaustive inquiries to ascertain whether any such rebates were given. Since then the Geraldton Chamber of Commerce has been assured that nothing of the kind is taking place.

Hon. G. Fraser: Then this Parliament cannot do anything in the matter.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If the young interjector will only wait, we shall come to that in due course.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I cannot follow you. I do not know what your trouble is.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I said earlier in the evening that it had been deemed fit to subsidise the "Julia Percy." Mr. Drew knows more about that matter than I do. I am wondering whether something could not be done now to give the three-quarters of a million pounds spent at Geraldton a chance to earn interest. If not, I have a suggestion to offer to the Government. During the past 12 months there has been something like 13,000 to 14,000 tons of coal burnt in Geraldton for railway purposes. In that quantity of coal there must be a proportion of Newcastle burnt, because of the danger of bush fires being caused to agricultural districts through the use of Collie coal. Suppose that during the next 12 months 14,000 tons of coal is consumed in the Geraldton district, cannot the Government of the day, the present Government, say, "We will send a little more Newcastle coal to Geraldton than has been done previously"?

That would be doing Geraldton a great benefit, because through steamers, we are told, cannot be arranged for unless Geraldton can guarantee a minimum tonnage of cargo of 300. The Chamber of Commerce assured Mr. Drew that night that so far it had been impossible to arrange this. The great factor in getting supplies to any place is to arrange regularity of shipments. If the Government, through the Railway Department, would place an order for 300 tons of Newcastle coal as suggested, there would be at least a monthly steamer to Geraldton, and the merchants of that port and the Victoria district and the goldfields, knowing the steamer was leaving various Eastern States ports, would be able to arrange their purchases accordingly. Geraldton would get the benefit of the trade, the people on the Murchison would get the benefit of reduced freights, and the Government would not, when everything was taken into consideration, be showing a big loss.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But Newcastle coal is carried by tramp steamers in bulk.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am telling the House that we can arrange steamers for Geraldton subject to a promise of a minimum of 300 tons.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Of coal?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes, of coal.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I did not know that.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Geraldton Municipal Council burn coal for electricity supply, and altogether we could make up another couple of hundred tons of general cargo. But up to the present it has not been possible to arrange 300 tons of general cargo. So we are assured by men whose job it is to arrange these parcels: Mr. Drew declared in no uncertain tones that he was assured it could be done. Up to the present, however, it has not been possible. Here is a means for the Government to assist in arranging for a through steamer to Geraldton, because it is generally acknowledged that the handling charges at Fremantle involved in having Geraldton cargo transhipped to another steamer at Fremantle put that mode of transport out of the question for the Murchison trade. Before the suspension of the session I asked a question concerning the control, if any, that the Govern-

ment had over the Midland Railway Company. In reply, the then Chief Secretary referred me to the Act. I turned up the Act, and in Section 5 I found the following words:—

Provided that passengers and goods shall not be carried over the said railway at rates or charges not approved by the Minister for Railways.

That was just what I wanted to know. It means that the Minister for Railways has to approve of the scale of charges levied by the Midland Railway Company on users of their line. On making inquiries from the Railway Department I learnt that to bring a ton of wool from Mingenew to Perth, a distance of 227 miles, costs 82s. 8d., whereas to bring a ton of wool from Geraldton to Perth, a distance of 306 miles, costs only 50s. People will say, "But the latter is the port-to-port rate." I happen to know quite a lot about the port-to-port rate. I happened to be secretary of the Geraldton Traders' Association when Mr. Poynton came to Geraldton and put this rate up to the Geraldton traders. A couple of men present were long-headed enough to see that if the business people of Geraldton accepted this rate, they would be dealing a serious blow to the trade of the port. The rate was condemned. To be perfectly fair let me give the freight charges. On a ton of wool from Geraldton to Perth, a distance of 306 miles, it is 50s.; from Mingenew to Perth (227 miles) it is 82s. 8d. For a distance of 227 miles on all Government lines, the figure is 62s. 8d. For the Minister for Railways to approve, as he must have done, of freights that act detrimentally to such a large number of primary producers is altogether unfair. Then take the figures for a ton of furniture. From Perth to Geraldton it is 62s. 6d., and from Perth to Mingenew, 145s. 5d. For 227 miles on all Government lines the charge is 113s. 11d.; that is, 31s. 6d. less than the Midland Railway charge. To convey a ton of sugar from Perth to Geraldton costs 50s., and from Perth to Mingenew 91s. 2d. For 227 miles on all Government lines the cost is 54s. 10d. The respective charges for 3 cwt. of groceries are 9s. 3d., 22s. 3d. and 15s.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is the difference between Government and private enterprise.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: When the Transport Bill was before Parliament we were assured that if it were passed, thus eliminat-

