

at Bunbury, which is making excellent progress and which promises to thrive to an even greater extent in the future. Already the Government receive in revenue £300 annually from the factory. If only the Government will render assistance, there are other industries besides dairying that can be developed in the South-West. One request I would make is that the Government should carry power to the southern port. I hope at any rate the Government will give sympathetic consideration to the proposal. I am glad to note that the Government propose to re-introduce the Main Roads Bill, which is very essential for the South-Western part of the State. I can only express regret that it did not pass last session as printed.

Mr. Thomson: As printed!

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, as printed. If members of another place have come to their senses during the six months of recess they will see the wisdom of putting it through this session in the form in which the Government will submit it. Then we shall have decent roads throughout the State. The Minister for Works has been in constant communication with Mr. Hill, of the Commonwealth Works Department, and has had a little consideration from him, though, I think, we were entitled to a great deal more. I would like to see the Closer Settlement Bill again introduced. I had intended referring to the subject of group settlement, but as time is limited I shall defer my comments. I only wish to say in that regard that a good deal of dissatisfaction was expressed last year by growers of clover burr who disposed of it to those in control of the groups. I trust the Government will see that in future it is placed on the market in such a way that the growers will get better consideration. I regret there was no mention in the legislative programme of a proposal to amend the Municipalities Act. That is essential, and I hope that time will be found to submit such a measure during the current session. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 4th August, 1925.

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

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

The PRESIDENT: Before proceeding with the consideration of the Orders of the Day, I would like to mention one matter concerning the appointment of our Standing Committees. It would be well if the Minister, when deciding upon the personnel of the Committees, were to consider the names of those living in the vicinity of the city. During the time Parliament has not been sitting, it has been most difficult to secure the attendance of sufficient members to form a quorum. The Library Committee has not been able to sit once during the recess, and great difficulty has been experienced by the Joint House Committee as well. I throw out this suggestion so that the Minister may take the matter into consideration when proposing the Committees to be appointed. Only with the greatest difficulty have we been able to secure quorums and, of course, work done without a quorum is invalid.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from 30th July, 1925.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [4.41]: At the outset I desire to express my deep regret at the untimely death of the late Mr. Greig and at the same time to offer my hearty congratulations to Mr. Glasheen on the success that attended his candidature. I hope Mr. Glasheen's experience in this House will prove of great benefit to himself, to the country at large, and also to the people he represents. On such an occasion as this, when looking through the Governor's Speech, one is apt to think it is very long. The difficulty I find in dealing with it is to determine what I shall omit when speaking on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. This is an occasion when hon.

members have an opportunity to express their views regarding the finances of the State, its activities and industries generally. There is a great temptation, not often taken advantage of by members, to speak at great length, but I shall endeavour to confine my attention to a few subjects of interest to me, concerning which I know a little and respecting which I may be able to shed some light in order to assist the Government. I shall criticise where necessary in order that we may have better government in some respects. The Speech delivered by the Governor represents really a recapitulation of the activities of the State. It is indeed an interesting document, and the tone is optimistic. In that, the Government are quite right. Western Australia is in a wonderfully buoyant position to-day and, notwithstanding the many difficulties and obstacles that have to be solved, the State is going ahead by leaps and bounds. One of the early paragraphs in His Excellency's Speech refers to the Premier's visit to the Old Country. I see in that visit great advantages to Western Australia. The Premier is a man of whom I have the highest appreciation. I know his ability and know that his best endeavours will be exercised for the benefit of the State, and that they were at the disposal of the people in the Old Country. We know that the Premier went into the financial position and did what he could regarding the new migration agreement which has been accepted by the Government. He was faced with many difficulties but I gather that his work in the Old Land was worthily done. The Premier seems to have broadened his ideas. He has given expression to his appreciation of the Old Country, of its people, and of its institutions. I can only hope that many others who have not the same appreciation as he now possesses since his sojourn in Great Britain may have an opportunity of going to the Old Land and seeing the country and its people. Should they have that opportunity, they will, as I did when I went Home in 1911, return with an appreciation of the wonderful productivity of the Old Land, and of the love and admiration entertained there for the Dominions. All the good things that have happened to Western Australia are mentioned in the Speech. We are glad to know that the State is progressing. In the midst of all the good things, however, some evil and dreadful things are happening not only in Western

