

mated that the annual cost will amount to £90,000. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

## BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT CONTINUANCE.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.40] in moving the second reading said: It is intended by this Bill to extend the period of the operation of the Dried Fruits Act, 1926, for a further term of three years. In 1926 the dried fruit industry was in an extremely parlous state, and, owing to urgent and repeated requests by the growers, the original Act was introduced. Provision was made under Section 35 of the Act for it to remain in operation until the 31st March, 1930, in order to ascertain if the control of the industry would be in the best interests of the growers. The control provided undoubtedly has had a beneficial effect, and, as a result, the measure was re-enacted at various times up to March, 1935. The effect has been to distribute the total value of crops more evenly between the producers, and it has eliminated the chaotic conditions that existed previously, when a few growers did exceptionally well and the remainder were unable to secure a reasonable return for their products. Now, by reason of the provisions of the Act, every grower gets practically the same price per ton for fruit, and, as the growers each export a fixed percentage of their tonnage, they share equally in any loss occasioned by lower returns from the fruit exported. Some growers were originally opposed to the measure, but it can now be definitely stated that practically every one of them agrees that it has been beneficial, and the great majority are in favour of control being continued. The production figures indicate that the position has definitely improved under the system of control that has been exercised. In 1927, the quantity of dried fruits produced was 1,597 tons, whilst in 1933 the total was 2,236 tons—an increase of 639 tons. These figures include sultanas, of which a sufficient quantity is not yet produced to meet local requirements. In 1927 only 93 tons were produced, whereas for 1933 the production

amounted to 441 tons. It can confidently be claimed that the increased production is due to a feeling of security engendered by the operations of the Act. Prior to that a grower could not be certain that he would be able to market his fruit in the State, and, failing to do so, his only other course was to send it overseas, with a consequent reduced return of approximately £13 per ton. The favourable results attained under control have given growers more security and an incentive to devote the whole of their time and effort towards improving their methods of production. At the present time there are 371 growers engaged in the industry and the area under production is 2,390 acres. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 11th November, 1931.*

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

### QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has any decision been reached regarding the acceptance of tenders for the purchase of equipment for the Electricity

Department? 2, What are his proposals respecting extensions, and will they include outer suburban areas? 3, Is it possible to indicate when new plant is likely to be installed?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, No decision regarding extensions of electric mains has yet been arrived at. 3, Not at present.

## **BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1934-35.**

*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

*Vote—Agriculture, £67,446 (partly considered):*

**HON. P. D. FERGUSON** (Irwin-Moore) [4.34]: It is a matter for regret that the Minister was compelled to introduce his Estimates at such a late hour last night. Most members were feeling a little weary, and about 50 per cent. of them were suffering from colds, and I regretted—and I think this applies to most members representing agricultural electorates—to see the Minister turning over page after page of his notes without comment, which information we would have been particularly interested to have. Unfortunately he said nothing about many of the activities of the department in which we would have been interested. It seems to me that during a period like the present, when every phase of agricultural activity is suffering through the depressed prices for its commodities, the department and the officers should be particularly busy. I imagine there has never been a time in the history of the department when the services of the expert officers should be so largely availed of as during these depressed times. We have been committed to a large expenditure in the South-West portion of the State for irrigation, and the Department of Agriculture ought to see that the settlers who will be called upon to pay the interest and sinking fund on that expenditure are placed in a position to produce something from their properties that will

enable them to stand up to the liability. It is the duty of the Government and of the department to help those settlers by providing an experimental farm in order to demonstrate how they can make the best use of the water provided by the Public Works Department. I do not suggest that huge expenditure should be incurred for the purchase of a farm—I believe we have enough experimental farms already; as many as the State can afford—but a farm might be secured without having actually to buy it, so that a practical demonstration of the best way to utilise the water available could be given to settlers. Very few of our South-West farmers have had experience of irrigation, and I imagine very few of the people in Western Australia have had such experience. I hope the Minister will be able to prevail on the Government to provide one or two men experienced in the practical use of water for irrigation purposes, and thus teach the farmers to make the best use of it. To expend several hundred thousands pounds on placing the water on the farms would be of little use unless the farmers were taught to make the best use of it. That is the function of the Department of Agriculture, and I express the hope that something will be done at an early date to educate the farmers in this matter.

The Minister for Railways: Victoria introduced it at Mildura.

**Hon. P. D. FERGUSON:** Never was it needed so much as at Mildura, because the Government of Victoria have lost hundreds of thousands of pounds on their irrigation schemes, and it behoves the Government of this State not to fall into a similar error. I venture the opinion that a good deal of the error could be avoided by the early appointment of an officer to instruct farmers in the direction indicated. Of course we shall not be growing in the South-West the commodities that are grown at Mildura, where the dried fruit industry is of considerable dimensions, but it is essential for farmers growing fodder crops and engaged in dairying, men who for years have been farming under the ordinary conditions prevailing in the State, to be educated in the most profitable and economical use of the water. Most members know from the use of water in their own gardens in the metropolitan area how a tremendous lot can be used without securing much benefit.

A judicious use of water is acquired only by actual practice, and farmers in the South-West will need to have the practice. A sum of £375 has been provided for the purchase of bulls, but no mention is made of any subsidy for the purchase of stallions. I should like the Minister to tell us whether the Government intend to continue the subsidy for the purchase of stallions, which has been responsible for so greatly assisting the Clydesdale draught horse breeding industry of the State.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: So long as the subsidy is to be continued, I do not mind. I prefer that the money should come from the Commonwealth Government, because they have more funds available. The Royal Commission on the Agricultural Bank recommended that the Government should establish a fund for the assistance of rabbit destruction. In view of the fact that rabbits have spread practically all over Western Australia, that the farming community are hard-pressed to cope with them, and that there are so many abandoned Agricultural Bank properties and Crown lands that are breeding grounds for rabbits, it would be only fair for the Government to assist in this direction. While it should be the responsibility of the individual farmer to eradicate rabbits on his own property, it is very disheartening to farmers to find that their efforts are more or less nullified by the fact that abandoned Bank properties or Crown lands adjoining are infested with rabbits and are not being poisoned. I have an area of sandplain country almost adjacent to my farm, and I can poison every day in the week on my cleared country, but just outside the fence where there are Crown lands—scrub country—rabbits are present in thousands and they come on to my property as fast as I can poison them. It is not much encouragement to me and to other farmers similarly situated to carry on the good work of destruction, because it is being neutralised on account of the poisoning not being done universally. If the Government could establish a fund such as is advocated by the Royal Commission on the Agricultural Bank, it might be utilised for that purpose.

The Minister for Lands: My experience is dissimilar. The rabbits are on my block, and none on the sandplain.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Then the local vermin board must have been lax in not putting the acid on the Minister and compelling him to poison.

The Minister for Lands: I do poison.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: In my district the board take care that the farmers poison, and they would like to put the acid on the Government to ensure that they also should poison, but unfortunately they can do nothing in that direction.

The Minister for Employment: Where do you buy that acid?

Mr. Hegney: Is it a local product?

The Minister for Employment: It sounds like a local product.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Regarding other vermin, the Central Vermin Board, who deal with the eradication of dingoes and foxes, have not sufficient funds with which to pay an adequate bonus for the destruction of those pests. The Minister, in introducing his Estimates, referred to that matter, and by way of interjection I asked whether he would get the Government to agree to enlarge the source from which the fund is collected. The Minister evidently thought that such a suggestion would not meet with the approval of Parliament, but I would like to urge upon him that he give Parliament a trial. I believe Parliament would agree to it, because it generally does recognise that in matters of national importance, such as the destruction of vermin, the cost should be nationally borne. I hold that every landowner in Western Australia should be called upon to contribute to this fund, and that contribution to it should not be restricted to those people who own more than 160 acres of land. To-day many farmers are paying into the fund though they have no cause at all to worry about vermin. Many of the inside districts where there are no dingoes are paying for the destruction of that pest. That is just as important to the man with less than 160 acres if he has sheep and poultry, as it is to the man in the inner areas with more than 160 acres who also runs sheep. If the Minister would place on Parliament the responsibility of agreeing to such a proposal, I believe he would not be disappointed. Personally I would have no exemption whatever, but would place the tax on all land in the State, whether fenced with verminproof fencing or situated in St. George's-terrace. I want to

have a word with the Minister for Agriculture regarding visits of the sheep and wool adviser of his department to the Royal Show at Sydney. Repeated attempts have been made to enable that officer to visit the Sydney Show, in order that he may bring his knowledge of wool and other matters up to the level of Sydney, where, I suppose, more is known of the subject than in any other part of the world. That would be in the interests of the many hundreds of farmers whom the officer instructs in the course of the year as to matters connected with sheep and wool. Other officers of the department occasionally visit the Eastern States in the interests of the particular branches with which they are associated, but three or four efforts to have such visits made by the sheep and wool adviser, the representative of the most important industry in Australia, have failed. At last the Merino Breeders' Association of Western Australia have undertaken to contribute to the cost of sending the adviser to Sydney, if the Minister will agree. It seems to me that it is not the function of such a body to bear or contribute towards that expense. Merino breeding is confined to a few men, probably about a hundred in Western Australia, while there must be about 10,000 sheep owners. Why should a hundred stud breeders be called upon to bear the expense? However, they have undertaken to contribute a percentage of the cost of sending the officer to the Eastern States in connection with Royal Shows there, if the Minister will agree. I wish to urge upon the Minister that he make provision for the officer to visit the next Royal Show to be held in Sydney. Last night the Minister referred to the rust position in the northern areas of the State. In my opinion this matter is of much greater importance than most people think. Attempts have been made to induce the Government to take immediate stock of the position, because it will be necessary to secure supplies of seed if those who are unfortunate enough to have rust lose most of their crop. There will be plenty of seed in the northern areas for the farmers, but it will be necessary for the Minister to ensure that the crops on the individual farms from which it is proposed to secure seed shall be inspected before they are harvested. Once a crop is harvested and goes to the siding, it is futile to attempt to inspect it, because it may be mixed with other varieties in a

wagon or in a heap at the siding, and farmers would run considerable risk in using it. On the other hand, if the officers of the Agricultural Department could go to a farmer who says, "I have a good crop of a certain variety," and certify to its being reasonably pure, it should be possible to secure some of that seed for farmers whose crops are so bad as not to be suitable for the purpose. A good deal of capital has been made of a statement by the Director of Agriculture that rust-stricken wheat is suitable for seed. I am afraid the director's attitude on the matter has been largely misunderstood in the country. Indeed, I am not sure that it has not been misunderstood by the Minister himself. Certainly Mr. Sutton said such wheat could be used for seed, and had been used with safety. I have used it for seed myself without any very deleterious results, so far as I can see. Nevertheless farmers would be running considerable risk, and unnecessary risk, when ample seed free from rust is available. The point of the director's remarks which has been lost sight of by most people is this—

However, the shrivelled grain cannot contain the amount of plant food for the nourishment of the young plant resulting from the germination of the seed, and because of this it is advisable that the seed-bed of such seed should be well prepared and in good condition.

That is the point I want to stress.

Mr. Patrick: Why use it at all?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: That is the commonsense view; but if a farmer is so hard up that he cannot afford to buy other seed, he will use rust-infected seed rather than not seed his country at all. However, the director says that if such seed is used, it is essential that the seed-bed should be carefully prepared, because otherwise the seed would not be able to stand up to the strain resulting from germination. While one might prepare a suitable seed-bed in May, lack of rain might cause it to fail. Even in our farming areas we get a light rainfall during May, and that is the critical period so far as germination is concerned. While sound, plump grain may stand up without rain for a week or two, the rust-shrivelled seed is not strong enough to nourish the plant for a week or two, and the farmer may easily lose the whole of his crop as the result of using such seed. I ask the Minister to get busy in connection with

the matter and endeavour to see that enough seed is reserved for those farmers who are likely to need it. However, the hon. gentleman and the Minister for Lands will have a better idea than I have of how much is likely to be required. Undoubtedly out of the half-million acres usually seeded in that area, quite a considerable proportion will be so badly stricken with rust that the farmers will have to get seed from other farms. I would like the Minister for Agriculture to tell us what is the intention of the Government regarding the grant to the Royal Agricultural Society in connection with the district display. What is the reason for the reduction this year of £100 in that grant? Is it considered that the Royal Agricultural Society do not make the best use of the grant? From my point of view the district display has done more to advertise the Royal Agricultural Show, and incidentally the productivity of Western Australia not only to our own people but to visitors from the Eastern States and even from overseas, than anything else connected with the Royal Show. It is well known that the district display is conducted at a loss by the Royal Agricultural Society. The work connected with the preparation of it is considerable. Individual societies and individual farmers who assist lose heavily as a result. Anything that the Government can do to assist them will, I am sure, be amply repaid. I was interested in the Minister's remarks regarding pleuro in the cattle in the northern areas. I am indeed pleased that at last a prominent Australian scientist has discovered a method by which it seems reasonably certain we shall be able to indicate whether a beast is suffering from pleuro, without having to slaughter it. In the interests of stations like Anna Plains and similar properties, it is possible now to get stock overlanded to the southern areas of the State. That is how it should be. But I wish to warn the Minister that he needs to be careful in this regard, as otherwise, notwithstanding the utilisation of the test, he may be running the risk of bringing into the southern areas cattle affected with pleuro. It would be unwise to allow any cattle on a station where pleuro has once been located to be removed from that station, except for slaughter. The Minister said that immediately the test had been applied, the cattle were drafted off and sent south; but I want to point out that with

the open range conditions under which those cattle are depastured, it may easily happen that they become re-infected. I understand that a beast has only to come close enough to another beast to inhale its breath in order to become re-infected; so easily can the pleuro infection be transmitted. As regards all those stations on which pleuro has never been located, I hope every effort will be made to bring the cattle down. On the other hand, where pleuro has once made its appearance, the risk involved, in my opinion, is too great. Hon. members will realise how necessary it is to safeguard districts south of the Kimberleys from the ravages of the dread pleuro disease, when I mention that the stock industry south of the Kimberleys is worth about twenty times as much as the stock industry of the Kimberleys themselves. Pleuro is considered to be one of the worst diseases known to veterinary science. So that while we are desirous of doing everything possible to assist the pastoralists in the difficult times they are faced with, we must also be mindful of our duty to cattle owners in the southern and Midland areas lest we do more harm than good. Will the Minister tell us what is the position as regards the provision of laboratory accommodation for the veterinary officers of his department? We have had ample evidence from visiting scientists who have come from the Eastern States, and from the C.S.I.R., that the accommodation we provide for our veterinary officers is practically useless, and such as we should be ashamed of. But there is something more to be said, and that is that Western Australia cannot expect to get hearty co-operation and support, and also financial assistance, from the C.S.I.R., which has more money available for scientific research than any other body in Australia, unless this State is prepared to co-operate with that body by providing adequate facilities. I realise that this is going to be a big job for our Government. Laboratory facilities cannot be provided except at considerable expense. I would like to know whether the Minister has gone into the question with the authorities of our University, so that some of their lands and some of their finance may be utilised to provide laboratory facilities in the interests of the stock owners of this State. So far as I see, it does not matter who provides the facilities, so long as they are provided without unnecessary delay. If the University

has more money available than the Agricultural Department, by all means let the University provide the facilities; but I do urge upon the Minister that every year's delay means additional loss to the stock raising industry of Western Australia. We have been told that the ravages of the blowfly pest cost £4,000,000 a year in Australia. It is easily conceivable that if adequate facilities are provided, one of our scientists may at any time drop across a remedy of one of our worst troubles and thereby save many hundreds of thousands of pounds to the stock owners of Western Australia.

**MR. WISE** (Gascoyne) [4.59]: When the Agricultural Estimates were under discussion last year, I made more than passing reference to the accommodation provided for many of the officers of that department. Following on the remarks I then made, it is most pleasing to me to know that one valuable officer, with a priceless collection of plants, has been suitably housed in the Observatory building, and provided with adequate facilities not only for doing his work but also for displaying the excellent material he has in his possession. I would like to see something further done. I would like the department to be reconstructed from a constructional point of view. I would not mind if the existing building were used for the new crematorium that has been suggested. For my part, I would like to see an imposing building erected for the officers of this department. There is ample room between the present structure and St. George's Terrace to enable a building to be erected—it would not matter how high it was run up—to accommodate all the officers the department is likely to have for many years to come.