ing motor traffic competition, railway rates would be reduced. Through the Commissioner, the Government have kept their promise, but from inquiries which I have made, it appears that there have been no reductions on the Midland Railway line. The Midland Railway people were squealing just as badly as the Government Railways about unfair motor competition, but now that they have been relieved of it they have failed to give a quid pro quo. The Midland Railway company are slipping back, not only as regards rates, but also train service. I read in the paper the other day that the company had celebrated its jubilee. I did not think the line had been in existence for that long, although I knew it had been running since I was a boy, and that is a good while ago. While we may not be in order in demanding or requesting any improvement in the service, I think we are at least entitled to expect that it shall not go back. Compare the time-tables of what is known as the "mail" train. It used to leave Perth at 5.3 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, arriving at Geraldton at 8.10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays. Bitter complaints frequently came from the Chamber of Commerce and other interested people that this train ran habitually late, so Mr. Poynton adopted a very novel, if not very satisfactory, method of running it. Instead of its leaving Perth at 5.3 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, he caused it to leave at 4.35 p.m., and instead of getting in at 8.10 the following morning, the train now arrives at 8.5 a.m. The sum total is that it takes 23 minutes longer to do the journey. From Geraldton on Mondays and Thursdays the train left at 4.45 a.m., arriving in Perth at 10.20 p.m. The times on the new time-table are 4.15 a.m. and 10.10 p.m. respectively. Under the old table, the train on Fridays left Geraldton at 5.35 a.m., and arrived in Perth at 11.5 p.m. Under the new time-table it leaves at 2.35 a.m., and arrives in Perth at 9.50 p.m., taking one hour 15 minutes longer for the journey. If it is too late for the old member for Geraldton, I hope that the new Minister for Railways will take action to see that the Midland Railway Company gives its patrons the service to which they are entitled. Although it does not interest me as a member of the Central Province, I consider that because it is a very big public utility it is my duty to draw attention to the necessity to effect some improvement in the administration of matters under the con-

trol of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. If anything were needed to justify my calling attention to the matter, it would be found in a statement which appeared in the "West Australian" on the 15th July, which read as follows:—

The Auditor-General in his annual reports on the accounts of the Fremantle Harbour Trust has from time to time commented strongly on the various aspects of Treasury and Harbour Trust policy which have been referred to in the statement, and extracts from some of his reports are attached. An examination of the position of the Fremantle Harbour Trust demonstrates clearly that the administration of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act and of the harbour and its finances must be placed on a sound and business-like basis, to effect which the overall and amendment of the Act should no longer be delayed.

That is not a statement of the Chamber of Commerce or the business people of Fremantle, but a statement made by the Auditor-General. I followed the controversy in the Press, and I noticed that Mr. Kitson when Honorary Minister hit back in no very uncertain manner at the critics of this administration, but it seems to me that when the Auditor-General gives voice to such criticism some notice should be taken of him. We have heard a good deal about control of marketing, and I hope something will be done to put marketing on a better basis than it is at present, in the interests of those people who so sorely need every protection possible. When I say that, I do not forget that the consumer's interests should also be protected as far as possible. I am not submitting my next subject in the form of a question, but I am hoping that the Chief Secretary when replying will give some indication as to whether the Government have anything in their minds on the subject. During the last Parliament a Bill was passed to provide for the bulk handling of wheat. This legislation was necessary in order that the farmer might have reduced costs. But the effect of this measure is that a number of other people will be thrown out of employment; it will take from them their means of earning a livelihood at a calling which to them had provided for their existence for many years. A single man may have started to work on a wharf, then got married and reared a family. This man might not have known any other calling. The members representing Fremantle will speak for the men at that port; I am concerned about the workers at Ger-

aldton, many of whom will be deprived of the means of earning a living.