Australia, but throughout the Commonwealth. It is necessary for the advancement of any country that its citizens should be law abiding. They should not be molested in any way when carrying out their ordinary avocations and they should be protected to the utmost by the Government in power. The Commonwealth represents the crux of the position. The Seamen's Union trouble has continued for 12 months with disastrous results to trade and to the community, and we are wondering what things are coming to when a few men can create such disturbance.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about the shipping employers?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not care who is the cause of the trouble. We have an Arbitration Court which should settle the differences between employers and employees. There should be an end either of all such trouble, or of the court.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: That is what I have been telling you for the last 15 years.

Hon. J. EWING: There are militant extremists whom I do not necessarily associate with the Labour Party. The Labour Party took a very commendable part in the seamen's strike. I give them credit for the attitude they adopted, but there are men in the State who it would be well for the country if they were not here. That has been exemplified by the A.L.P. Congress, which recently found it necessary to expel at least one member from the Labour movement.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Would you deport them?

Hon. J. EWING: We must have constitutional government in Western Australia. The militant extremists, who are to be found in every portion of the globe, are forever preaching the gospel of discontent. That is bad for any community. The ordinary man, be he Liberal or Labour, desirous of advancing the interests of the country should refrain from preaching the gospel of discontent. There is sufficient trouble in the world without that sort of thing. The militant extremists, however, care nothing for their country: they aim to achieve only their own selfish desires. Those of that ilk have clearly stated that they care nothing for the country in which they live. Their sole desire is to disturb the Empire. Fortunately these people are few in number, but though that may be so to-day, they are day by day getting inside the Labour movement. In the Eastern States are militant extremists who are members of the political Labour Party,

and they threaten to leaven the whole Labour movement sooner or later. Members of the Labour Party, true and loyal citizens of the State as they are, will, I trust, see that these extremists do not gain a footing in the movement or disturb the progress of the country. Action is necessary, however, if they are not to gain control of the whole movement and cause disaster to the Commonwealth, as they have done to other parts of the world.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It will be a bad time for the bosses when they get control.

Hon. J. EWING: It will indeed. Quite recently there was a strike of hotel and restaurant employees in this State. What was the origin of the strike? Why was it necessary for those employees to disturb the country to the extent they did disturb it to the great disadvantage of the people generally? The employees were working under an award and there seemed to be no trouble imminent till, suddenly, an ultimatum was served on the employers to concede more wages and altered conditions. The reply of the employers was, "There is an award in existence; we shall abide by it, and that is the end of it." That accomplished no good.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A lot of employers used to evade the award.

Hon. J. EWING: Ultimately the parties met but could not come to an agreement. The Deputy President of the Arbitration Court called upon the employees to return to work, but that order was disobeyed. Thus they committed a distinct breach of the law of the land. No matter what party a man might belong to or what his occupation might be, if he breaks the law he should be punished. The acting President of the court summoned a compulsory conference, but it did not come off and the trouble reached a serious stage. The public were subjected to considerable inconvenience, and the strike, instead of lasting for a month during which the people were prevented from carrying on their ordinary avocations and were intimidated, should have been settled in a few days. The strong arm of the law should have been brought into operation by the Government immediately and determinedly, and then the strike would have been settled within a week. The strikers, in addition to losing their pay, also lost considerable prestige. This sort of thing weakens the value of arbitration. The court has been established and decisions have been given, but still men

strike. In such circumstances it is of little use having an Arbitration Court. On that occasion the people would have greatly appreciated more determined action by the Government, and I greatly regret that the Government did not take the necessary action.

Hon. J. R. Brown: When the Government brought in an Arbitration Bill last session, you did not pass it.