**Hon. P. D. Ferguson**: The Public Works Department has a plan prepared already for such a building.

**MR. WISE**: I hope the department will be able to make use of the plan very soon. Some of the officers, particularly those who work in the underground ramifications of the existing building, are housed in dreadful surroundings. The poultry expert occupies a small room, and I am sure that if 20 or 30 fowls were perched there, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have a lot to say. That instance strikes a parallel with the conditions under which many other officers of the Agri-

cultural Department are housed. The member for Irwin-Moore mentioned that no more experimental farms were necessary. I would agree with him if he were to use the word "wheat" in connection with his statement. There is urgent need for an experimental farm in the Gascoyne district. Much has been done, and a lot has been heard from me since I have been a member of this Chamber, in connection with a very important industry now established in the Gascoyne. The Minister stated last night more, perhaps, than most members before realised in connection with what has been done there, and the remarkable results achieved in so short a period. Every credit is due to the men who have battled along there irrespective of what the officer or officers paid for the work could achieve. The time has arrived when consideration must be given to preventing what would possibly prejudice decent experimentation being carried out. There could possibly be some such experimentation on the part of the farmers themselves, but the best results cannot be achieved unless an experimental station is established in the district. I would like to touch briefly on the question of rust in wheat. That matter was mentioned by the Minister and by the member for Irwin-Moore. The Minister informed the Committee that a wheat possessing all qualities could not be produced. That is quite so. There are far too many composite characteristics in every plant, particularly in wheat, to permit the production of an all-rounder. Some 16 years ago when I was connected personally with the plant breeding station at Roma in Queensland, there were 1,000 acres devoted to the specialised production of new varieties of wheat. When I was in charge of the experiments at that station, there were many varieties evolved over a period of years that were remarkably rust-resistant. Although it is impossible to produce a rust-proof wheat, great results can be achieved by the selection of the most resistant varieties obtaining in any district and the selection made of the best crosses from them. The character of the wheat plant is involved so much that I would like to give the Committee an instance of what happens when two varieties are crossed. It will serve to show the importance attached to the selection of varieties of plants in crossing wheat. If seven pairs of differentiating

characteristics are chosen—that is, bald and bearded wheats, those possessing short straw and long straw, giving red chaff and white chaff and with hollow straw and solid straw, etc.—in the crossing of those two varieties it is possible to get over 1,000 different segregations. It is in the selection from the segregations that the work of the plant breeder becomes evident. I would submit it is quite possible that the view with regard to wheat, and particularly regarding rust-resistant wheats, has become too localised in this State. It is quite possible that the department has become too enthusiastic over the wheats evolved locally. I suggest that as plant breeding stations in every part of the world are at work, it would be well worth while the department's investigating every avenue where work with wheat is being carried out. Luther Burbank did remarkable work originally with wheats and Farrar followed him in Australia. At the State farm at Roma in Queensland, there have been many more varieties of wheat resistant to rust than the main varieties known here—Nabawa and Merredin. Many of the varieties, particularly our hard wheats, have proved, under Queensland's humid conditions, very resistant to rust. The most popular wheat previously used in the Victoria district was Nabawa. There were varieties evolved in Queensland that turned out to be fixed. Like the "Old Bobs" and "Florence" types of wheat, the best types evolved had little flag and were heavy yielders. Heavy leafed types are not persisted with in those districts where rust is prevalent, and varieties that carry a heavy flag are those from which danger is to be anticipated.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Have they not those varieties on our State farms?

Mr. WISE: I cannot say.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They have over 400 varieties at the Wongan Hills experimental farm, and many varieties at other farms.

Mr. WISE: When I mentioned this matter to the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Sutton, he gave me the impression he was quite satisfied that the wheats evolved at our State farms.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is not so. There are many of these other varieties there too.

Mr. WISE: I know that, but there is a danger in such a perspective of thinking that

anything produced in the State is better than that produced elsewhere. I agree with the member for Irwin-Moore that no trouble is too great to take in an endeavour to secure for Western Australia the best varieties of wheat, particularly from the standpoint of resistance to rust. The manager of the Queensland State Farm at Roma, Mr. Soutter, was in Western Australia last year, and I understand he visited all our wheat-breeding stations. I submit it is worth while for the department to follow that up as far as possible. In conclusion, I ask the Minister whether it will not be possible to do something in connection with the wool branch of the Agricultural Department. I refer particularly to the appointment of an assistant to the inspector of sheep and wool, Mr. McCallum. The time is not far distant when Mr. McCallum cannot hope to cope with the work under his jurisdiction. It is essential that facilities be afforded Mr. McCallum or his assistant, if one be appointed, to visit the northern parts much more frequently than is possible under existing conditions.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [5.10]: When introducing his Estimates last year the Minister made the following statement:—

I think ways and means might be devised to provide better accommodation for the officials. They should not be hampered in their work by restricted office and laboratory accommodation, and something will have to be done to give them improved accommodation. I am taking up with the Premier the question of the housing of the officials.

Subsequently I introduced a deputation to the Minister with a request that up-to-date accommodation, particularly laboratory accommodation should be provided for the officials of the Agriculture Department. So far, the only two replies we have received in consequence of that deputation were to the effect that consideration was being given to the matter. Thirteen months have elapsed and I think some finality should be reached on this very important question. As the member for Gascoyne pointed out, the present accommodation is certainly not healthy, but, apart from that, another and much more important phase has been referred to before. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research have made it clear that they cannot make their skilled officers available to this State to the fullest

extent on account of the poor laboratory accommodation here. Surely, seeing that it means so much to the industry, a greater effort should be made to improve the laboratory accommodation available. Perhaps, as the member for Irwin-Moore pointed out, the University authorities may have greater financial resources than the Agricultural Department. If that be so, the department could consider handing over the work to the University. That which is available really causes the officers concerned considerable hardship and imposes on the primary producers an additional hardship. There is another danger. The State may lose the services of some of the competent officials employed on the technical side of the departmental work. I refer particularly to the experimental officers. Since last year's Estimates were considered, we nearly lost the services of one important officer. Endeavours were made by another State to secure his services, but in this instance the officer was loyal to Western Australia. Nevertheless, I desire to emphasise the danger, and it behoves the State to take the steps necessary to prevent the loss of these officers, particularly when it is largely a matter of better laboratory accommodation being required. The member for Gascoyne mentioned the position of the sheep and wool inspector, Mr. McCallum. If any member desired to interview that officer, he would probably find it necessary to shift a few chairs and other furniture in order to achieve his purpose. His room is probably about the smallest that one could possibly imagine such an officer to be provided with. I wish the Minister would consider making motor transport available to Mr. McCallum. I have sent requests to him to visit various parts of the State, and it has always been necessary to provide transport for him when he arrived at his destination by train. In travelling by train to attend meetings in various parts of the country, much of the valuable time of this officer is lost. That should not be so. I hope he will be provided with a motor car so that he will be able to get to different parts of the State with despatch. The farmers know the worth of this particular official, and desire his services to be available. I trust his work will be facilitated. The Minister, when speaking on irrigation the other night, mentioned pasture improvement and said there was a certain amount

of work to be done on an irrigation farm in the South-West; that it had to be cleared, subdivided, and planted, and that it would all take time. But is will still take time even if the start be delayed for another five years. The earlier the work is undertaken, the sooner shall we have results, and it is important that we should get early results. In my view it is the duty of the department to conduct experiments, for it is a waste of effort to have individual farmers experimenting with their pastures, when the department can carry out the work systematically and let the results be known to those to whom it means so much. Application was made to the Minister for the provision of a small amount, about £300, to enable pasture experimental work to be conducted at the Avondale Farm by Dr. Dunn. I hope the Minister will give favourable consideration to that application, so that the work can be carried out. The Avondale Farm is close to the Great Southern, and we have already a field day there, where the farmers assemble to see the results. Combining that with pasture improvements would afford excellent opportunity for disseminating necessary information amongst the farming community. I should like to touch upon the work of the Stallion Board. As the result of the importation of a large number of horses in recent years the work of the board has become very much greater than it was a few years ago, and it may be necessary to reinstitute the system of horse parades in order to have the animals examined. But I should like to mention that a case was brought under my notice last year in which the veterinary surgeon examined a horse and, two weeks later, word came that the animal was pronounced to be unsound. That is not just to the owner of the horse, for mistakes can occur, papers can get mixed up and there is nothing to show that the unfavourable report really relates to the horse stated. I think the decision of the board should be made known as soon as the horse is examined, and in the presence of the owner. I mentioned this to a member of the board, but he said there would be endless argument. However, that has nothing to do with the justice of the case. Incidentally I think the Act provides that two members of the board shall be present, one to do the veterinary examination, and the other to pronounce upon the animal's fidelity to



type. In the case I have mentioned, only one of the examiners was present. I hope the Minister will look into this, and also see to it that the engagements of the board are strictly met. In one instance a man was put to a great deal of inconvenience. He paraded his horse at the time and place appointed, but no examiner turned up. However, I believe the board members were prevented from putting in an appearance by having to visit another place, and there was no chance to notify the farmer who had paraded his horse. On the Address-in-Reply I suggested the advisability of transferring the Meat Export Advisory Council from the Chief Secretary's Department to the Agricultural Department. Only the other day we saw in the paper that it is likely restrictions will be placed upon the export of beef from Australia, and it is possible it may be extended even to mutton, which would be very serious for this State. This is a matter which really concerns the Agricultural Department, and it seems to me out of place that it should be under the control of the Chief Secretary. Of course I do not for a moment cast any reflection on the Chief Secretary, but this is a matter which naturally comes under the Agricultural Department. Actually the Minister for Agriculture represented this State at a meeting of the council in Hobart last year. Particularly do I urge this transfer, because it may possibly be that there are influences at work which may affect our quota system. At the last meeting an exporter was appointed to represent this State, and the exporters' outlook on this matter is not exactly the same as the growers' outlook. I hope the Minister if possible will have this export council matter transferred to his own department, where it will be closely watched, and where anyone interested will naturally go for information. These are the only matters I wish to bring before the Committee. I appeal to the Minister specially in regard to the laboratory to see if some decision cannot be arrived at; and also to see that suitable accommodation is arranged for the responsible officers.

**MR. PATRICK** (Greenough) [5.21]: I agree with other members as to the housing of the officers of this department. With most of the farmers, I highly appreciate the work those officers are doing. At the same time certain criticism is necessary in regard

to the research work on rust in wheat to be undertaken by this department. I noticed the other day that the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research said it would take 10 years to produce a rust-resisting wheat. That is where research should have been undertaken from 1915, the last disastrous visitation of rust to this State. The Minister has told us the department has given a great deal of attention to high yielding varieties of wheat. But yield is not the only thing to be considered in plants. I remember years ago listening to a very eminent stock-breeder lecturing on merino sheep. He said the main thing in sheep was constitution, and that having got that he could then proceed to build in wool and other qualities. The same thing applies to plants. We must have a good constitution wheat before we get high yield qualities. This is exemplified in Federation wheat, which from a stripping point of view is probably the best type of wheat yet produced in the Commonwealth. It did not grow to any great height, it was easy to strip, and it held its grain well. But Federation proved to have a very weak constitution, and consequently it went out. Constitution is one of the main things we have to look for in plants. Later on in my district another type of wheat, the Currawa, became very popular, but it proved to have a weak constitution, and so went out. I have seen a great number of wheats which have started with high yields, but have proved prone to disease, and so have declined. The only notable exception I am aware of is the variety Gluyas Early. At the Roseworthy Agricultural College this variety has topped the wheat yield for the last 40 years. It is of very fine constitution. Of course they are constantly picking it over and re-fixing the type, but still this wheat has proved to have a remarkably good constitution. I have been told it is so long since we have had rust that farmers have been taking the risk of rust in order to achieve high yields. However, in 1915, when Federation wheat was popular, 90 per cent. of the farmer growing Federation wheat went right out of it. That is why I interjected the other night that farmers growing any wheat prone to rust would now have to go out of that variety. I notice I was reported as having interjected that they would have to go right out of wheat growing, but of course I said

nothing of the sort. We were told at the Chapman State Farm field day that the variety Nabawa had proved in New South Wales the best rust-resisting variety ever introduced into that State. But only two years ago the Director of Agriculture advised farmers at the Chapman Farm field day to drop Nabawa wheat and take on Bencubbin wheat, because it was not so liable to disease as was Nabawa. Actually this year Bencubbin is absolutely the worst variety we have in the rusty districts, whereas those farmers who planted Nabawa are getting good yields. So I think the officers of the Agricultural Department, before giving such advice to the farmers, ought to know what they are talking about.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: How can it be tested against rust if you do not get a rusty year?

MR. PATRICK: It should be possible artificially to create in the laboratory the conditions of a rusty year and so test out the varieties for rust liability. Thirty or 40 years ago in South Australia there were individual farmers who brought out rust-resisting varieties that proved to be really rust-resistant. In 1915 one of the best rust-resisting varieties grown in our northern areas was Marshall's No. 3.

Mr. Wise: Districts vary. Some are wetter than others.

MR. PATRICK: Yes. Certain districts are always liable to rust, and those are the districts in which these rust-resisting varieties should be tried out. Instead of advising people to grow seed affected by rust—I do not know whether the Director of Agriculture meant some of the shrivelled seed I have seen—I would advise them to get right out of that variety of wheat altogether. In 1915, approximately 90 per cent. of the farmers went out of "Federation." A few, however, still persisted with it. That wheat was affected by rust even in years when there was no rust elsewhere in the district. There was one year in which certain farmers grew "Federation," and advised those who had gone to a new settlement nearby to do the same. In that year those particular crops were an absolute failure, although there was no rust in the Victoria district generally. Wheat which has a weak constitution is liable to contract diseases at any time. I was very interested in some of the lectures I heard at the Chapman State Farm. Mr. Pitman, for instance, made some inter-

esting statements about nitrogen bacteria cultures for plants. I never heard of that before. He referred to the nodules of nitrogen found on clover plants, and to the fact that clovers, being leguminous plants, gathered nitrogen from the air. We were told there were different bacteria on different leguminous plants. The subterranean clover, for instance, differed from the lupin in this respect. I am going to make experiments on my own farm and see whether there is any advantage to be derived from them. Mr. Pitman said that by using these cultures on subterranean clover it is possible to obtain a result which might take three or four years to obtain in the ordinary way. I also wish to refer to the policy associated with the Chapman State Farm. Mr. Sutton said the department were seriously considering the advisability of giving up wheatgrowing there. He pointed out that the land had been cropped for about 30 years, and was palpably going back in fertility. That is a reflection upon the department. If there is one thing that requires to be studied in jam and wattle country it is the maintenance of soil fertility. That has already been proved by farmers in the district. There is no reason why a farm should go back in wheatgrowing if in the earlier years lupins or other leguminous plants were planted. This was done by farmers in the district. It is possible to secure better crops of wheat after lupins than off bare fallow. A farm may be maintained in fertility by means of leguminous plants, such as the lupin, which, in the Victoria district, grows like a weed. We are told that attention is being paid to improving the pasture. Some interesting experiments have been made with top-dressing. This has also been the system followed in past years by individual farmers. I have proved on my farm that it is possible to double or treble the feeding qualities of the property by a generous top-dressing every year. I am glad the department are moving in the same direction. This year the Royal Agricultural Society rejected a large number of rams that were put up for sale. In this State it is necessary to register stallions and bulls to indicate that they have some breeding. The same thing should be done with respect to rams that are offered for sale. I do not know whether the department had anything to do with the action of the society, but the wool inspector was a member of the committee

which rejected several of the rams. It was not a pleasing job, and brought forth a great deal of criticism. Some of these rams came from the Eastern States. I saw some of them, and am of opinion they represented the most rubbishy animals ever put up for sale in this State. Many farmers who do not know much about the subject, and are just going in for sheep, think that because rams are put up for auction by the Royal Agricultural Society they must be classy sheep, especially if they come from the Eastern States. I do not know what the effect of the rejection of these rams was, but they were not put up for sale. I am afraid the agent who imported them would probably have passed them on to farmers in the country who had sent in buying orders. Very often farmers do not bid for rams at the sale, and content themselves by sending in buying orders. If these rams had been put up for sale, they would no doubt have fetched 12 or 15 guineas. Some provision should be made for animals of this class to be branded as having been rejected, and they should not be allowed to be sold. I should also like to lay stress upon the rabbit menace. My experience differs from that of the Minister, but coincides with that of the member for Irwin-Moore (Hon. P. D. Ferguson). Undoubtedly rabbits are attacking what are known as light lands. Some of the sandplain has been abandoned altogether through the invasion, because the owners have not considered it worth while to spend the money necessary to protect these areas by means of wire netting. Consequently, the rabbits have become a serious menace on the sandplain. Owing to the position in which they find themselves, farmers cannot afford to protect their holdings with netting. During the last four years they have not been in a financial position to do so. The matter is becoming so serious that it will have to be taken up by the nation. It is interesting to note the criticism of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits concerning trapping. I was speaking to several people on the occasion of the Chapman field day. They told me that on the Greenough, where trapping has been done extensively, by men who were catching rabbits for export, the menace has practically disappeared. I do not know if this disappearance will be permanent, but there has been a substantial reduction in the number of rabbits for the

time being. The Royal Commission which inquired into the Agricultural Bank stressed the necessity for closer co-operation between the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Bank and the Lands Department. We have experts, like Dr Teakle, condemning land that had previously been thrown open for settlement. What should have been done is that the experts of the department should first have examined the land and, if suitable, it could then have been thrown open for settlement. It should not have been selected first and condemned afterwards. Closer co-operation should be brought about between the Agricultural Department and those departments that are in charge of land settlement. I again urge the Minister to endeavour to arrange for the better housing of his officers, and also provide a laboratory.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—College of Agriculture, £7,167—agreed to.*

Department of Police—(Hon. H. Millington, Minister):

*Vote—Police, £221,208:*

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [5.40] I should like to draw attention to a protest I have received regarding the administration of the liquor laws on the goldfields. This protest is in the form of a communication from the Bishop of Kalgoorlie. If desired, I will lay it upon the Table of the House.