Hon. G. Fraser: We spoke about that ten years ago.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I should like to know what is proposed now that bulk handling has become an accomplished fact. It is no use waiting until the system of bulk handling is in full swing, but it is up to the Government to take action that will enable the men for whom work on the wharves will no longer be available, not to go on relief work, but to get employment in some other form. Relief work will probably mean their having to leave their homes to go to some distant part of the State.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What do you propose?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: My friend wishes to know what I would propose. I have no doubt some members would say that it was the Government's job. I do not propose to leave it at that; I am wondering whether a start could not be made—and the idea is not original, since it has been adopted in other parts of the world—with the provision of blocks of land for these men, say in the vicinity of Fremantle and Geraldton where they had been working, and the erection of shacks or small homes. We have the timber; it is not as if we had to send overseas for it—and other material with which to build the homes. These homes need not be elaborate, but there should be sufficient land around the homes to enable the men to grow produce. Hon. members might ask: Why suggest the growing of produce for which no market can be found? No one knows better than I the difficulty being experienced to-day in the selling of peas, beans and tomatoes, and that very often these products do not bring enough to pay for railage. To-day our sustenance workers are barely able to provide for food and clothing out of the meagre wages they receive. Therefore, realising the intermittent nature of the work of wharf lumps, this section of the community could at least be provided with homes and a small area of land on which they could grow articles necessary for their own consumption. I do not say a man would not want any Government money. He would still require some. Perhaps work could be found comparatively near his home, and sufficient money given to him

to enable him to live in greater comfort. The idea is not new, and is carried out in other countries. Instead of lounging about street corners a man would have something with which to employ his spare time, say in a garden where he could grow something. The building of the house itself would also afford some employment. That is what I think should be done with these people. It would be costly in the first place, but it would be very much better than paying out week after week for road work or any other work of that description. The present system does not enable a man to make a home for himself. There is an inquiry here about slums. In Geraldton, recently, the municipal council had to condemn a number of homes. When I was on the council for eight years before entering Parliament we were talking of condemning some of those places, but were deterred from doing so lest the people living in them should be obliged to camp on the beaches. To-day many of those places could be condemned. A lot of building is going on in Geraldton. I am sure the class of house going up to-day would not be within the reach of wharf lumpers. I do not want to be accused of wet-nursing people. When, however, a community has been forced into bulk handling, as the farmers have been to reduce their costs, and by this forcing have deprived a number of men of the means of earning a livelihood, the Government and the community generally should endeavour to find some means whereby the displaced men could earn a living apart from being sent all over the State on road work. I wish now to touch upon public health. I was sorry to hear Mr. Wittenoom's remarks about the Albany hospital. I have heard quite as much squealing and complaining about the hospital tax as I have heard about anything. What I am going to say I say in defiance of all the criticism of this tax. My experience has been that the hospital tax of 1½d. is a good thing. It has enabled the Government to provide improved medical attention and services for people who are down and out, homeless, friendless and moneyless. I speak from close association for many years with the Government hospital in Geraldton. We pride ourselves on our treatment of the poor. There are many things that are crying out to be done