Hon. J. EWING: We did pass it. There was an Arbitration Act in existence, and the amending Bill brought down last session could have had the force of law with certain exceptions.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Very necessary improvements were made to the Bill.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so, and the Assembly would not agree to them. The Speech refers to the financial position of the State being very satisfactory. It says—

The financial position of the State shows considerable improvement. . . The deficit for the past financial year was reduced to £58,399, the best result achieved since 1911.

I agree with the Government that that is a very satisfactory achievement, and I congratulate them and past Governments who helped to bring about that improved state of affairs. The people of Western Australia can now see daylight, and in the near future there should be no deficit at all. During the present financial year I hope the Government will succeed in making revenue and expenditure meet, so that we can start once more with a clean sheet. When that time comes, it will indeed be a happy day for Western Australia. I do not expect every member to agree with the remarks I am about to make, but I hope they will consider the opinions I express and find a modicum of truth in them. In 1919 when Sir James Mitchell came into power, the position of the State financially was almost hopeless. The Government did not know what to do or where to turn to obviate the disaster then threatening the State. Plenty of people, members of Parliament included, advocated the imposition of heavy taxation and the retrenchment of civil servants as the only courses possible of adoption to save the State. Sir James Mitchell, with splendid breadth of vision, declined to adopt either of those courses. He realised that no development would result if heavy taxation were imposed or retrenchment schemes entered upon. He turned to the land and said, "Herein lies the strength of the coun-

try. I shall carry out a land policy that will retrieve the financial position and place Western Australia in the foremost ranks of the States." With that object in view, he conceived and started the group settlement scheme, and it was the conception and inauguration of that wonderful scheme that has saved Western Australia. Any man who thoroughly studies the position must confess conceived and started the group settlement Sir James Mitchell went to the Old Country and borrowed six millions of money. On his return to Western Australia he started the group settlement scheme. Whatever may be said of the scheme now, it stands to his credit as the turning point in the financial position of the State. Sir James Mitchell could see, as others can see now, that the great thing for which Western Australia should strive was the settlement and development of its land. Therein lies the wealth and strength of any country. I am pleased that the present Government are following in his footsteps. In the financial position to-day, we see reflected the success of the policy Sir James then initiated. The Speech tells us that the financial position has so greatly improved that the deficit this year is only £58,000 odd. If we go back a few years we shall realise how the group settlement scheme has assisted the financial position, in fact has saved it. Of course we must give credit to the present Government for continuing land settlement, but credit should also be given elsewhere where credit is due. The deficit in 1921-22, which was the peak deficit year, was £732,135. At that time the then Premier said that the State had turned the corner, and that the financial position would improve. In the next year the deficit was £405,000, the improvement for the 12 months having been £326,000, an improvement that was regarded as the best ever made financially in the State. In 1923-24 the deficit was still further reduced, the amount being £229,000, or £176,000 less than that of the previous year. All this was the result of the policy adopted by Sir James Mitchell. The financial year just closed showed a deficit of £58,339, an improvement of £170,820 compared with the figures of the previous year. Thus, we have a series of improvements, year by year, and the question may well be asked, "How has this happened?" Was it caused by heavy taxation, or by retrenchment, both of which were advocated some years back? No. The result followed on the splendid policy initi-

ated and carried out until 18 months ago by the former Premier, Sir James Mitchell.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Is not borrowed money paying for it in part?