The letter is dated the 17th October, and is as follows:—

Re administration of liquor laws. We desire respectfully to place before you a resolution which was unanimously agreed upon at a meeting of church leaders comprising Kalgoorlie and Boulder, held at Kalgoorlie on Thursday, October the 11th. The resolution is as follows:—

“In view of the very unsatisfactory position on the goldfields in connection with the administration of the liquor laws as disclosed in a recent withdrawal of prosecutions against certain hotelkeepers, and the continued flouting of the law, we urge that the office of Commissioner of Police be placed on the same footing as that of the Commissioner for Public Service and the Commissioner for Railways in order to render the office free from political interference.”

Our efforts with the Government to tighten up the law have apparently failed, and we appeal to you, sir, as Leader of the Opposition, to convey to Parliament our resolution, and if possible put same into effect. We are very

concerned here regarding the respect for law. The whole position is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory. The open disregard for law by certain people is placing our police authorities in a position which must not be tolerated. We believe that the above resolution, if put into effect, would do much to remedy the position, and we solicit your guidance in regard to the most effective method to bring same about. Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) Edward, Bishop of Kalgoorlie; J. Albert Andrews, on behalf of church leaders, Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

The Acting Premier: Do the writers say that a copy of the letter has been sent to the Government?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They say that the matter has been taken up with the Government. There is no doubt this letter and the resolutions were the outcome of an article on the withdrawal of the charges which appeared in the "West Australian" on the 21st June last. The article dealt with alleged licensing breaches concerning which the police took action against certain licensees, but when the cases were to be heard, the charges were withdrawn. The Minister may be able to tell us the reason for that. If the law cannot be satisfactorily administered on the goldfields, the best thing for Parliament to do is to amend it. We cannot have the law administered differently in one part of the State from the manner in which it is administered in another part. To-day the law on the goldfields permits people to keep open their licensed premises from 9 a.m. until 11 p.m. If it is necessary to keep hotels open after 11 p.m., and Parliament approves, let us do the thing properly. It is of very little use to have the police trying to give effect to the law, if through political interference they are prevented from proceeding against people who have violated the law.

The Acting Premier: Where is there evidence of political interference?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know. I am merely bringing this matter before Parliament, as I was requested to do. No doubt the Minister will go into the whole matter. I have heard more about it than appears in the letter. Members should protest against the violation of the law. Are we going to allow the police to mete out one treatment in one place and a different treatment in another?

The Acting Premier: During the riot, I endeavoured to induce the police to close

the hotels on that day, but they would not do so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then it is time we took charge of the police.

The Acting Premier: I rang up the inspector of police from Widgiemooltha and told him to close the hotels. When I got there about 5 o'clock they were still open. There was a riot on. One man was killed, and places were being burnt down.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We are getting away from the issue. The probability is that the power is vested in the magistrate.

The Acting Premier: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then the magistrate ought to have carried out the instructions of the Minister.

The Acting Premier: It was the duty of the police to apply to the magistrate to have the hotels closed on that day.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Evidently, according to the churches, the police are now neglecting to do what the law says they should do. If the Minister does not know the position, I hope he will go into it and inform members concerning what the Government propose to do. If he does not know the position, perhaps he will make inquiries so that the law is given effect in the same way in all parts of the State. We do not want differential treatment meted out in different places.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [5.45]: I should like to draw the Minister's attention to the need for additional police in the agricultural areas of the State. Perhaps it would be advisable to appoint one or two special constables in the hope of it being possible to catch sheep stealers. Unfortunately sheep stealing is not confined to one particular area; it is scattered more or less over quite a number of districts throughout the sheep-raising parts of the State. At the present time most of the stealing is being done per medium of motor trucks. It is a simple matter for a truck to be backed up against a fence, bags placed around the tyres and the sheep rounded up with a dog and the truck loaded and taken back to the road where the bags are removed from the tyres. Then away they go. Sheep stealing has been reduced to a fine art, and the thieves are not particular about the type of sheep they take. They have actually gone to paddocks where stud sheep are being depastured and they very soon get to work

with the butcher's knife. Of course the carcasses are just as good as live sheep. The owners themselves are not in a position to detect the sheep stealers. If the Minister could make available one or two special police to devote the whole of their time to the job, they might succeed in arresting the culprits and an example could be made of them. The people who embark on this form of stealing usually know where the local policeman happens to be; that is to say, they are aware of the fact that the policeman is in the town itself, and the thieves proceed some distance away to carry out their stealing. It is difficult, under present conditions, to catch the offenders. The policeman is equipped with a horse and the thief has a motor truck. The department would not encourage the policeman to hire a motor vehicle. He would be told that his horse was provided for his work in the district, but, as we all know, a horse is no match for a motor vehicle. A couple of policemen could go to a district where sheep were being stolen and could remain there for a few weeks. If that could be done, I am sure they would catch the culprits. Thousands of sheep throughout the agricultural areas are being stolen without the owners being able to find out who the thieves are. I urge the Minister to take a personal interest in the matter. The farmers themselves have represented the position to the Police Department, but unfortunately that department has not taken it up very enthusiastically.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [5.49]: I also should like to urge that the number of police officers in country districts should be increased because of the stealing that is going on. At the same time I should like to pay a tribute to the Police Department for their action in responding to the request of beekeepers to cope with thieving from hives. One would imagine that the bees themselves would provide sufficient protection but that unfortunately is not the case.

**Mr. Marshall:** Why not earmark the bees as they do the sheep?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** The stealing was reported to the department and the result was satisfactory to the owners of the hives. I trust that when the next Estimates are framed provision will be made for an increase in the police force.

**MR. WARNER** (Mount Marshall) [5.50]: I support the remarks of the member for Irwin-Moore with regard to the sheep stealing that is taking place in the agricultural areas. Unfortunately, the farmer is not aware of his loss until the flocks are mustered. It is almost impossible for a constable in charge of the district to run down the thieves since he is not equipped as they are. This is the lowest form of stealing, remembering that the farming community have experienced such a bad time in recent years. The loss of sheep means a great deal to farmers, in fact more so than if a theft were committed from a warehouse, where provision is made for losses by theft.

**Mr. Marshall:** How do they dispose of the sheep?

**Mr. WARNER:** One piece of mutton tastes just the same as any other. I believe that the sheep are sold as mutton to small butcher shops in the country districts. I suggest that where possible one or two plain-clothes constables be sent to various districts and permitted to remain there for a few months. If that were done, I am sure the thieves would be caught. Even if they were not caught, the mere fact that special police were on the lookout would act as a deterrent.

**THE MINISTER FOR POLICE** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn [5.53]): There are two questions to which I shall reply, namely, sheep stealing and the administration of the liquor laws on the goldfields. With regard to sheep stealing, for quite a while inquiries have been made and the police are doing all they can. Members, however, will understand the handicap under which the police are working. Transport is now so noiseless that the thieves can get away without much effort, and therefore it is almost impossible for the police force to stand up against that sort of thing in the country and especially against those who know how to keep their own counsel and who are particularly clever in carrying out the stealing so expeditiously. There has been a suggestion that more police should be employed. I remind the Opposition that during their last year of office there were no additions to the force, but when we assumed control we appointed 34 additional men in the first year. It is as well to remember that with the limited funds available we are doing our utmost to keep the police force abreast of the times. My expe-

rience of country policemen is that they are very efficient. Certainly they are kept very busy, since they have not only the police duties to carry out but to collect statistics and numerous other small jobs. In many instances they are the representatives of all the departments in the city. Therefore I cannot see how a country policeman can be expected to keep an eye on what is occurring in every part of the district under his control. I agree with Mr. Ferguson that some good might result from the employment of plain-clothes men. Even then a sheep stealer, being very wise, will have the means of discovering exactly where the police are located. The matter has been given attention and the Minister for Lands has also taken it up. On one occasion it was found that a man, who himself was making a lot of fuss, was a very doubtful character. Others who themselves may be culprits even direct attention to someone else. Our agricultural districts are very difficult to police, remembering the modern machinery at the disposal of the sheep stealers.

Mr. Seward: What about enforcing the Brands Act?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: If anything can be done in that direction, we shall be only too glad to help the owners. I shall certainly take up the matter with the Police Department as well as the Agricultural and Lands Departments and see whether anything can be done to minimise the stealing. Now with regard to the spasmodic suggestion that the liquor laws are not being properly administered on the goldfields, I admit that a certain amount of latitude has been permitted during the past 40 years. After the disturbances on the goldfields some months back, it is true that for a while the law relating to the closing of the hotels at the correct hour was strictly administered. Later on again the old habit was allowed to assert itself and the beer-drinking citizen, who is quite a decent type, inquired why he should be deprived of his beer simply because a lot of larrikins tried to burn down the town. I am reminded of a statement made by the present Agent General, Sir Hal Colebatch that in connection with the liquor business there were two noisy sections of the community. That is true. One is the anti-liquor section who always desire to impose their will on the community; the other, of

course, is the trade. Although the clergy of Kalgoorlie have made a protest, members should bear in mind that protests are continually being lodged by those who consider they are being deprived of reasonable opportunity to obtain liquor, and those people constitute a large section of the community.

Mr. Marshall: Do not forget the evil arising from those hotels being closed. Rotten things are taking place on the Murchison.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Kalgoorlie is a peculiar district. It stands aloof from other parts of the State. The people of Kalgoorlie proposed secession from the coast years ago, and many of them have an idea that antagonism exists on the part of the coastal residents. In other ways Kalgoorlie has peculiarities. It had football and other Sunday sports that were not allowed down here. As to Sunday trading, one would be led to believe that the licensing law had been strictly observed for years. Anyone who makes a suggestion to that effect has never lived on the goldfields, and the same applies to the North-West. There is no such thing as an eight hours day in Kalgoorlie.

The Acting Premier: An eight hours' drinking day.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Men work throughout the day and throughout the night. The law says that hotels there shall not open until 9 a.m. and shall close at 11 p.m., but is the man who starts or leaves work at midnight to be denied a drink? It would take an army of police to prevent his getting one.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Would it not be better to amend the law?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Does the hon. member think that My Lord the Archbishop would help to amend the law in that direction? He would want it more strictly enforced. When a question was asked in the House, the reply given was that the licensing law would be reasonably administered on the goldfields. That is the reply to those people who have protested. I discussed this matter for an hour with one of the clergy and he had to agree that as the practice had grown up—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much conversation amongst members.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Whenever a question is raised concerning beer, horses or dogs, everyone is an authority. There was a complaint that certain summonses had been withdrawn. That is correct. I replied to a question that we were trying to get back to a reasonable administration of the law on the goldfields after the very strict administration that had been enforced. Summonses were issued against two or three licensees. For some time the hearing was postponed, and eventually the summonses were withdrawn on the authority of the Acting Commissioner of Police. When we were endeavouring to get back to a reasonable administration of the law, it was only right that hotelkeepers should be made to realise that they could not overstep a certain mark but had to conduct their business in a reasonable manner. We regarded the lapses as the aftermath of the riots. The men who were summoned were no worse than many others. They were not isolated cases and the police were aware of the fact and, in the opinion of the department, it would not have been just to take action against those men only, having regard to the conditions that were prevailing. People seem to be making more fuss over the drinking of a glass of ale than over the burning of the town. People should not lose their sense of proportion. There is no foundation for the charge of political influence or undue influence. It was a commonsense administration of the Act not to proceed with those prosecutions. It has been suggested that "the office should be free from political interference." It must have been an inexperienced person who wrote the letter containing that suggestion. Why, not a day passes without my being asked to interfere. In one instance I was asked by a parson to interfere in a matter affecting the traffic law. Whenever somebody considers he has been harshly treated by the law, he looks to somebody to help him. Every day I am asked by somebody to use my influence with the police force, and such people ask other members also, because those members come to me with the requests and also approach the police.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do you suggest that I have been to you?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No, not that I can remember.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know I have not.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Even if the hon. member had been to me, I would deny it like a man. There would be a lot of trouble if we conducted inquiries into everything that happened, especially happenings arising out of the goldfields riots. Even now it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to administer the law on the goldfields. To complain of what is happening at Kalgoorlie is a very simple thing, but the utmost tact is required to administer the liquor law and the laws relating to the restriction of gambling. I assure members that the police have a most difficult task, and that they are performing their duty diplomatically and capably. One man asked, "Is there a law for Katanning and another for Kalgoorlie?" As a matter of fact there is a difference in the conditions and that difference applies also to the North-West. On one occasion I travelled from Meekatharra to Nullagine, a distance of 400 miles without passing a hotel. Does anyone suggest that the trading hours would be observed when people had to travel such great distances? To do so would be too ridiculous for words.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then let us amend the law.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Let us exercise commonsense in administering the law. We have to take into account all the circumstances. I have no apology to offer regarding the complaints that have been made. I think a copy of the letter to which I have referred was sent to the Premier, but I do not know the nature of his reply. We are endeavouring to get back to a reasonable administration of the liquor laws on the goldfields and in the outlying districts. In the main the police are not interfered with. There was a suggestion that the inspector at Kalgoorlie should be given a free hand. The policy of the department is that all cases for prosecution should be examined by the Chief Inspector in Perth. Otherwise how would we get anything like uniformity?

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have not uniformity to-day?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: But if the suggestion were adopted, there would be glaring inconsistencies. It is a commonsense procedure to have the cases examined by the Chief Inspector.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You cannot get a drink at York but you can at Kalgoorlie.