and cannot be done, but in Western Australia we can pride ourselves on the fact that if a man is penniless and friendless, and falls sick, he can go into a Government hospital and receive all the attention he requires. I know the conditions appertaining to the hospital in Geraldton, and am surprised to think that the same conditions do not exist all over the State. I know that in Geraldton the best medical attention is always available. We have three medical practitioners in private practice and they have the right to enter the hospital, where they generously attend indigent patients free. In the town and in the district a man can receive good medical attention, can be kept sweet and clean, and receive expert nursing attention without any cost. Hardly a week goes by that I am not approached by some unfortunate person for hospital attention. I am not prepared to ask the department to forego its fees or hospital charges. That is one thing a person ought to pay if he can. I am frequently in touch with the Medical Department with regard to the admission of people to the hospital. Patients always have to be examined in merely a cursory manner before admission, and I have never found any difficulty about getting a patient in. It is the hospital tax which enables these things to be done. I have heard the Under Secretary for the department personally explain all about hospital treatment in Geraldton. Surely I shall receive the support of the Chief Secretary when I say that the hospital fund goes into an account separate altogether from the general revenue account, and that the Minister for Health has full control over it. It may be that the Minister is supposed to find enough money out of the fund with which to build hospitals. I do not know whether that was in the mind of the framers of the Act. This special fund, however, is kept apart from the Consolidated Revenue, and is doing a lot of good. People have suggested that the tax should be raised to 6d. Mr. Wittenoom discussed this matter this afternoon. He suggested that the tax should be increased, and immediately Mr. Thomson, representing the same Province, raised an objection. The Government are constantly finding themselves in need of additional money. So sure as they ask for it a howl goes up about the high taxation. I was pleased to see in a recent issue that the "West Australian," notwithstanding the hard things that have been said, reminded legisla-

tors that it was not the time to ask for a reduction of taxation.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We do not want an increase.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I also wish to refer to the reported purchase by the Government of trolley buses, without Parliamentary approval. There are one or two important principles at stake. It is said that this House has nothing to do with the finances, but I notice that Appropriation Bills and Loan Bills come before us. I wonder whether it is just a matter of form. If people, who profess to be anxious to retain our present form of Government, wish to retain it, they are not assisting in that direction by an action such as this. There does not seem to be the slightest necessity for the expenditure of that money. There is another matter I wish to bring up, although it has nothing to do with the Government. It is the system that is responsible for it. We have certain essential needs that are languishing for capital, but when we come to the city we see going up a building costing a quarter of a million pounds. One can be pardoned for asking what sort of system it is that permits that kind of thing. It is common knowledge that there are scores of vacant offices in the city. Will the expenditure of that money produce an extra bushel of wheat or a pound of wool, or any wealth at all? I can hear someone say, "Would you rather the money was spent in another part of Australia?" I am glad to see the money is being spent in Perth, but when the building is finished, what then? I think an insurance company is putting it up.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is to save them from taxation.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: One cannot keep a good man down. The man in the street says, "You know why that building is going up." The other fellow may say "No," and the first one says, "So that the company may escape taxation." I have heard other reasons expressed. There must be something wrong with a system that allows that sort of thing.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I cannot see anything wrong with it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Perhaps the hon. member could if I lent him my glasses. All sorts of systems and schemes are being suggested to stop that kind of thing, the unnecessary expenditure of money on quite unnecessary matters. One of these is socialism. That has been tried here, but has not done

much good. We have been told that it would have done a lot of good had it not been for the Legislative Council. There was a Premier at one time who said, "Thank God for the Legislative Council." Recently we heard of the Douglas Credit System. People say that was founded on a fallacy. There is something else I have never heard spoken of here. I was reading a paper last week called "The Liberator." In it there is a report of a meeting at which you, Mr. President, when moving a vote of thanks to the speaker, said you admired people who were after the truth, that the world was in such a troubled state that any man or number of men who were conscientiously endeavouring to find a way out deserved every credit and support. I wonder whether "The Liberator" would get us out of our troubles. The present system is not doing any good. I wish to quote Professor Beasley, of the Western Australian University, whose remarks are reported in the "West Australian" of the 20th November, 1935. This is what he had to say about Communism:—

Only one country in the world was really concerned with the welfare of its citizens—Russia. All other countries were concerned with mirages of prestige and power. These questions they put before the welfare of the people.