Hon. J. EWING: The present Treasurer, when presenting his Budget last year, anticipated a deficit of £196,000. He must be a proud man to-day to find that the position improved to an extent that enabled him to close the year with a deficit of only £58,000. Of course he did not include in that a portion of the land tax, and one or two other items that might have helped him even further. I know well that a sum of £45,000 was ear-marked for the reduction of freights, but the land tax was for the whole year, and we find that the freights were reduced only for a short period of the financial year. A remarkable thing to my mind, and it must have been an agreeable surprise to the Treasury, was the enormous revenue that was collected in June, the total being not less than £238,000 more than the total for June of the previous year. The Treasury officials must have worked very hard to get that result, and I congratulate them on their success. The railways assisted materially in the improvement of the financial position. When we remember that the railways, during the last four years, have made a profit of no less a sum than £680,000, we cannot but congratulate ourselves, especially when we remember that this was largely due to the policy of the Mitchell Government. During the last financial year the railways showed a profit of £190,000, or about £50,000 more than in the previous year. I offer my congratulations to all connected with the Railway Department upon the economical running of the railways and the care that they have taken, which is reflected in the financial result referred to. All must have loyally joined the Commissioner and his officers to bring about such a satisfactory position. We may also say that this is a tribute to the vitality of the State and the prosperity being enjoyed by its people. I noticed in yesterday's paper that this is the best result ever achieved by the railways in this State.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Because of higher freights.

Hon. J. EWING: Certainly, but do not forget that we have also been paying higher wages, and that costs generally have been higher.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There has also been great production.

Hon. J. EWING: That is quite correct and the production is the result of the wise policy initiated and carried out during the past three or four years.

The Honorary Minister: Not in the group settlements.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, and the Minister will join with his chief in congratulating the people of Western Australia upon the establishment of the groups in Western Australia. Migration is an important and difficult question, and these aspects are emphasised in the Governor's Speech. The settlements, however, must prove of the greatest advantage to Western Australia, and I say fearlessly that with the new agreement not only the Government of Western Australia, but the Governments of other States as well, will seize the opportunity to come under it in order to be able to do what is necessary to bring about the development that is so badly needed in Australia. During the past seven or eight months, pending the issue of the report by the Royal Commission, and also because of the framing of the new agreement, the Government have to an extent marked time. They kept all the groups going, but refrained to an extent from establishing new ones. They filled gaps wherever those gaps required settlers, but they did not encourage migration to the State, and did not proceed as whole-heartedly as had been done up to the time of the appointment of the Commission. My opinion is that the Royal Commission should never have been appointed. Its personnel never appealed to me for an instant; it was not good, inasmuch as no member of that body was thoroughly familiar with the conditions existing in the South-West.

Hon. J. Duffell: They had ways and means of obtaining the knowledge.

Hon. J. EWING: In spite of the adverse report of the Commission we read with pleasure in the Governor's Speech that it is intended to continue the work at the groups. In view of that, it seems to me to be hardly necessary for anyone to discuss the report of the Royal Commission. I suppose, however, a good deal will be said because the Government, after having had the report in their possession for over a fortnight, arrived at the decision that the groups must continue. I

am impelled to ask, in these circumstances, of what value is the report?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The Minister in charge was committed to group settlement long before he took office.

Hon. J. EWING: The Minister whose words I have just quoted spoke for the Government. We realise, therefore, that the Government stand committed to the carrying on of group settlement, notwithstanding the Commission's report, or what others may think of that report.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do you think they will continue with the same loose administration?

Hon. J. EWING: We are not discussing that aspect of the position at this moment. I congratulate the Government and the Minister for Lands on their optimism and their faith in the State. It is apparently the desire of the Minister for Lands to do what is right in connection with the development of this country. Of course, if he took heed of the report, he would suspend operations at once, but he is not going to do that, and we were all gratified when we learnt his decision. The agreement made by Sir James Mitchell when he was in England was an excellent one at that time.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Sir James Mitchell is not referred to in the Speech.

Hon. J. EWING: Do you not think he is worth mentioning?

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member please address the Chair.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. President, I think Sir James Mitchell's name was worth mentioning in the Governor's Speech. The hon. member may have his own opinion, and he is entitled to it. In any case, I am not dealing with individuals from the personal viewpoint; I am referring to Sir James Mitchell as a former Premier of this State. At the same time I have not said anything to the discredit of the Government at present in power.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: You are far too lenient.

Hon. J. EWING: I am endeavouring to be fair, and I am speaking appreciatively of the Minister for Lands, who has declared that the group settlements must continue.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is that in the Governor's Speech?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I have been looking for it but have not been able to find it.