The Acting Premier: You cannot?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I do not intend to labour the matter further. It was a commonsense decision not to proceed with those cases. There is a desire and a determination on the part of the police to administer the Act fairly and reasonably on the goldfields. There was a suggestion that some publicans had been favoured. There is no foundation for the statement that any publican has received a favour as compared with another. I assure members that the law is being administered without bias and that there is no foundation in fact for the suggestion contained in the letter.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £130,849. (Partly considered.)*

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [6.13]: I desire to support the two members who urged that when a pensioner's family is receiving assistance from the Child Welfare Department, the department should not take the amount of the pension into account in fixing the sum to be paid to the family. Invalid pensioners residing in my district have complained that the payment made by the department for the children and their mother has been calculated after taking into consideration the amount of the pension. The 17s. 6d. a week granted to an invalid pensioner is considered by Federal authorities to be necessary for his maintenance alone, and the department should not take the pension into account because, by so doing, the allowance to the family is reduced. Such persons are likely to be in receipt of the reduced amount for many years. I know pensioners who are only in their thirties or forties, and the reduced amount received by them would be all they could hope to get until the children were off their hands. That makes their standard of living very meagre, and by the time they have paid rent, only a small sum is available for personal needs. Complaints have been made to me that when a baby is born into such a family, no allowance is made to the child for six weeks or two months after birth, notwithstanding that the cost of maintaining an infant is often as much as is required for an adult.

Mr. HEGNEY: Before tea I was discussing one or two phases of the activities of the Child Welfare Department, and was alluding to the fact that when a new-born comes into the home assistance is not granted by the department immediately. I have had one or two complaints on that score from parents. The income is so limited that the expense involved in a new arrival cannot be met. The Minister, having reared a family, knows that the arrival of a baby means a fair amount of expense in the way of clothes, powders and soap.

Mr. Marshall: What is the department's reason for not giving assistance immediately?

Mr. HEGNEY: The department contend that the baby is not an expense, especially when the mother is feeding it. There are other expenses, however. Having regard to the fact that Western Australia needs population, and embarked on an expensive immigration scheme which has cost the State a great deal of money, we should bear in mind that the best population is the native-born. In most cases the persons I refer to are not of low racial capacity. In the case of one of these families the father suffers from chronic asthma, but the children are virile Australians. Having had a good deal to do with the Child Welfare Department, I wish to state that I have always received courtesy from the officers. They examine cases thoroughly. There is no looseness in the department. However, the policy to which I have referred should be reviewed. On the employment side I consider that the Minister has done a difficult job very well indeed. The hon. gentleman has the worst portfolio in the Ministry, inasmuch as he has to satisfy thousands of men who are out of work and who all have grievances demanding rectification. In view of the economic conditions prevailing, the Minister is to be commended for the work he has done. Similarly, the officers are a fine lot of men. They are sympathetic to persons seeking employment, so far as is consistent with rigid adherence to Government policy. Still, the officers are not mere automata. They examine each case on its merits, and generally speaking applicants receive fair and reasonable consideration. A member of the Opposition mentioned one or two phases relating to the Government policy of preference to unionists. In that respect, too, the Minister has done a good job, especially in not vacillating

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m*



when criticism was launched at him. I remember some statements made by the Leader of the Opposition at a protest meeting held in the Perth Town Hall some months ago. He said that the men who were compelled to join a union did not get any benefit from the union.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do you say I attended a protest meeting?

Mr. HEGNEY: It was so reported in the Press.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I never attended any protest meeting at all.

Mr. HEGNEY: If the hon. member denies that, I would recall to his mind that at the time his Government came into power many industrial conditions were broken down. I may instance the camp allowance of 6s. per week. That was a condition in an agreement between the Australian Workers' Union and the Public Works Department. The Minister then administering the department cut that provision out, and the union were forced to appeal to the Arbitration Court, whereupon an allowance of 5s. 3d. was awarded in place of the 6s. The question is asked, why should men have to join a union? The remarkable thing is that men entering various industries, even if only on part-time, obtain the benefit of conditions won by industrial organisations. For instance, it was common for workers on jobs in the country particularly, but also in the towns, to have their time broken before they had one month in, the result being that they lost one day's holiday pay. That has gone by the board. The present Minister insists that award conditions shall be maintained, and so in every instance the man gets the benefits of the award relating to the industry in which he happens to be working. Those are only two instances of the benefits workers receive from the Labour Administration. There are other beneficial features incidental to membership of a union. It often happens that a worker who is not a member of any organisation comes to me because he has been injured in the course of his employment. If such a worker belonged to some organisation, he could look to that body to take up his case. This may frequently mean an appeal to the courts to vindicate the rights of the worker. In such circumstances unions employ their funds to engage legal assistance. Again, many workers, especially in country districts, are defrauded of their wages.

That applies to men who have been engaged in wheat-carting, or working for farmers. Recently I brought two cases under the notice of Mr. McLarty, the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank. The mother of two boys had got into difficulties because she had no income. The boys had been working for about 12 months, and had £60 and £40 coming to them respectively. However, they were not paid at the end of the term. One of the boys had been working for a farmer. I know of other cases where workers have been similarly defrauded. The first place such men make for is the Trades Hall, to fight their case. Yet when a union organiser is in the locality where such persons are working, when they might be expected to help in building up the fighting strength of the organisations, they refuse to do so. Throughout the world it is only too true that without trade union organisation the workers cannot expect to obtain improvement of their industrial conditions. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition has been farming all his life, but if he has been engaged in industrial work he will know that there are always men who will accept all that is going but do not want to pay anything whatever. That is the case throughout Australia, especially as regards men working under the very best industrial conditions. The policy of preference to unionists is, therefore, in the best interests of the workers themselves. Through their organisation they can negotiate in respect of grievances with the Minister or others concerned. Otherwise they seek the aid of the political representative of the district. Such men have come to me time after time, and I have always referred them to the industrial organisation to which they should belong. One other point I wish to raise in connection with the operations of the department is the proposed housing scheme. I have discussed the matter with the Minister previously. In all earnestness I suggest that workers cannot now afford to purchase homes at the price of £600 or £700, which represented the policy of the Workers' Homes Board. I am aware that the board are now prepared to build cheaper homes if security is forthcoming. However, for years to come many workers will not be able to purchase such expensive homes. They want merely those reasonable housing conditions which their incomes

will permit them to obtain. They are entitled to get the best they can pay for, but many of them will be satisfied if they can get something like a reasonable home. A worker's home built at much less cost than has been the rule hitherto would be regarded as eminently suitable by workers without security of employment. A phase of the activities of the Employment Board in the past was the making available of an advance of £60 or £70 for the erection of a skeleton home—two rooms and a kitchen with a stove. There are several of these skeleton homes erected in the Belmont district. They are regarded as eminently suitable by workers, who can improve them and meantime escape paying the high rents that prevail in the city. In many cases such workers have had to get out of the city because they were unable to pay high rents. They have bought by small instalments a block of land in an outlying district and have been able to get assistance to the extent of £100 or £150. Within five miles of this building I can show deplorable housing conditions under which workers suffer who are forced by economic stress to accept those conditions. The other night a person came to see me and said that for 12 months he had been trying to get some assistance towards building a home on a small block of ground he owned. At present the family are living in a bag hut at Belmont. The family comprises father and mother, a girl of 11 and a boy of 9½. The four have to sleep in one room. That is not nice, but these people cannot help themselves, as the husband receives only 28s. per week relief and has been out of work for a long time. There is great need for a better and cheaper building programme. I urge the Minister to stimulate the activities of the Economic Council in connection with their building scheme.

**MR. NORTH (Claremont) [7.46]:** The Vote under discussion is important and apart from the fact that in the past the Minister and his predecessors have endeavoured to carry on under very difficult circumstances, the time has arrived to consider the position more as one of a permanent nature. After four years of the depression, the same policy seems to be in force. That means that so many of our citizens are out of work, and it implies that the situation has been made more difficult than

it was at the commencement. Children are growing up and the lack of clothing, furniture and so on has become more marked. I have been at pains to discover what the prospects are for an improvement in the situation. I do not refer to an alteration in the Minister's attitude; he has been doing much to improve the position. During the course of the debate, much has been heard from members to indicate that improvements have been effected and certain deficiencies that needed remedial treatment have received attention. I endeavoured to find out, after analysing the Federal attitude and that of Professor Copland, whether there will be an improvement. As I see it, the outlook appears hopeful. First, I would like to put a question to the Minister. I do not know whether these matters have been brought under his notice. I would ask him: What is the attitude of the department regarding a person who can earn small amounts during the time he is standing down? I have been informed that if a little money is so earned, that money must be acknowledged and then it is deducted from his prospective earnings, so that he is actually worse off than if he had spent his four or five weeks, as it were, on leave.

The Minister for Employment: That information is incorrect. If you had read the newspapers, you would have been informed that the information was not true.

**MR. NORTH:** I am glad to hear the Minister say that. I am simply putting before the Minister what I have been told by others. I would prefer to see the position such that if it were possible for a person to earn a few shillings so as to be able to pay something off his rent or spend it in some other equally agreeable manner, no objection would be taken by the department. I have also been given to understand—again I am open to correction by the Minister—that in the case of a worker who was on relief work, one of his boys was engaged in selling papers during his father's standing down time. He was thus able to earn a few shillings a week and I am told there was trouble in consequence.

The Minister for Employment: Yes, that boy was earning 29s. a week, and the father did not report the fact. In addition, the father's income was well above the basic wage rate.

Mr. NORTH: If that was the position, and the father did not report the fact, an offence was committed. That makes it quite a different matter.

The Minister for Employment: As a matter of fact, that case was dealt with in the court.

Mr. NORTH: Is that so? Turning to another matter, I will refer to the rates paid on the lower scale of sustenance. Quite by accident I read the other day a statement made in Sydney by an official from Great Britain referring to the rate applying in the Motherland on the lower scale. I think it was called the insurance benefit rate, which corresponds to our dole system in Australia. I learnt that the British man who is out of work, single or married, draws 19s. a week. If he is married, his wife receives 6s. a week, and each child is paid 3s. a week. Comparing those rates with our system, up to the first four units—that is to say, a man, his wife and two children—the British system appears to be the better scheme. The rates represent 30s. as against our payment of 28s. If those figures are correct, it would certainly show that their system is better with regard to the married person without children or with one child. Our rate admittedly is the highest in the Commonwealth and now, after four years, this question assumes a different aspect from that of a purely temporary arrangement. In those circumstances, it is to be hoped, if there is to be much more permanent unemployment, something will be done by the Minister with a view to improving the conditions of married people, with or without a child. The existing rate is very low indeed. I know of a case that came under my notice a few weeks ago relating to a worker who lives at Buckland Hill. He was in receipt of 49s. a week. He was without work, and he had a wife and five children. Their position was certainly much better than a couple in receipt of 14s. a week. Obviously the extra children made his return a better average. I was glad to find, however, that he came to me with the object of securing work and getting away from the sustenance arrangement. That appeared to me rather striking because it is often urged by those who oppose certain reforms that are being discussed all over the world, that if a system of sustenance were arranged at a slightly lower rate than full wages people would tend to live on the sustenance and avoid

work. The man I refer to, although in receipt of £2 9s. a week, with no worries and little taxation to pay, preferred to secure a job, which is a good sign. There is another important point. Recently a young man came to me and said, "I want to get married, but I have been told by the department that if I get married, I shall have to fend for myself for six months." While still single, the young fellow was with his parents. Another important question arises. If a young fellow reaches 20 or 21 years of age, are we, as a community, to say he must not get married? That would give rise to rather awkward questions. It has been suggested that if the couple were married, the man would be able to get relief work and receive support from the community. I shall not inform the Committee what advice I gave those young people. They came back and indicated that everything was all right.

The Minister for Employment: You did not give them Punch's advice to those about to marry?

Mr. NORTH: I prefer to remain quiet on that. Coming now to the main point I wish to make, regarding the most difficult situation the Minister is attempting to tackle and improve, it is a matter of common knowledge that his position is so invidious that he has even been called names. He has been referred to as "Mussolini."

Mr. Marshall: I have heard him called much worse than that.

Mr. NORTH: The most hopeful of the names applied to him is that which Al Smith mentioned in the United States when speaking of President Roosevelt. He referred to the President as "Santa Claus." I think that name will apply better to the Minister, if effect is given to Professor Copland's new theory by which he suggests Australia may emerge from the depression. I have a copy of the report issued by the Commerce Committee of the Melbourne University, the chairman of which is Professor Copland, one of the great economic advisers who installed the Premiers' Plan. He has been one of the men behind the scheme that was entered into. His new method of getting out of the depression is very interesting, and, in the course of his statement, he said that the way to get out of the depression was to secure a continuous expansion of investment. He said—

Even with improved export prices, a vigorous public works policy would be necessary—with-

out them it will be still more urgent—slum clearance, building schemes, beautification and increased concentration on secondary production and services.

He then mentions certain methods. He refers to dealing with the slum problem, beautification schemes and increased concentration upon secondary industries. Then there is this striking statement—

A vigorous public works policy would have to be of very large proportions to take the place of the pre-depression level of export prices and the pre-depression level of public works continued.

This report is but two weeks old.

Mr. Marshall: That is two weeks too old.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why?

Mr. Marshall: It is a lot of muck.

Mr. NORTH: Professor Copland advocates a policy of public works. What he now says is quite different from the stand taken before the depression. In those days Australia was spending on public works £40,000,000 from Loan funds raised abroad, and by so doing engaged a great army of workmen. The necessity was urged for that course in order to absorb those who are thrown out of work from various industries. The professor now suggests borrowing money for beautification schemes. That shows at least that this gentleman, who ranks high among the economists of the world, has been frank enough to change his views.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Does he say where the interest is to come from?

Mr. NORTH: I am coming to that. Economists the world over have experienced extraordinary bad luck. Everything has seemed to be against them. They aimed at securing the restoration of prices. Then, too, the latest actions in Britain would seem to tend to reduce our exports to her. There is still the fact that prices are remarkably low. Now Professor Copland has distinguished himself by advocating a completely reversed method and has suggested a vigorous works policy. Whereas formerly Australia borrowed from abroad £40,000,000 in order to keep about 100,000 men in employment, allowing for the expenditure of half the amount upon materials, he now proposes to go in for a policy of works, which will include beautification schemes. I take it the object is to enable those other workers who are temporarily unemployed, due to the

slump in industry, to be engaged and thus help to create a sufficient demand to restore industry to its former level. The money is not to be borrowed abroad but the source of finance is to be local. Where formerly Australia borrowed £40,000,000 abroad, the suggestion is that Australia herself shall find the necessary funds. The change in the attitude of the economists must strike many people as curious, in view of the policy adopted before the depression and the system of borrowing by means of external loans. We are now face to face with the fact that the economists are changing ground. At least Professor Copland has done so, and I admire him for it. He shows definitely by his new attitude that it is possible for Australia to finance the larger public works policy without the necessity for borrowing abroad. The effect of it is shown in the fact that our secondary production is increasing tremendously, and the effect is also shown in what the Minister has endeavoured to accomplish in connection with our local industries. As we are not borrowing £40,000,000 abroad, we cannot bring in goods to balance against our exports. No one will say that Australia has fallen down with regard to her exports, notwithstanding the changed policy. Rather has she maintained her export trade and increased it. The only flaw is that our economic advisers, for some reason or other—I suppose it arises from the tenets they have followed—is that they thought when prices were low, we must punish the rest of the community by reducing employment. Now under the new method it is suggested that we shall not expand our primary production, for we are told that that must cease. In Professor Copland's words—

The only alternative to a revival of international trade in food-stuffs and raw materials is increased concentration on secondary production and industries providing services, liberal banking and continued interest reductions.