On the 19th of the same month, according to the "West Australian" no less a person than Archbishop Prendiville said:—

Communism is a widespread menace, and is endeavouring to get a foothold in this country.

If lawyers can disagree, what about the ordinary layman, or even politicians? Something should be done; that is pretty evident. I struck a great idea in the "West Australian" of the 24th February of this year. It was headed, "Sharing of Salaries," "New Zealand Government's Scheme," and the cablegram read—

Under the salaries-sharing plan adopted by the Labour Caucus, the Premier (Mr. Savage) will receive £800 a year and a special allowance of £250 for the extra cost of entertainment which must fall upon him as Premier. Other Ministers will receive £400 a year less, while the income of non-Ministerial members of the party will be increased by about £100.

I reckon that is a jolly fine idea. As the Labour Government in New Zealand are reported to be doing splendid work on reduced salaries, I am bold enough to make the suggestion to our Labour Government that this scheme be given consideration. There is one matter I find difficulty in

understanding. I have always understood that Labour stood for the leasehold system in preference to the freehold tenure of land. Despite that, we find the Labour Government selling land wholesale. I understand that the plank of the Labour Party's platform shows that we should not dispose of the land at all because it is not ours to sell. I wonder how our Labour Government can claim to stand four-square to the party's land policy. I shall not resume my seat without uttering a protest against various appointments made by the Labour Government. The policy they have adopted is really that of spoils to the victors. Against Mr. Angwin no one can say a word. He is a very fine gentleman, but I maintain he is too old now to carry out the important and onerous duties involved in the chairmanship of the Rural Relief Board. Mr. Kenneally was formerly lauded as a very able Minister of the Crown, but he was rejected by the electors of East Perth. If Trades Hall liked to find a position for him, well and good. That did not happen. The Government went to his assistance and appointed him to the chairmanship of the Lotteries Commission, a position for which, I contend, there is not the slightest necessity. To indicate that I am not at all prejudiced against Mr. Kenneally himself, I go further and say there is no necessity for a paid board to control the lotteries business at all. There are plenty of public-minded citizens who would consider it an honour to be appointed to deal with the distribution of the lottery funds. They could carry out that task easily and would enjoy the confidence of the public. Another appointment made by the Government to which I take exception was that of Mr. Abey, who was appointed general manager of the Agricultural Bank. I know that gentleman to be a very fine bank official, but there are a number of exceedingly capable officers in the Agricultural Bank. Not one of those officers had an opportunity to secure promotion either to the position of chief inspector, or to that of general manager, although they had many years of faithful service to their credit. The Public Service includes many fine men who have devoted years of their lives in various departments of State, and all they have to look forward to, apart

from their salaries, is promotion in recognition of good conduct and conscientious and faithful service in the departments in which they have laboured. The appointment of outsiders to Government positions has not only a depressing effect on the Civil Service as a whole but is not in the best interests of the service, or, what is of more importance, of the State.

On motion by Hon. T. Moore, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 8th September, 1936.

	PAGE
Electoral—Swearing-in of member	412
Question: Vermin bonuses	413
Bills: Cus-Big Bell Railway, 1R.	413
Legal Practitioners' Act Amendment, 1R.	413
Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment, 1R.	413
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 1R.	413
Child Welfare Act Amendment, 1R.	413
Purchasers' Protection Act Amendment, 1R.	413
Wool (Draft Allowance Prohibition), 2R.	413
Petroleum, 2R.	414
Cus-Big Bell Railway, Message	410
Pearling Crews Accident Assurance Fund, 2R.	419
Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements, 2R.	422
Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagees' Relief Act Amendment, 2R.	423
Annual Estimates: Financial Statement for 1936-37	425

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

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

MR. SPEAKER: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the Brown Hill-Ivanhoe electorate caused by the acceptance by Frederick Charles Lee Smith of the office of Minister for Justice and Railways. It shows that Frederick Charles Lee Smith