Hon. J. EWING: Here is a reference to it—

Without abandoning their declared intention of seeking every possible improvement in future, my Ministers have decided, after consideration, to come under the terms of the new agreement, which will mean a resumption of the migration activities which for a time have been suspended.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That does not say anything about group settlement?

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member is only side-tracking. Under the new agreement it will be possible primarily to develop the lands of Western Australia, and that is indirectly set out in the Governor's Speech.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Question.

Hon. J. EWING: It is a question that the hon. members will have an opportunity to deal with later on. The old agreement enabled the Government to establish groups only on Crown land and that was always regarded as a weakness. The new agreement is excellent in many respects, and amongst other things, provides for the acquisition or resumption of alienated lands. It will thus be possible to purchase land wherever necessary, or to resume land for the betterment of the groups. Hon. members have seen the terms of the agreement. In paragraph 1 it is provided that money will be forthcoming for "any other purpose." That means to say, any Australian undertaking, and it will be an excellent thing for Western Australia, because there are many projects that it will be possible to develop under the new agreement which were not possible under the old. The new agreement is 20 per cent. better than the one Sir James Mitchell made, although that of course was the best that could be made at the time. The Imperial Government are now prepared to lend money to Western Australia at 2 per cent. for the first five years, and at 2½ per cent. for the next five years. The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth has accepted the responsibility of finding money at 1 per cent. for the first five years, for the settlement of our lands. Never before has money been available so cheaply for land settlement.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But that is only for a limited time.

Hon. J. EWING: It is for 10 years. Even during the second five years we are to have the money for less than 2 per cent. The Premier has an opportunity for the development of Western Australia that has never before been dreamed of. On all hands we have people crying out for assistance in the

development of their State. That is what the Imperial Government had in mind when they framed this new agreement. We are now to get money at a rate lower than obtains in any other portion of the British Dominions, and the Premier, I hope, will take that money and proceed with works throughout Western Australia. There are harbours and railways to be built, and electricity to be developed; let us take the opportunity and get ahead with the work. The desire of the Imperial Government is to see that the Empire is consolidated and populated. What is the use of five or six million people in Australia when we have hordes of aliens close to our northern shores? No country is safe without its full quota of population and money for development. I hope the Government will not fail to seize with both hands this splendid opportunity for developing Western Australia. Following upon this new agreement a most ridiculous thing happens, a thing greatly to the disadvantage of Western Australia, a thing people are speaking of everywhere to-day, a thing that may do incalculable harm to Western Australia. I refer to the report of the Royal Commission on Group Settlement. Truly that report justifies the leading newspaper of the State in its headlines, "Group Settlement Commission's Adverse Report. Farms not Worth Cost. Migrants as settlers. Department Stuck for Land." This paper circulates all over the world. What will the people in the Old Country think when they see those headlines? What will the migrant think? He does not know what is going on; he reads this report, perhaps in the Strand or in Piccadilly, this Group Settlement Commission's adverse report. Surely men who had the interests of their State at heart would have toned down their report, instead of persisting in doing what they know will seriously damage the State.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The "West Australian" always praised the Group Settlement Commission.

Hon. J. EWING: I never saw in the "West Australian" a leading article praising this report.

The PRESIDENT: What the "West Australian" approves or disapproves is altogether apart from this debate.

Hon. J. EWING: This publication in the newspapers is the only chance we have had to get a clear understanding of that report, for it was not laid on the Table until

this afternoon. Consequently all the evidence is still to be gone through if we are to understand it. At present we are in the dark. This report comes as a cold douche to the people of Western Australia. It is astounding and damaging; astounding because it is the outcome of the deliberations of men who do not understand the South-West. Mr. Johnson said this morning or yesterday that the report is based on the evidence. I cannot believe that the evidence would justify such a damaging report.

Hon. H. Stewart: Suppose you read it before you condemn the people who made the report.