Having referred to those points, I should like to explain how the committee itself would finance these new works, because when the proposals are coming to the State Government they will be coming right apart from the existing works the Minister has in hand. The proposals of the committee are that investors should take a lower return for their capital; the words used are "continuous reduction of interest." That will show

the committee how the money is to be obtained. The method is by reducing interest. If to-day our interest bill is £50,000,000 and if we take that at 4 per cent. and tell the public to accept a lower rate of interest, say 3 per cent., we are saving at once £12,000,000 per annum and that at 3 per cent. would be £400,000,000 of new loan money to draw upon at the new rate. If we drew the whole of it they would still pay the same interest bill as they are paying to-day. From their point of view it is a very ingenious way of raising new loans at no physical cost to the public, because they merely reduce the interest rate and therefore enable the existing interest bill to cover a far larger sum. But when all these new works are completed, will the bondholders be asked to take a further reduction to, say, 2 per cent., or even 1 per cent? That, of course, remains to be seen. In conclusion, I should like to suggest one or two works which I think might be considered under these new Federal proposals when they come forward. The first is that the Minister for Employment should take a drastic step in the centre of the City of Perth in regard to town planning. We have our town planning experts and we have the City Council very active; also we have this chance of millions of money to spend, and so I urge the Minister to give consideration to the improvement of our city by the removal of the railway station and the shunting yards and goods yards in West Perth. We have here such a wonderful chance of making a show and leaving something to posterity, a chance which will never come again; for we shall never again have such an army of unemployed and the cheap money which gives us this great chance. If we fail now, we may postpone action in that direction for so long that we shall be faced, as Sydney and London have been faced, with the necessity for spending millions, where a few thousands would have been sufficient at an earlier stage. It is argued that the removal of the railway yards could be carried out at a profit to the community, because of the enhanced value of the land for civic purposes, to say nothing of the improvement that would be made in railway arrangement. There are many other things which could be attended to when we get the word from the Federal Government to deal with this matter. I am sure the economists have come to a logical conclusion, so long as there is a slackening

in industry anywhere, that the unused capacity of plant shall be taken up by public works policy to absorb everybody at present unable to earn the basic wage. Of course it is the Minister's own policy, but he has always been limited by the very tight Federal control of the purse-strings. However, I think, in view of this report, and in view of certain remarks by the Federal Government recently, there is at last going to be a big change for the better. As I see it, the economists have restored confidence by taking a nerve tonic and eating their own words. I think that is all there is to say on the matter at this juncture, but I again urge the Government to take the chance of making our city complete by removing the railway station and the shunting yards which now spoil what should be a very fine city.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [8.6]: I am going to tender what support I can to the suggestion put forward by the members for North-East Fremantle and Middle Swan in their effort to get the Government to do something in the way of building cheap homes for the workers. I have often thought it is a great pity we could not set aside part of our suburban areas for the purpose of building a cheap class of otherwise admirable houses. When I was in London during the war, the British Government found it necessary to build a lot of wooden cottages in which to house munition workers. They were set out in garden design and, although a cheap class of house, they were built in varying designs and on considerable areas of land. If that were done here, it would provide very real assistance to the workers. The Workers' Homes Board serve a very useful purpose, but unfortunately they go in for too expensive a type of home. The worker cannot afford to pay the high rents imposed upon him, so it is worth while to give some consideration to the suggestion made. It would provide a lot of work in the timber industry and amongst the artisans, and, what is much more important, it would provide homes within the financial ability of the workers. I think the Government might well give consideration to it. I should like to see something rather better than those small houses that we built. We might well build small houses with a view to their further extension, and on proper town-planning

lines. It is interesting to find the member for Middle Swan declaring that I attended a protest meeting in the Town Hall. While I had an invitation to go to that meeting, I did not attend it. I do not know where the hon. member got his information; I think perhaps it was manufactured somewhere else. I certainly did not attend that meeting. I did get an invitation to attend, but I did not go.

The Minister for Lands: Perhaps it is being confused with the transport meeting.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Possibly. That is the only meeting I have attended in the Town Hall.

The Minister for Employment: Is that the only slip you made?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think it was a slip, for it was certainly of benefit to some in the farming community. It is pleasing to hear that there are fewer unemployed this year than there were last year. I refer particularly to those who have found employment outside that which the Government are offering.

The Minister for Lands: A lot of your farmers have gone back to the goldfields.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And more will go to the goldfields if the prices remain as they are. Of course they were glad to get away from the goldfields at one time, but while gold mining offers the opportunity it is offering to-day, I am afraid a few more farmers will go back. The problem confronting the Government is to find permanent employment. After building a road, or cutting a drain, at the end of that road and of the drain there must be another road and another drain looked for. That will provide no permanent solution of the problem. I do not know that I can offer much in the way of suggestion as to how to improve the outlook, but in a State principally of primary products, agricultural and pastoral—of course gold mining offers a little assistance.

The Minister for Mines: Within the last five years it has offered assistance to the extent of absorbing 5,000 men.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, but it is taking people off the land.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot complain if those people find more profitable employment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, but I was going to point out that gold mining in this

State has attracted quite a number from the Eastern States, perhaps a big percentage of those 5,000 mentioned by the Minister for Mines. To-day our primary industries have many difficulties, as, for instance, in finding markets for their produce and overcoming the low prices, and so those industries do not lend themselves to much development just now. The position is made worse by the fact that we are getting these embargoes, which prevent us from even marketing the goods we produce. But attention must be given to the finding of some avenue of permanent employment for those men now on part-time. I know the Minister has done a good deal to encourage people to use West Australian-made goods. However, I regret to say the information supplied to the House by the member for North-East Fremantle is so far astray that I think he must have got hold of some very old returns. I have looked up the quarterly "Statistical Abstract" dated the 30th June, 1934, and I find that our imports from Eastern Australia have risen from £3,200,000 in 1932-33 to £8,902,000 in 1933-34. We imported an excess of £900,000 worth of goods from the Eastern States last year above what we did in the year before. There has also been a rise of about £700,000 all told in the imports from overseas. Unfortunately we are still importing more from the Eastern States than from overseas. In return we are sending very little away to pay for the imports. If we were importing more from overseas we would be able to get more markets for our wheat and our wool. Evidently we have not made as much progress in persuading people to buy West Australian goods as the Minister would have us believe.

Mr. Tonkin: How do you account for the big increase in the number of people engaged in local industries?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The returns we have available are trade union returns. Probably more people have joined unions to-day than were members previously. That may account for some of the figures.

The Minister for Employment: The trade union returns do not account for those who are employed in factories, but for those who are unemployed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have been looking at the returns which appear in the Quarterly Abstract. I find they refer to trade unionists.

The Minister for Employment: They refer to those actually employed in factories.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know if that is the case, but these figures cannot be disputed.

Mr. Tonkin: Why not?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They are supplied by the Government Statistician, and we always accept his figures.

Mr. Marshall: We can dispute them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member can dispute anything. I have even heard him disagree with his own colleagues.

Mr. Marshall: That is not to say I am not right.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I believe he often quarrels with himself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing the hon. member.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He is discussing himself. I suggest that you, Sir, should invite him to take the Chair; he might then be able to keep order. Whatever we can do to absorb these people in permanent employment we must do. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) quoted some figures with regard to industries in which the previous Government endeavoured permanently to employ people.

Mr. Coverley: Where did the Government endeavour to do that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The then Government encouraged private enterprise to embark upon condensed milk factories. These provided some employment and were of great assistance to our dairying industry.

The Minister for Lands: Do you say your Government started that? The condensed milk factories were on the way before your Government came into the business.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am afraid the Minister often dreams. He remembers that the previous Government brought down certain Bills when actually they did nothing of the kind. There was no reference to Nestles Company launching out in this way prior to the arrangement that was made when the ex-Premier was in Victoria.

The Minister for Lands: They saw me about it personally long before.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is no reference on the files to anything of the sort. If there is any credit to be taken the Minister always desires to take it, but if there is any blame he throws it upon this side of the House. Perhaps the Minister will take

credit for the establishment of the wooden stave pipe factory at Carlisle, and for the asbestos pipe factory at Fremantle. These two enterprises provided a good deal of permanent employment.

The Minister for Lands: Do you take credit for the establishment of the Calyx factory?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I could point out the difference between the type of business started by the Labour Government when they were in office before, and the type of business started by the last Government. Every one of the former enterprises had to be assisted financially by the Government. On the Loan Estimates I propose to indicate how much the State is losing by reason of this assistance to industry. The condensed milk factories did not require Government assistance, nor did the match factory.

The Minister for Lands: We have employed more men in the mining industry than you did in any industry you were connected with.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We cannot take any credit with regard to the mining industry. What we require to do is to bring about the development of other industries, so that the money we are sending out of the State to provide employment in the other parts of Australia may be kept here. Anything we can do in that direction we ought to do. We should encourage private enterprise to engage in industries such as those that were started during the term of the previous Government. Such enterprises would be of material assistance to Western Australia.

Mr. Withers: Have you any suggestions to offer?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We made many suggestions when we were on the hon. member's side of the House, and gave effect to them too.

Mr. Cross: You never did anything.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member is not prepared to give us credit for anything we did.

Mr. Doney: The raw materials used by the factories are primary products of this State.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Except in the case of the match factory. The factories that were started during the period of the previous Government were started with

their own capital and without Government assistance.

The Minister for Lands: What about the butter factories at Geraldton, Ravensthorpe and Northam?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Those belong to ancient history. I could tell the Minister something about industries that were started by the Government of which he was a member. I suggest, however, that the Minister should cease interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition should address the Chair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am looking towards you, Sir. I suggest to the Minister for Employment that he should not take away that little work which is now offering by the farming community. I regret to say there is not the amount of work offering this year that there was last. What little is offering we ought to be able to say there are men available for.

The Minister for Employment: The member for Williams-Narrogin was complaining about the men who are being sent to the country.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He is not the only one.

Mr. Doney: But obviously not when they were sent there to do farming work.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not desire to touch upon that point. I hope the Minister will give consideration to releasing the right type of men for the work. The only men he can properly release are single men, for the wages offering in the industry would not maintain a man, his wife and his family. I still believe that men would be better off working amongst the farmers than they would be on the part-time employment provided by the Government. During the last few months I have received many complaints from men who have been sent to country districts. I suppose the Minister is trying to do his best, but I would point out that he is not putting into effect the promises that were made prior to the last election. The promise was that all the men employed on Government jobs were to be paid the basic wage while so employed. I have here a large file of complaints from men who were sent into the country to work. These indicate that they have had to work 48 hours a week for earnings of about £3 a fortnight. On Noble's location near Busselton, there

were 17 men employed. Their full wages amounted to £3 a fortnight, and they had to work 48 hours a week to earn that much.

The Minister for Lands: I suppose they were your own countrymen; importations.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If I am not a better specimen than the Minister I will sit down.

The Minister for Lands: Only importations, I suppose.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the Leader of the Opposition address the Chair?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I wish the Chairman would stop the Minister from interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN: I will stop him as readily as I would the hon. member.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I object to his interjections.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the Minister to keep order.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He has a habit of making beastly interjections. They are not complimentary to any member or to himself. The men are complaining that they cannot earn more than £3 a fortnight, but have to work 48 hours a week. I have already pointed out to the Minister that there are cases in which a man after completing a fortnight's work and paying for his food has received no more than 2d. At the time the Minister said that was not true. I have here pay order No. 59963 signed by C. G. Winter, for the magnificent sum of 2d. I will pass that over to the Minister in the hope that he will say he regrets that he contradicted me.

The Minister for Employment: I do not know that I did contradict the hon. member. If it is a pay order for 2d. it would be after the man had paid for the stores that had been supplied to him.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It was impossible for the man to earn any more. After he had paid for the food supplied to him for a fortnight he had only 2d. left out of his earnings. Here is another pay order No. 60095 for 10d. This also is signed by C. G. Winter. When on this side of the House the Minister complained about the treatment meted out to men by the Government of the day. With the additional money the present Government have in the way of loan funds they ought to be able to give better effect to their policy than they are doing.



Mr. Wansbrough: Would you give the men wages if they did not earn them?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: These men are doing their best. I know what is happening.

The Minister for Employment: I will tell you what is happening, and what happened in your time, too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will tell the Minister something that is happening, though I do not intend to quarrel with him.

The Minister for Employment: Oh, no.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am pointing out what these men are able to earn working 48 hours a week. Some of them have earned £1 4s., others £3 a fortnight, all for 48 hours a week. This does not include the hours spent in burning off, work that is often done on Sundays. This is the information that has been sent to me. I know that instructions were issued by the Minister to those in charge of the land-clearing operations that the price fixed shall be such as to enable the average camper to earn 30s. a week, about the basic rate. This 30s. a week for the average camper does not apply to many of the men. The complaints are that the Government have sent out men who are not physically fit for what they have to do. In the term of the previous Government many were brought back and placed at Blackboy. The Minister found it necessary to dispense with the camp at Blackboy and broke it up. He then sent these men out to earn a living in this way. Many of them are physically unfit for the work and simply cannot do it. They are earning only a small amount of money, and the Government are not carrying out the policy on which they went to the country. The other night the Minister said that the last Government had lowered the standard of living because we had reduced wages for persons outside the Government service. I now have my opportunity to reply to that statement. At the time we asked the House to extend the financial emergency legislation to people outside the service, we were fully cognisant of what we were doing. The intention of that legislation was to spread equally the sacrifice that had to be made by all sections of the community, not alone by those in the Government service.

The Minister for Employment: You wanted to bring all wages down.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: As a result of that legislation we brought down the cost of living. The Minister knows there was a fall in the cost of living of about £42 a year. These men in reality did not suffer the disadvantage the Minister would have the public believe they did, for the adjustment in the cost of living compensated for the reduction in earnings. It would have been unfair to ask Government men who were connected with the sawmilling business to suffer a reduction in their income whilst others also engaged in sawmilling alongside were receiving the same wages as heretofore. Let me instance the Government railways and the Midland Railway Company, as they are seen working side by side at Midland Junction. Some of the employees would have been getting a higher rate of wages than others, and the sacrifice would not have been equal. The Minister talks about the standard of living being reduced. He himself has reduced the standard of living for some members of the community to a shocking extent. He has done this by depriving men and their wives and children of the opportunity to get food, because they will not join his union. That is a shocking state of affairs. If there were permanent employment for these people and there was a choice for them, I would say to the Minister, proceed with it. But these men cannot get employment anywhere else, and they are not given union conditions. Of course some of them are pig-headed and stubborn, and nothing will make them join a union. Then simply because they will not join I do not see why a man who has a wife and children should be compelled to starve. They are on part-time employment, getting 30s. a week. The rate is no greater than when we were in office, seven shillings per unit plus £1 a week.

Mr. Cross: And there were more on the dole then.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am anxious that the Government should raise the standard of living. Because they have a low standard of living the men are told they must join a union, and that if they do not do so their wives and children will starve. The standard of living is determined by the lowest standard set by the Minister, and I am certain he is not doing it with any degree of pleasure. But he condemned us for having done exactly what he is doing now. We

tried to spread the money out as far as possible to keep the men in employment. The compensating fact was the reduction of the cost of living, and we got to the stage where the men were not any worse off than if we had reduced them. The Minister said that we had lowered the standard of living, but the standard of living to-day is that which is unfortunately set by the part-time worker. The statement was made that I was forcing men to go to the country, but I would point out that those people were better off employed by farmers earning a few shillings a week than they would have been on part-time work. The probability also is that they were much happier. I have listened to complaints about men who through the standing down period were earning very little money. I can quote the case of a one-armed man who was getting 28s. a week on relief work, but because his wife decided to do something to assist him he was reduced to 14s. a week. As the Minister will know, very little work is available for a one-armed man.

The Minister for Employment: Complete the story by telling us what the wife earned.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: She earned 15s. a week.

The Minister for Employment: There was very good reason for what we did.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister should know that the choice of work for a one-armed man is limited, and in such a case encouragement should be given to the wife who is willing to help. Sometimes I think the Minister is without heart, but on this occasion I do not think he is, and I hope he will look into this case. The man himself tells me that his wife is anxious to give him a helping hand.

The Minister for Employment: I will say quite definitely that the facts are not as you state them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister has not found me out in telling untruths.

The Minister for Employment: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the Minister is a little like his colleague, the Minister for Lands; he is prepared to tell an untruth if it suits him. He will, however, find my statement correct. Anyway, I did not rise to find fault with the department. The Minister has said that my criticism was carping. I would not call it carping. I remind him that there has been no stonewalling, very little unreasonable discussion

from this side, or delay in any shape or form. Thus the Minister might accept the few opinions that I have expressed. I have had many of these matters brought under my notice by post, and most of them I have sent to the Minister so that he may inquire about them. Unfortunately, however, I have not been able to induce him to alter his determination, though there is a chance that he will alter his policy. I am aware that he is only able to do what the money he has available will permit him to do. At the same time he is not as fair as he might be when he makes extravagant statements.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [8.42]: Various administrative details have been touched upon by previous speakers, and therefore I do not intend to cover the same ground. I do, however, wish to make reference to a question which is important to all members of this House, and to all in the community, that is, the problem of employment of youth. I do not think this problem is pressing as severely to-day as it will three or four years hence. The present generation of adults who are unemployed have been brought up in better times, and they have a better stability; but the incoming generation who passed their adolescent years in a period of depression and disturbed conditions will grow up to 22, 23 or 24 years of age without having a fair chance of employment. Naturally these people are going to be in a very disturbed mental state. So while the pressure of the unemployment of youth is severe now, it will become still more severe as time goes on unless we have some means of dealing with the problem. In the paper a few days ago it was stated that in England a large-scale method was being adopted of sending young people back to school if they did not promptly find employment, so that up to 18 years of age, I think, they would at all events have some occupation for their minds during the greater part of the week and would also be under certain discipline. Regarding this problem, with which the Minister is deeply concerned, I do not think that in this State or in Australia we have done all we could do. I feel there are avenues that could be explored by which we could do a good deal more for the coming generation. I wish to tell the Minister I am sure he will be acting with the strong support of the people of the State, and es-

pecially the parents, if every possible opportunity is taken when the matter of the Federal grant for unemployment is being reviewed. No doubt it will be considered at a meeting of Ministers from the various States, and it seems that the present offers an extraordinarily good opportunity for a review on a Federal basis of the whole situation of unemployment, and in particular the question of the unemployment of youth. Unless we can find some unexpected release from our difficulties in the near future, we shall have this problem confronting us for a considerable time. I would conclude my remarks on this point, which is perhaps the most urgent problem of all connected with unemployment, by asking the Minister to exert every effort when the Federal scheme is discussed to see if something cannot be done for the young people, especially to ascertain the best means of dealing with their spare time, to afford them opportunity to learn worth-while trades and obtain vocational training, and provide a medium by which they may exert themselves and fit themselves to become gradually absorbed into the industrial work and life of the country. Of all our problems, that is one of the most urgent. I merely intervened to give this matter an important place in the discussion on this Vote.

*[Mr. Withers took the Chair.]*

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [8.47]: I compliment the Government and particularly the Minister for Employment, who is entitled to credit for the sincere and energetic manner in which he has tackled a most difficult problem. He took office when the position was chaotic in the extreme, and when attacks were being made from all angles on the pay and conditions of the rank and file. He found the greatest number of unemployed the State had ever known. Blackboy was full and the Migrants' Home was almost full with good men who were all unemployed. To-day Blackboy as a depot for the unemployed is non est and I think the same applies to the Migrants' Home.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are both empty now.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member left them both full.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: I congratulate the Minister on his persistent efforts to restore

the standard of pay, which had been so attacked previous to his advent as Minister that there was no recognition of the rates workers might earn. The condition of affairs was deplorable. There was no organisation. The Leader of the Opposition has lamented the state of affairs existing to-day, which I admit is bad enough. He professed to be moved regarding the pittance that men were now able to earn. Has he forgotten when he was in office the experience of the men at the Frankland River, men who were promised tents and facilities and were left without homes and could not even earn their food?

Hon. C. G. Latham: You mean when they were out on strike?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, before they went on strike; conditions that caused the men to strike. The hon. member now professes to be perturbed because probably some of the men cannot earn their food in competition with other workers, but the hon. member must admit that the present Government did set up a board to adjust grievances and give the men a chance to earn their food. That is more than his Government did.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You had better refer to the records.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not wish to have any more records than those I have heard from the hon. member. He professed to be concerned about the overlapping of the Federal and State basic wages, but which did he support? The higher one? Not on your life. He supported the £2 18s. 1d.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Who said so?

Mr. MARSHALL: That is a fact.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I say the statement is not true.

Mr. MARSHALL: You did say it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not.

Mr. MARSHALL: Since I have been in the Chamber, the hon. member has been associated with every attack made on the conditions and pay of the workers. Even to-night he suggested it was right for the Government to apply the Financial Emergency Act to private enterprise. No other State did that. His own leader, at the Premiers' Conference, said it was better to look after their own house than to go out to clean up other people's back yards. The late Mr. Davy was responsible for including Section 5 in the Financial Emergency Act, and this State alone enacted that provision.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are generally fair, but you are not fair in saying that.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member cannot deny it is true.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is not true.

Mr. MARSHALL: This is the only State that extended the operation of the Financial Emergency Act to outside employers. Section 5 permitted private employers to reduce the standard of wages paid, notwithstanding that the Arbitration Court, after making full inquiry, had determined how much it cost to keep a man, his wife and family. In spite of that, the hon. member now complains about the standard of living.

Mr. Hegney: He would oppose the restoration.

Mr. MARSHALL: He would oppose anything beneficial to the employee.

Mr. Hegney: He is getting more conservative every day.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member's lament about the standard of living reminds me of cemetery worms advocating cremation. I compliment the Minister on his efforts to bring about a wage standard. I congratulate the Government on their work to alleviate unemployment. Here I have to give a little kudos to the Minister for Mines, because he formulated the prospecting scheme. That scheme has done more than any other formulated since I have been in Parliament to assist the workers. We had institutions full of single men and married men to whom the future offered not the slightest hope. It was absolutely black. Now a thousand or more of them are to be found in an industry, and the Government are not called upon to contribute anything. I admit the Government are assisting some of them, but a large percentage of the men are rapidly making good, and for them the future now holds some hope. That scheme for assisting young fellows particularly has been of greater advantage than members who do not represent goldfields districts can appreciate. Hundreds of young men are now to be found throughout the Murchison who previously did not know what it was to be out of earshot of the city trams, and who thought that if they went beyond it, they would be hopelessly lost. To-day they are bushmen and they would not thank anyone who invited them to return to the city. They are to be found over a distance of 300 or 400 miles between Peak Hill and Carnarvon; all of them are hopeful and

most of them doing well; certainly much better than when they were on the dole.

The Minister for Employment: They certainly have more chance of getting married, of which the hon. member spoke, than if they were knocking round the city.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then you will have to send them some girls.

The Minister for Employment: They will get the girls.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is true that the present Government have had more loan money to spend than had the previous Government, and this, with the aid of the mining industry, has helped in the solution of the problem. I think the Minister was astray in stating that the mining industry had absorbed 5,000 men. I think he meant by way of direct employment. I venture to suggest that the one big mine at Wiluna is maintaining 5,000 men, women and children who otherwise would have been on the dole. The balance might have struggled through without State aid.

Mr. Stubbs: And Claude de Bernales was largely responsible for that.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member need not talk about him. I have a notice on the paper, and his activities will be well and faithfully revealed when I start on him.

Mr. Wansbrough: Is that a threat?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, a promise. I will deal with him when his turn comes. He starved women and children, and should have been gaoled.

Mr. Stubbs: That is not fair.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will tell the hon. member something he knows nothing about.

Mr. Stubbs: He cannot defend himself.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course he can defend himself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: He does not need any defending. If other men had done what he has done, they would not be enjoying their freedom. I am not sure whether the sustenance policy laid down by the Government is as revealed in the statement made to me, but if it is, I do not think the Government are on the right track. I am told that if a man on sustenance desires to go to the goldfields, or some isolated place where he may find permanent employment, the department refuse to maintain his wife and family while he is in search of work. If that is so the policy of the

Government is wrong. There may be a percentage who would abuse such a privilege.

Mr. Tonkin: It is not a privilege to look for work.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course not. It discloses courage. The person who is prepared to say to the Government, "Look after my wife and children for a week or so whilst I get some employment on the goldfields," shows that he has ambition. He can still be watched. The Government are particularly keen on keeping an eye on everyone to whom they give a railway pass. The person is no sooner in employment than the police are on his track for a refund of the fare. It is astounding to observe the number of Eastern States people who have secured employment in the gold mining industry. Quite a large number of these have migrated to Western Australia and secured work on the goldfields.

Mr. Stubbs: Have they been engaged in preference to our own men?

Mr. MARSHALL: The employer does not discriminate between them. Our own people have either been handicapped in their efforts to reach the goldfields, or else they have not had the ambition to go there. If this has been the policy of the Government, I hope it will soon change. People should have been encouraged to go where employment is available. The opportunities for work on the fields are particularly bright, though I do not say that everyone who goes there can get it. Our own people have just as much ambition and just as much desire to earn their living as is the case with the people from the other side. If this is the policy I hope the Minister will no longer enforce it. One or two men have come to me and asked if I can find them work on the goldfields. I have told them there is a good chance of their getting it. They have then asked about their wife and children. I have replied, "If you are prepared to go I will see the department on your behalf." I am afraid it has been the policy in the past not to give assistance to the wife and children when the man has left to seek for work. I would rather encourage a man to look for employment than to remain here on the unsatisfactory basis of sustenance work. I trust that the reference which has been made to pensioners is incorrect. I cannot conceive that any Government would take up that attitude, and would confiscate the pittance

received by invalid pensioners because the wife and children are an obligation upon the State. At election time we have always declared that invalid and old-age pensioners are ill enough provided for as it is. If an old-age pensioner is ill-provided for, how much more can that be said of an invalid pensioner, who may be suffering from a complaint as a result of which he requires extra nourishment and clothing? The fact of his being in receipt of an invalid pension calls for more sympathetic attention from any Government than has evidently been given to these people, if what the member for Fremantle has said is true. I cannot believe that any Government will take up such an attitude. If it is true I hope they will immediately revoke such a policy and revert to something more humane. Let the invalid pensioner retain his 17s. 6d. a week, seeing that other families are getting that much without any interference. There may be some argument in favour of the policy, but I do not know of one. I hope when the Minister replies we shall find that the statement is not true, or if it is true that it has occurred in an isolated case where other incomes have had to be considered. I hope it has not been put into effect in cases where the pension is the sole subsistence of the recipient. I thank the Government for the treatment they have meted out to the unemployed, and the officers for the courtesy and consideration they have extended to me in all cases I have brought before them. The officers are all fairly efficient and most obliging. The Government are deserving of every credit, and more particularly does this apply to the Minister, who has a most objectionable portfolio to administer.

Mr. Stubbs: He does not mind.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course not. He has made a fairly good job of it. The same may be said of the Government in their general administration of the departments, and with regard to the unemployed in particular, but the pathetic side of it is that apart from those men who have secured employment in private enterprise we are still working on the same old system of borrowing money and spending it, thereby adding to the interest bill which is going up every year. We are continually borrowing and spending.

Mr. Stubbs: A day of reckoning is coming.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, some one will have to be here then to make calculations and adjust matters. When that day is coming we do not know. What astounds me more than anything is that while we cannot get sufficient money to provide work for the unemployed, there are statesmen even in Australia, who argue that we should prepare for war. I wonder where the money is coming from? If they were to arm the unemployed or the workers of the world it might be that the rifles would be turned in the wrong direction. These times cannot go on for ever. Statesmen may bluff some of the people some of the time, but they cannot bluff all the people all the time. I am sorry we have not been able to reach a Budget equilibrium, and live within the means provided by our own taxation. I do not like borrowing. Monetary reform is an urgent necessity. Every Premier in the Commonwealth should be engaged in giving effect to some alteration in that regard. We want our unemployed to be put upon a decent standard of living. There should be no unemployed. We should be able to get back to a state of prosperity with full and plenty for all who are prepared to work. We should not have hungry thousands living on a mere pittance, dished out by way of sustenance, and at the same time finding millions to provide wealth for other people, when that wealth, really produced by the people, belongs to them, and should be distributed equally amongst them. Every Premier throughout Australasia should be alive to the position, with a view to bringing about in our banking and monetary systems such a reform as will obviate the frightful conditions that are paramount to-day.

#### THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

(Hon. J. J. Kenneally—East Perth—in reply) [19.11]: Members generally have accepted these Estimates in a most reasonable spirit, and I wish to thank them for the generous manner in which they have dealt with them. Naturally, in discussing a department the work of which throughout the civilised world has proven the great task of statesmen, it has been found possible to criticise and find fault in detail with what has been done. I have noticed that throughout the discussion no serious fault has been found with the principles enunciated and practised for the relief of people in distress. I wish to make perfectly clear some-

thing I have mentioned before. I have repeatedly stated that the question of finding employment for our people is not a party political question. I have made various efforts to keep that question away from the realm of party politics. Anything I have to say in reply to criticisms which have been offered here will not be from the party political point of view, although I may have to say certain things in answer to members opposite who have compared the actions of Governments. I repeat that whatever success has been achieved in the betterment of the position of unemployed men and women in this State has been achieved because the Government have been permitted—if I may so put it—to harness the energies of all classes of public thought, because they have been able to assemble people who previously had been diametrically opposed to one another's viewpoints, but who realised that, after all, we in employment ought to do our best in order that those who are out of work may be better circumstanced. Realising this, they have been prepared to accept the invitation of the Government, and have met weekly for the purpose of analysing the position and trying to devise means of harnessing the energies of the community so as to find employment for the people. The reply I have to make is from the point of view that if any one man set himself to solve the unemployed problem, or even to mitigate its evils, he would fail unless he received substantial aid from every member of the community. It is because that support has been forthcoming that the present Government have been able to accomplish what they have been credited with. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) said the other evening that the savings the Minister had made were at the expense of the single men. The hon. member could not have anticipated what his Leader would say later—that the Government would need to give attention to slackening-off in order to make sufficient single men, in particular, available in the country to do the farming work required. I will assume that the member for Williams-Narrogin spoke without consultation with his chief. It is another case of two great minds not running in the one groove.

Mr. Doney: The Minister probably overlooks the fact that it is only extra seasonal work that is offering, and that this occurs,

generally speaking, only at two periods of the year.

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** The Minister is not unmindful of the fact that 12 months ago there were 875 single men on relief work and that now there are 2,011. The member for Williams-Narrogin was unmindful of that fact when he said the saving had been made at the expense of the single men.

Mr. Doney: Do you mean to say that at the present time there are 2,011 single men receiving sustenance or relief work from the Government?

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** Yes: relief work, as I said in introducing these Estimates. There are 2,001 single men and 7,000-odd married men on relief work. As against that, there were about 875 single men on relief work at this time last year.

Mr. Doney: Have you any record of the number of single men out of employment not receiving either sustenance or relief work?

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** This fact remains unchallenged, that for a whole week there were no inquiries made at four agencies for labour in the city of Perth for farm jobs which were offering at from 30s. per week upwards.

Mr. Doney: That may be so, but what about the other question?

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** I have answered the hon. member's question, because if those people are out of employment and not receiving sustenance from the Government, their obvious duty is to recognise that we cannot do more in abnormal times than we can do during normal periods. The Government are not held responsible, and cannot be responsible, for finding particular types of employment. The Government's responsibility is to see that people who cannot get work do not starve. Where people can get work, it is their obvious duty to do the work that is offering. Furthermore, it is the obvious duty of the Government to refrain from making available relief work which acts to the detriment of industries already established in the community.

Mr. Doney: I appreciate that point.

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** In reply to the hon. member's assertion, let me point out that the savings made by the

Government have not been made at the expense of the single men. In point of fact, the present Government increased the amount paid to single men, and also increased considerably the number of single men employed under the Government scheme.

Mr. Doney: Did that apply six months ago as it applies now?

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** I do not understand the hon. member's question. Does what apply?

Mr. Doney: Did relief of the single men, as you are outlining now, apply six months ago as you say it applies at present?

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** Of course it did. It is no innovation.

Mr. Doney: You have regarded it as your duty all along to find food for such single men as are not in work?

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** No. We find work for them. We do not give attention, as I know the hon. member did at one time, to finding food. That is degrading. The Government have, wherever possible, found those men work.

Mr. Doney: So, precisely, did we.

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** It was because those men wanted work that the Government gave attention to finding them work.

Mr. Doney: We did precisely the same thing.

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** The previous Government were passing through unfortunate times. That has to be recognised. The previous Government passed through a time which, in my opinion, was harder to pass through than the present time. It is only by a recognition of that fact we shall be able so to study this problem, which is the problem of everyone, as to be able to arrive at the right conclusion with regard to it. When the hon. member, after giving that study to the problem, says that whatever money the Minister saved was saved at the expense of the single men, he is either saying what he knows to be absolutely untrue, or making a statement without having given any consideration whatever to it.