Hon. J. EWING: I am condemning the findings of the majority report of that Commission. I cannot conceive that the evidence justifies it. Mr. Moore, when moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, was in a difficult position, in that he was a member of that Royal Commission. He curtailed his speech for the convenience of those attending the opening ceremony, but I hope he will take the opportunity at the close of the debate to give us an explanation of this report.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You will be enlightened long before that.

Hon. J. EWING: I say that the men who made the statements contained in this report have no knowledge of the South-West. There are members who will challenge this report, and say it is an attempt to condemn the South-West. Members representing the South-West have always been ready to support the development of the wheat areas, and we expect members representing the wheat areas to extend the same consideration to the South-West. Hon. members who have not yet spoken will not be at the disadvantage confronting me, for before they speak they will have an opportunity to read the evidence on which that report is said to be based. Possibly they will then be able to explain the wrong deductions of the Commissioners from the evidence.

Hon. H. Stewart: What do you think of piece work versus sustenance?

Hon. J. EWING: I will come to that presently. The first paragraph of the report practically recommends the abandonment of group settlement. It requests the Government to suspend group settlement until it is ascertained that the capital expended will be justified. That means suspension altogether; for if the work is suspended until it is determined whether the settlers can pay

interest on the money expended, we must say good-bye to group settlement altogether. To-day we cannot get two men to agree as to what the capitalisation is, and as to what capitalisation a settler can bear. Let us go ahead with the work, and let the settler make good himself. In this report the Commissioners do not put the best side of the migrant to the fore. I take strong exception to that. As to contract versus day labour, the Government believe in day labour. Yet, since taking office, they have changed their minds, at all events in respect of its application to group settlement, and the contract system is coming into vogue. I want to know how work on a group settlement can be done by contract. The contract will have to be let to some competent contractor, and when the work is completed the blocks will be handed over to the settlers. I want to know what is to be done with the migrants? Are we to bring migrants from the Old Country or are we going to stop bringing them? If we are going to adopt the contract system, we must stop bringing these people here, because they would not be competent to become contractors.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: The Controller states definitely that a new settler working under the contract system is worth four times what he is on a group.

Hon. J. EWING: If the settlers are put under a proper group foreman, and are initiated into the work, they will gradually become competent. Then they might take on contracts. Let us suppose a thousand immigrants came to Western Australia to-morrow. What would be done with them? Would they be put somewhere on a place where they would be taught clearing, and how to use an axe or a mattock? To do that would cost a great deal more than if they were put straight into groups under competent foremen. The fallacy of the thing is apparent. Either we have to continue the system, with greater efficiency and greater supervision, or stop the stream of migrants altogether until these farms are cleared and made ready. If a thousand migrants arrived here to-morrow could they be put on to contract work or not? We have to train these men, and the best place to do so is on the land that they will eventually occupy. The present system is the right one. I do not say there have not been mistakes, or that there has not been over-capitalisation, but as the years go by and experience is gained,

so will the difficulties be overcome and the cost of the work reduced, and each farm owner will have his property on a proper basis of capitalisation.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Would you employ day labour if you were clearing a farm?

Hon. J. EWING: No. What are we to do with these men if they come to the State in thousands? Are we going to train them for 12 months on some farm? We cannot have a migration scheme under such conditions. The men must be put on the land where they will have their future homes. We believe that is what they want. They desire to have their own homes and provide something for their children.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: At a prohibitive cost.

Hon. J. EWING: One of the first paragraphs of the report of the Royal Commission states that the better land of Western Australia is suitable for dairying. The Commission go on to say that a large area of the poor land is in the groups. I know that nearly all the South-West is fitted for dairying. Mr. Rose knows that. He is one of the directors of the Bunbury Butter Factory. The report concerning that factory shows what has been done with regard to dairying in Western Australia. It indicates the advancement that has been made from month to month and year to year; the interest that has been taken by the people in the South-West in the industry; and the great advantage they have had from the factories. No doubt factories will gradually extend throughout the South-West, of which dairying is the chief industry. There are a hundred and one adjuncts to it, such as pigs, bacon curing, potato growing, etc., all of which are of material assistance to the man on the land. In the South-West such good work has been done as to encourage those who want similar factories established to improve their conditions. All this is advantageous to the State. The majority report of the Royal Commission indicates that from 28 to 30 cows are necessary for each group settlement, whereas in the minority report, Mr. Latham, who is as good an authority as any member of the Commission, states that a man can make a decent living with 20 cows.