Mr. Doney: You are very fond of summing up a situation in that way. If you read my remarks—

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** I would not make that statement so definitely

had I not been particular to give figures and details when introducing these Estimates. Having done that, I hold the hon. member responsible for having made a statement diametrically opposed to the information supplied, unless he was prepared successfully to contest the correctness of that information. With regard to men standing down, the statement has been made that no work has been found for them.

Mr. Doney: Yes. That was my statement.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I wish to point out that we cannot institute in this State a system whereby relief work—I emphasise, relief work—can be performed by a man for a certain period, and then, as soon as he finishes that relief work, he can simply sit on the doorstep and ask the Government where they are going to send him next. In all communities there must devolve a certain responsibility upon the person concerned. If the Government give him relief work for a period, the individual must make an effort, when work is offered elsewhere, to become absorbed in ordinary commercial pursuits.

Mr. Doney: Do you assure yourself that work is offered?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It is not necessary to assure oneself that work is offering now where it was not available before. It has been in pursuance of that policy that we have been able to put between 900 and 1,100 people in the timber industry and to place many additional men in the mining industry. Now that we are getting back towards normal, it would be wrong for me as Minister, or for the Government, to give the people to understand that after they have been given their quota of relief work, they have merely to turn round and ask the Government where they are to be sent next. If men cannot be absorbed in industry, then it is the Government's responsibility to endeavour to place them in other work.

Mr. Doney: Do you make that general throughout the State.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Government are attending to that phase. This also answers the question put by the member for Murchison regarding the position of work when it is offering in other districts. The Government grant passes to men to enable them to go where work is likely to be offering.

Mr. Doney: I concede that.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I have made arrangements under which single men, who are on relief work, can earn money in advance. Even if they are in a position to say good-bye to us, they can get money in advance, and if they can secure work in outside districts, they can get a pass enabling them to journey there. Should they go to a district and find that the work they thought was available was not offering, they can return to the department and we endeavour to place them. I want to impress upon members that the success of the scheme for getting men back to employment can be judged only by the proportion placed in outside industries. Relief work is properly termed. It cannot last for all time. It is a method by which the Government provide for individuals concerned during the transition period from the dole to absorption in industry. That is why I stated in my introductory remarks that the pleasing feature, and the only reliable guide to the success of the scheme, is the fact that, compared with 12 months ago, 4,000 additional men have left the Government relief work or sustenance system. The member for Williams-Narrogin was unfortunate in the cases he mentioned. He said the Government were sending people to the country without an examination as to their condition. That is not so, although it was the position previously. We went to the elections on that issue, as he stated, and we have altered the system.

Mr. Doney: There were no such conditions to alter.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I say there were.

Mr. Doney: I say there were not.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Members know each of us and they must choose between us. We cannot go on saying "there were," "there were not." I want to prove the correctness of my statement.

Mr. Doney: You have the opportunity; go on.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The position formerly was that when men were offered work in the country, they had to go. We determined to alter that. We have appointed a medical officer for the examination of all men who desire to be examined. If a man is offered work he can



take it unless he says he is physically not capable of doing what is required.

Mr. Doney: That is precisely as it was formerly.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I say it is not.

Mr. Doney: A doctor's certificate was quite sufficient.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The hon. member knows it was not so.

Mr. Doney: Would I say it was if I knew it was not?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not know what the hon. member would do, but he knows full well what the position really was.

Mr. Doney: A doctor's certificate was always sufficient to allow a man to remain in his home town.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The hon. member knows that statement is incorrect.

The Minister for Works: Ask him who the doctor was.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If the statement was correct, who was the medical officer who would examine the man?

Mr. Doney: The doctor resident in the town. I was speaking of my own home town.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The system in operation then was that a man was told to go to the country and he had to go. It was because of what happened under that system that we decided to alter the policy. We have appointed a medical man to whom the men can appeal if they consider they are not physically capable of performing the work offered. That medical man has been taken to inspect the various works offering. He has adopted a system by which he classifies the men in "A," "B" and "C" grades. He knows the work offering, and knows what the men in the various classes are capable of undertaking. Should a man appeal to him, he can say whether he is capable of performing the work offered to him. If the man is not able to do an ordinary day's work, he is certified accordingly, and we try to place him in work he is physically capable of undertaking.

Mr. Doney: We are not disputing that.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Since the appointment of the doctor, some 300 men have been classed as below normal.

As a result of our policy, many of these men have become absorbed in industry because they have undertaken work they can perform. The vast majority of them are deeply grateful to the Government because they thought they were at an industrial dead-end, but, by becoming absorbed in industry, they have been restored in a large measure to the independence of which they have been deprived for so long. In support of his statement, the member for Williams-Narrogin was equally unfortunate. He spoke of a man being sent from Fremantle. I feel sure he did not know the particulars of the case, or even he would not have relied upon that instance, and that is saying a lot.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not say things that are unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I think the Leader of the Opposition recalls the case, and I do not think the member for Williams-Narrogin can have conferred with his Leader before he made his speech.

Mr. Doney: That is quite likely.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The member for Williams-Narrogin evidently did not know that the man he referred to earned in one year £7 15s. at his ordinary trade or calling and during that year drew £118 in sustenance from the Government. When we found that the man was physically fit, he was told to go to the country because work was offering there, whereas it was not available where he was stationed. That man stated he was following a certain calling and claimed he should be allowed to remain where he was in order to earn probably another £7 15s. during the following year and to draw a further £118 from the Government. In those circumstances was it wrong for the Government to say to him, "Here is work offering. You are physically capable of undertaking it. If you do not take it, you must cease to be a charge on the Government?"

Mr. Doney: Is this the man you sent from Fremantle to Geraldton while there were many unemployed in Geraldton?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No, it is not. The hon. member has now stated a half truth and a half lie, because men were not unemployed in Geraldton, and this man did not go to Geraldton.

Mr. Doney: I gave you a newspaper reference to bear it out.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: And the newspaper reference indicates that

the man went to Kalgoorlie, not to Geraldton.

Mr. Doney: That is just as bad.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I would point out that no matter what Government occupy the Treasury benches, they will find it difficult enough to provide employment for people, and so, when the employment is consistent with the applicant's ability, the applicant must take the work or cease to be a charge on the Government.

Mr. Doney: I agree with that.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The hon. member also mentioned a man named Pearce, who wrote to the newspaper. Mr. Pearce is of a poetic turn of mind and is known to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Cross: Where is he living now?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: He was living in East Perth.

Mr. Cross: I think he is in East Cannington now.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Pearce was offered work, but would not accept the condition attaching to it.

Mr. Doney: What condition?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: To join the union covering the work. He would not take the work, and he said he would rather leave his wife and family to starve. He can let them starve.

Mr. Doney: I thought so.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If a man is sufficiently low in principle as to be prepared to sponge on the community rather than observe a condition of Government employment, if he prefers to let his wife and family starve rather than take work offering which would enable him to keep them, that is his own option.

Mr. Doney: You and I will never agree on that point.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: That gentleman came up here to meet the Leader of the Opposition. I discussed the position with the Leader of the Opposition, and told him that if he would get Pearce to call at the office next day, his case would be considered.

Mr. Doney: It is a vile business to lay down a condition such as that.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The hon. member is an authority on what is vile, because anything vile he can do to the workers he is prepared to do. But there are people who will stand between him and his objective. Mr. Pearce was told, through

the Leader of the Opposition, that if he came down next day and was prepared to join the union, when he earned the money to enable him to do so, he would be offered work. He expressed gratification to the Leader of the Opposition and said he would call down next day. He did, but when offered the job he said he would not join the union; and when told he would not have the job unless he did join, he said he would go back to the Leader of the Opposition, who would give him some money. Of course, if we have money to spend we could not spend it in a better cause than giving it to people who apparently are in want because they want to be; I am more concerned with those in want because they cannot help it. I do not wish to come back to the question of compulsory unionism, other than to say that the party to which the member for Williams-Narrogin belongs has expressed the definite intention to follow compulsory unionism.

Mr. Doney: What is the instance you are going to give?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: There are two instances. One is the definite effort made by the P.P.A. to have the contributions to the P.P.A. stopped out of cream cheques.

Mr. Doney: Is it compulsory?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Leader of the Opposition the other night, in reply to an interjection, said that if the P.P.A. did it, it must be right.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Make that perfectly clear. You are making it appear that I said it was perfectly right.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No. Some member, by interjection, said, "The Primary Producers' Association did it." The Leader of the Opposition's reply was that if the Primary Producers' Association did it, it must be right. Now I have here a copy of the "West Australian" of Saturday, August 18th, giving the proceedings of the Primary Producers' Conference. It was found necessary to go into the question of better organisation, and on behalf of the Waddy Forest branch it was moved—

That Conference considers that the time has arrived when legislative action is necessary to establish funds by the collection of a small levy per unit of primary produce, the funds to be administered by representative industrial councils, one for each section of primary industries, in order that these industries may be in a position to effectively work for a solution

of their many problems and thus enable producers' organisations to act independently and immediately on matters of urgency.

This was lost after discussion in which delegates expressed the view that a system of compulsory membership to one farmers' organisation would be a better solution. The Slab Hutt branch moved—

Conference favours the adoption of the following objective for the industrial sections of the association:—The accomplishment of complete organisation by legislation.

Conference felt that this motion did not go far enough, and the following amendment was carried—

Conference considers the complete organisation of primary producers is impossible without legislation and urges that every effort be made in that direction.

Mr. Doney: There is nothing about compulsion there.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I was expecting that interjection. But we see that it improves, like certain spirits, with age, and the longer it goes, the better it gets. Here is a statement by one of the delegates—

We should follow the example given to us by other organisations, Labour for instance, and endeavour to bring about legislation for compulsory membership for a farmers' organisation.

Then the same delegate moved this motion—

That the time has arrived for compulsory membership amongst primary producers on similar lines to that in force by workers' unions, and that the annual contribution be reduced on account of big membership, and that each member receive a free copy of the "Primary Producer."

I do not know whether the latter was a solatium to him, or whether he would be compelled to read it when he got it. The report continued, "The best way to organise was for each man to become an organiser." The motion was carried after being amended to delete the words "on similar lines to that in force by workers' unions."

The Acting Premier: That would have been *infra dig*.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Perhaps it did not go far enough.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: But retaining the provision for compulsory unionism, the motion was agreed to by the conference. Members of the Country Party

who accept the Primary Producers' Association and its dictum are placing themselves in this position, that in order to attack the Government and find fault with its policy of compulsory unionism, they will have to forget that the Primary Producers' Association carried such a proposition. They wish to put that aside.

Mr. Hawke: I think the member for Williams-Narrogin was a delegate to the conference.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Government realise that the day of collective bargaining is here. That fact is being realised throughout the world. The day of individualism is past. With the day of the individual past and collective bargaining here, we have to create organisations through which to conduct collective bargaining. All arbitration systems postulate organisation through which collective bargaining may take place? The system to which we are wedded would not be possible but for the existence of the principle of collective bargaining.

Mr. Stubbs: If you preached that gospel in Italy, you would be given a dose of castor oil.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If some of that remedy were administered to those who on principle would let their people starve rather than submit to collective bargaining, it would probably produce the necessary effect. The Government realise that only through a system of collective bargaining can the operations of the State be successfully conducted, and are pledged to the system of preference to unionists. In effect we tell the people that if they want the Government to employ them, they must observe the conditions of Government employment. It is a question upon which the P.P.A. have expressed their opinion, and I am not expecting to hear much more from members opposite in view of that motion.

Mr. Doney: Collective bargaining and compulsory unionism on pain of starvation are two different things.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It is compulsory unionism to which the P.P.A. delegates have pledged themselves. When I saw the report in the paper that the P.P.A. delegates had pledged themselves to compulsory unionism, I began to examine my conscience to determine whether I had not slipped.

Mr. Doney: A vastly different thing, though.

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** I wondered whether I had been able to convert the P.P.A. or whether all my life I had been on the wrong track.

The Acting Premier: Do not you like to see sinners coming to repentance?

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** Anyhow the Government intend to pursue the policy they have enunciated. The member for Fremantle raised the question of old age or invalid pensions being taken into consideration in determining the amount to be allotted to a family. Such pensions are taken into account, and it is proposed to continue that policy. They are not taken into account to the extent of debiting every shilling to the person concerned. Either in making payments through the Child Welfare Department or in paying sustenance, the Government make allowances in order to enable people to live who otherwise would not be able to live. To come to a conclusion as to what amount of money should be made available to effect that purpose, we have to consider all the money that is going into the home. This is not to say that if one person were receiving a given sum and another person in the home were receiving a pension of 17s. 6d., the total would be cut down by 17s. 6d. At the same time it would have to be reduced by something. Assume that in a family of six, one was allowed 7s., and then became eligible for an invalid pension of 17s. 6d. a week, naturally that one person would be cut out of the unit of the family for assistance. Even then we would not take into consideration the difference between 7s. and 17s. 6d., but would consider the allowance that was fair for the particular case. It may be that an invalid pensioner was ill and required a fair amount of nourishment. These departments exist to help people over the period when they cannot earn for themselves. Assume the unlikely event of six invalid pensions going into one home. I know of one home where three invalid pensions and an old age pension are drawn. Assume that there are six pensions at 17s. 6d. a week, which would be equal to £5 5s. The man with a wife and four children, making a six unit family, is given a basic wage of £3 11s., and obviously there has to be an adjustment. Simply because it is an old age pension, we cannot disregard the amount going into the

home and pay over and above that. Where an invalid requires additional nourishment, the whole 17s. 6d. may be allowed, but as one member pointed out, a person on £2 9s. might be able to keep his home going better because of the collective commitments regarding housing. As the total income increases, the liability of the Government must necessarily decrease, so long as there is sufficient money going into the home adequately to keep the people occupying the home. In reply to the requests of the member for Murchison, I can offer no relief, but I can offer that where it is brought under notice that any injustice is being done by making reductions, the case will receive sympathetic consideration, as does every case that is brought forward now. As members know, we cannot be prodigal in passing out State money. There is no bottomless pit from which to draw it. The member for Fremantle raised the question of piece-work, and the Leader of the Opposition spoke of men not being able to earn the requisite amount in a given time. In reply to the member for Fremantle, I point out that the Government have made the move that they promised the people on the hustings to make regarding the piece-work proposition. The Government have appointed a board upon which they and the workers concerned have equal representation and the two representatives appoint an independent chairman. If they cannot agree upon one, he is appointed by the Minister, but so far the Minister has not been called upon to make such an appointment. Members will see that the two independent representatives have been able to agree upon an independent chairman. The decisions of the board operate from the time the appeal is lodged, not from the time when a decision is given. No injustice is done to the individual. Any benefit that is gained, or any decrease that is made—there have been no decreases since the board was appointed—take effect from the time the appeal is lodged. The Leader of the Opposition will recollect that when he was in office I headed a deputation to him asking him to appoint a similar board, but he refused the request. By what right does he complain about men not earning a given amount per week? During his term of office the men complained enough about the little they could earn, but when they asked for the appointment of an independent board to look after their interests and judge between

them and the Government, the Leader of the Opposition refused to appoint one.

Mr. Moloney: That is characteristic of him.

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** The Leader of the Opposition now complains about the earnings of the men. These have been considerably increased since he was in office. The Government have done all that they undertook to do on the hustings, when they said they would appoint such an independent board.

Mr. Doney: Does the 2d. represent the increase in the wages?

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** The hon. member's mind is as big as two-pence.

Mr. Doney: That may be funny, but it is not very convincing.

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** If the hon. member had an elementary knowledge of accounts, he would know that the amount left out of a person's earnings would depend upon the extent to which he had been purchasing from the store on credit. From the documents that have been referred to, it is impossible to say what the earnings were.

Mr. Doney: You denied that any man had received a balance of only 2d.

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** One cannot say whether a man earned too little or too much by showing what he received after he had finished up on the job.

Mr. Doney: Then why need you deny the statement?

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** Accounts can be presented to show that some people purchased from the store things that other people did not find it necessary to purchase.

Mr. Doney: That is nothing new.

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** I am more concerned about the amount of money the men earned. The hon. member was careful not to say what the total earnings were. He only dealt with what had been received from the store.

Mr. Doney: The hon. member did not.

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** He can get the information if he puts up facts. The member for North-East Fremantle said that men in the standing-down period did not get the benefit of the money they earned for work done during that period. I think it was the member for Claremont who also referred to the same subject. The position is not as it was set

out by the member for Claremont, who said that if a man did earn money between times, it was cut out of his sustenance rate. That may have been so in the beginning. Later on, however, it was cut out of his sustenance rate plus £1. That would apply to the 14s. man, who would cut it out at 34s. Even that has been improved upon. The man who cut it out previously at 14s. later on cut it out at 34s., and now cuts it out at 50s. I refer to the man who is standing down. He will already have had his period of full time on the job, and additional work at the job to earn what otherwise would be paid by sustenance order. He is not retarded from going to work during the standing-down period, but must report the amount he has earned during that time. Unless he earns more than £2 10s. a week, he is not cut out. He again goes on to the ordinary full-time work. Take the £2 9s. man. If he happens to be a tradesman he would earn ordinary tradesman's wages. Under the previous Government he was limited to £3, but to-day there is no limit to the amount he can earn in a week. Having increased family responsibilities that man now secures six weeks' full-time work out of every seven weeks in the year.

Mr. Hegney: In other words he is four days short of full-time employment in seven weeks.

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** During that time he may earn over the basic wage.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What would the family unit be in that case?

**The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** It would be seven altogether. Take the building trade and others that offer somewhat casual employment in normal times. As a general rule, men engaged in those callings would not average more than six weeks' full-time work out of every seven in the year. Now, if such a man is stood down for the seventh week, he may earn money during that period, and unless he earns over the basic wage, it is not stopped. I mention this to indicate that a definite move is being made to get back to normal conditions. Even though, as I have said, in a big task such as this is admitted to be faults can be found, the fact remains that when negative decisions are given on applications made by members or by the unemployed themselves.

the negative decision is given not through desire, but through compulsion arising from the financial position. To give an affirmative answer would undoubtedly please one much better. The member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney) spoke with regard to an allowance not being granted for the first few weeks in the case of babies. I do not know whether the hon. member was referring to the Child Welfare Department or sustenance.

Mr. Hegney: The Child Welfare Department.

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** In some instances the provisions as to allowance for families are extended so as to meet the rent, as the hon. member will know. I am not aware whether the cases he mentioned are linked up with cases in which additional amounts are allowed in respect of rent. If representations are made with regard to any such cases as the hon. member instanced, and if it should appear that any injustice is being done, the department and the Minister will be only too anxious to remedy the injustice. I have already answered the point raised by the member for Claremont (Mr. North) with regard to earnings. I mentioned only the 14s. man, but what I said applies in an ascending scale, so that where the top sustenance is reached, unless the man earned over the basic wage, there is no additional standing-down time insisted upon in that respect. I have to insist upon attention being given to anything over and above that because of the fact that there are still some people out of employment. That is my only justification. Until such time as we can give each person now out of employment an opportunity to get his foot on at least the first rung of the ladder of employment, we cannot be as liberal as we would like to be towards those we have already placed in employment. The member for Claremont also mentioned that the rate of sustenance here would be inferior in some respects to the rate paid in Britain.

Mr. North: Not as regards the high levels. As regards the low.

**THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:** The hon. member said that in Britain the man himself would get 19s., the wife 6s., and the children 3s. each. Certainly in the commencing period, as compared with those figures, our 14s. would be lower. But

the hon. member would not be unmindful of the fact that there is a period to those payments in Britain. They run for a given period, and then they cease. First of all they are reduced, and then they cease entirely. Our payments do not cease. The hon. member also knows that before the depression came, the social insurance scheme had been introduced by Britain. That is a contributory scheme, contributed to by employers as well as workers. If a person in Britain is going to be out of employment for only a short period, after which he goes back into employment—and unfortunately that is not the position today—that person in Britain would be better off; but taking the payments as spread over the period of unemployment existing in Britain as well as here, the person under our system is not only better off than the man in Britain, but better off than any person under any other Australian Government system. I should make a halt here to mention that in Queensland a married couple with no children received 14s. 6d., as compared with the 14s. allowed here; but as the thing goes ahead, there is a reduction. That Queensland rate is the only higher rate, as compared with this State, operating in Australia. With respect to the cheaper homes proposition mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition and other members, I said in introducing these Estimates that the matter was receiving consideration from a board which had been appointed. Possibly the board are not giving attention to homes on the scale mentioned by some members, but they are aiming at the possibility of providing a home at a price of £400 to £450 on the basis that perhaps 15s. per week would be sufficient to meet interest, depreciation, and a slight amount of principal. The aim of the board is to devise a system by which homes of that kind can be made available to the workers. It is realised that at the present time the worker cannot indulge in the same expenditure on a home as previously. It is also realised that many workers in Western Australia—and this does not apply only to people with workers' homes—who before the depression were purchasing homes, as they were then justified in doing, at prices ranging from £800 to £1,000, are now in a very unfortunate position. The practice was to pay a certain amount on the house, and pay the rest by instalments.

On account of the big slump, a man who paid £300, representing possibly his life's savings, in part purchase of a home, often finds that the value has decreased by more than £300. Thus his equity has disappeared. In many cases it would pay workers in that position to get out of the property altogether, if they were able to do so.

Mr. Patrick: The same home could be erected now far more cheaply.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. Although the cost of building is going up, in many cases it would pay a man simply to say good-bye to the £300 and build anew. But of course he is not in a position to do that. However, attention must be given to the question; and the board appointed, including the Chief Architect, are giving attention to that aspect. The Leader of the Opposition also mentioned the fact that there has been an increased quantity of goods imported from Eastern Australia. The hon. gentleman omitted to give attention to the aspect that these goods are largely luxury lines. With the increased spending power of the people, they have begun to reach out for lines additional to those which were made evident when the community was tightly pressed for money. On the other hand, other lines which previously were imported in huge quantities from Eastern Australia are showing decreases. To the extent that decreases are shown, it is an indication that the campaign in favour of local products is yielding results. We are hopeful that the position will improve further as time goes on. If it does not, there is a very poor time ahead for the people of Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition said that the Minister had found it necessary to close Blackboy. I did not find it necessary; I found it possible.

Mr. Hawke: And desirable.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. The Blackboy Camp and the Immigrants' Home at Fremantle were becoming festerers on the social system. The longer they remained, the worse they were likely to become. Another celebrated home joined them last week when the Frankland River institution was closed down.

The Minister for Lands: £62,000 went there.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And that was not nearly as much as was spent at Forrestania, which cost the State £120,000.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Blackboy and the Immigrants' Home cost the State about £130,000, and the Frankland River camp, £62,000. I have said before, and I repeat now, that that expenditure may have been necessary. But surely to the Lord, members will admit that as soon as possible those concerns should have been closed down.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have not complained about it at all.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The hon. member says he did not complain about what was done for the single men.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No. I said you had to send the men out, and they could not earn what they were expected to earn.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Many of those men are congratulating the Minister to-day for having sent them out. If the Leader of the Opposition likes to take a trip to Wooroloo, he can see the men who are engaged there in clearing land to make the sanatorium self-supporting from a dairying point of view. He will see in their improved calibre and appearance evidence that they have had some of their former independence restored to them. If he does so, he will admit that it has been worth while.

Mr. Hegney: They asked for the work.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Some wanted to go out, but others did not. Even those who were told they would have to go, have now made good. Many of those young fellows thought they were at an industrial dead-end, but now have an objective in life. There have been a few failures, but they have indeed been few compared with the many successes achieved. That in itself evidences the fact that the closing down of these institutions was worth while, not only from the standpoint of the saving of expenditure but from the satisfaction it has given to a large body of men. Regarding the appeal made by the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of a man who, he said, had been earning 28s. and because his wife had earned 15s. his allowance had been cut down to 14s., I do not know the particulars of the case. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that if the facts are as he stated them, the action was not in accordance with the policy of the Government.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I will give you the particulars to-morrow.

The Minister for Lands: Give the name.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I will not give the name in Committee. I will send the particulars down.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Leader of the Opposition will realise that the earnings may not have been reported. As soon as I heard of the case, my suspicions were aroused. That man may have continued to receive sustenance.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think he did.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not know. I want to make the position clear. If what the Leader of the Opposition stated really happened, it was not in accordance with the department's policy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am glad to hear that.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: There may have been other considerations. There may have been earnings that were not reported. The penultimate matter I wish to deal with refers to a question raised by the member for West Perth. Like the poor, it is always with us. Even when the major problem of unemployment will have passed, the difficulty regarding our youth will remain for attention. Whoever happens to be responsible for the government of the State will be confronted with that difficulty. Annually large numbers of boys and girls leave school and, as I have pointed out before, the biggest tragedy of the depression period has been the unemployment of our youth. These young people are out of work at a time when normally they are called upon to reach determinations that may have a lasting effect upon their future lives. Many of them have experienced extended periods of idleness.

Mr. Stubbs: In some instances, up to 18 months.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: In many, to more than that. Such experiences will not be to the benefit of the individual nor to the ultimate benefit of the nation. I hope that something substantial will be possible as a result of the promised Federal assistance towards the employment of youth. In anticipation of something being done in that direction, I have had reports prepared dealing with various phases of the problem. One report deals with technical training. I have had information prepared to indicate the number of youths who can be employed in industries under the apprenticeship system, if brought up to

date. In many trades and callings at present the employers are not too sanguine that the existing revival is permanent, and naturally they are dubious as to whether they can undertake additional training of youth. I have had a report prepared from that standpoint. Another report deals with the possible organising of the leisure time of youth. At one time it was stated that the menace to society was represented by the idle rich. I think that has to be changed now, for to-day the menace to society is more likely to arise from the idle poor. If we are to cope successfully with the problem confronting us, it can only be by providing for the proper organising of the increased leisure time that the future may provide for humanity. We must see to it that that leisure time is properly used. I look forward to the time when we will have to give attention along those lines, not only in respect of the youth but of the adult, because of the additional leisure time that will be available, due to the increased use of machinery in industry. The nation that will successfully cope with that problem will be the one that will reap the greatest benefit. Then there is the last question I will deal with. It was raised by the member for Murchison and concerned the Government's efforts to send men where work was available. We are increasing the facilities in that respect. Members will see on the Estimates that the amount for the number of passes issued has taken a big jump, as has also the amount received for the repayment of those passes. The increase in the number of passes issued has been brought about by the very point raised by the member for Murchison. A large number of people are coming from the Eastern States and securing positions in the gold mines. Then this happens: Smith comes over and gets a job, and as soon as he has enough money he sends back to his home State and brings over a friend of his. Meanwhile every effort is being made to enable men under the Government relief scheme to secure work elsewhere. And it is not confined to those on Government relief; any man who can show that he can get work if granted a pass to take him out to that work is accommodated with the pass. That system has contributed largely to the getting of a number of people off sustenance and relief work.



I hope that when I have to submit a further report in 12 months' time, and even in the years to follow—

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not too many years to follow.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:—I hope to be able to report that we have got placed out in employment the remaining 800 odd who are now on sustenance, after which the Government's task will be to see that those in employment are working full time.

Item—Assistance to women on whom children are dependent, and outdoor relief, including services and grants, etc., incidental thereto, £88,000:

Mr. SLEEMAN: I think this item should be a little greater. There are not many people in the State unfortunate enough to be on old age or invalid pensions and their wives and families compelled to accept assistance from the Child Welfare Department. In the latest case to be brought under my notice the man was very sick, and instead of having 17s. 6d. weekly with which to clothe himself and get necessary medicines, he had only 8s. 5d. I appeal to the Minister to see if he cannot alter the decision, so that the few unfortunate people in that position will not have portion of their old age or invalid pension taken to provide for units of the family. A man unfortunate enough to be an invalid requires every penny of that 17s. 6d. for himself.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £120,400:

Item, Salaries and Allowances, including salaries of officers under the control of the Public Service Commissioner; salaries generally, including temporary assistance, district allowance, allowances for leave due to officers on retirement, and to officers under Public Service Regulations, and proportion of salary of officers due to other departments, also arrears of salaries and allowances due from previous year, £13,439:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In view of the fact that the unemployment relief Vote is considerably less than 50 per cent. of what it was last year, does the Minister think it

necessary to expend all this money in salaries, which is only £119 less than it was last year, and with less than half the money available?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not know whether the hon. member was in the House when I asked members to alter the figures down the columns. Last year's column has been understated, as I explained when introducing the Estimates. The first "12" should be "14," and the "22" should be "33." The staff, which last year numbered 84, has been reduced to 69. That staff has been kept particularly busy in order to secure the results achieved, but as time goes on we shall not need so large a staff.

Item, Unemployment Relief, £100,000:

Mr. SLEEMAN: While some of the camps may be all right for C class men, quite a lot of the camps are not suitable. Most of those men are maimed or disabled, and cannot do the work they are being sent to. They are being sent to jobs for which they are not fit. A little while ago we had wives complaining of their husbands being sent to C class jobs. One man who had the use of only one arm was sent to fall trees, drag them together, and burn them off. That is not work for a C class man.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Where was the doctor?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The doctor was all right. He classified the man as C class, and the man was sent out to that job. When we appealed to the department, the department would not bring back the man, who eventually left of his own accord. Apparently there is no class C work in the metropolitan area, and so the men have to go to the country, where they are asked to do heavy work.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If the doctor classified the man as C class, it was with a knowledge of what constitutes C class work. There are not many cases of men, after having been examined by the doctor, being sent to a job they are not capable of performing. No member of the House can complain of lack of sympathetic consideration given to the men by the Minister. The case mentioned by the hon. member has not been brought before me. Recently I had to take away another man because he was not quite up to the work. Since this work has been found, the men have been

only too anxious to get off sustenance. There will be failures. If any member finds a case in which he considers injustice is being done, and will inform me, it will receive the same sympathetic consideration that other cases are receiving from day to day.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Council of Industrial Development, £1,450—agreed to.*

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolutions reported.

*House adjourned at 10.32 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 15th November, 1934.*

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

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

#### 1, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

#### 2, Dried Fruits Act Continuance. Passed.

### BILL—GOLD MINING PROFITS TAX ASSESSMENT.

*Report of Committee.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.34]: I move—

That the report of the Committee be adopted.

Before doing so I should like to make an explanation. Yesterday afternoon there was a difference of opinion between Mr. Baxter and myself with reference to clauses in the Bill. I find I did not correctly appreciate the nature of the point raised by the hon. member. I submitted the question to the Commissioner of Taxation to-day, and the opinion he has supplied to me may be of interest to members. He says—

In confirmation of my verbal statements of this morning on the provisions of Clauses 8 and 10 of the Bill for an Act to regulate the assessment and collection of tax on profits of gold mining companies, I submit the following remarks:—

Clause 8: Companies subject to duty under the Dividend Duties Act balance their accounts at different dates throughout each calendar year. The majority balance at the 31st December and 30th June respectively. It is, therefore, essential that for the purpose of assessment of the gold mining profits under the proposed Bill, a commencing date should be fixed. This date is determined under Clause 8, namely, as from the 31st December, 1933, and onwards. There will, therefore, be no discrimination or disadvantage to any company assessed under the provisions of the proposed Bill.

Many of the gold mining companies have their head offices in London, and balance their accounts at the 31st December. It takes from four to six months for these companies to balance their books, furnish their returns to London, prepare their financial statements and have them passed by the shareholders and directors in general meeting and then forwarded to the department. Consequently, a gold mining company that balances its books at the 31st December, 1933, would not be assessed until June or July of the present year, and therefore would be assessed and pay tax in respect of the financial year ending the 30th June, 1935. The clause is in strict keeping with the section of the Dividend Duties Act.

Clause 10 is a precautionary provision and put into the Bill to compel companies to furnish returns and be assessed, notwithstanding any of the provisions contained in Subsection 9 of Section 6 of the Dividend Duties Act. This subsection, as you know, has relation exclusively to gold mining companies which are entitled to deduct their share capital paid up in cash after the 30th June, 1924, from their profits before they are assessed. Such companies will be assessed as set out under the