Hon. E. Rose: Quite right.

Hon. J. Duffell: They will have to be different cows from those we see on the Peel Estate.

Hon. J. EWING: I have not seen them.

Hon. J. Duffell: I saw them quite recently.

Hon. J. EWING: I refer to cows that really are cows, and will produce good value in the matter of butter fat. In these two statements there is a wide difference as to the number of cows that are requisite. Throughout the whole report everything is exaggerated, and brought out to the detriment of the scheme. Everything that can be done to make it appear that the costs are high seems to me to have been done, but the good work achieved by the scheme and the advantages to Western Australia, are not mentioned in the majority report. What was the object of the Commission in this condemnation? Are they not citizens of Western Australia, and all of them farmers? They are condemning their own territory, and to do that is not creditable to them. They go on to say that the expenditure will be £3,000 on each farm. I will not argue that point now. They compare group settlement with the Agricultural Bank conditions. They say that the bank can clear land and settle a man upon it at from £1,600 to £2,000, and contrast that with the group settlement costs of £3,000. I do not think there can be any justification for the last mentioned figure. Until group settlement was started, and there was a more liberal interpretation of the Agricultural Bank conditions, it was many years before we could secure the expenditure of any money from the bank in the South-West.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is a fact.

Hon. J. EWING: Here they advocate the extension of the Agricultural Bank conditions to an unlimited degree in order to do this work, and probably settle single men on the land to battle out their own salvation. The opportunities that are afforded by the Agricultural Bank are far surpassed by those afforded by the group settlement scheme. The very crux of the group settlement scheme is that it places poor men on the land. A man with £200 can go to the Agricultural Bank, borrow more money, and go on improving his farm. The man who has no money, and no opportunity in life, but who is taken by the right hand under this scheme and told that if he will work, here is the opportunity for him, here is a country which is giving him a chance that never existed before, that if he will be resolute and work hard he will be successful, has ample opportunity of making headway under the group scheme. Hundreds of thousands of people in the Old Country are living on doles. Is it not better they should come to Western

Australia, assisted by the Imperial Government, to carry out this wonderful work, and develop this portion of the British Empire, rather than remain where they are taking doles?

Hon. J. R. Brown: We want men here with capital.

Hon. J. EWING: In the first place, these men have not the experience to enable them to profit by the Agricultural Bank facilities. No opportunity like this scheme is given to men in any other part of the world. Members in discussing costs fail to recognise the benefit the scheme will be to Western Australia, Australia, and the British Empire. If these men come out and make good, something will have been accomplished. Men who have not had the opportunity of doing certain things are now getting it, and are making homes for themselves and a competency for their families. The thing that strikes me strongly is a statement in the report that of 384 settlers of the first 20 groups, only 207 have remained on their groups.

Hon. J. Duffell: That is a good percentage.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, it is 54 per cent. We know what has happened in America, where not 30 per cent. of the people who originally went on the land remained there.

Hon. A. Burvill: And the wheat belt was the same.

Hon. J. EWING: Although the Commission condemn the scheme, they point out that 54 per cent. of the original settlers are still on the groups.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is a higher percentage than was obtained in Gippsland.

Hon. J. EWING: Those who have left have done so because they did not want that class of life. They may have wanted to travel about, and may have been bachelors. The percentage of those who remain is eloquent testimony of the success of the scheme.

Hon. J. Duffell: You have to bear in mind that the majority of the migrants came from the working classes of the Old Country, and were not used to the land.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. They are not Australians.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Many are Australian born.

Hon. J. EWING: To my mind the migrant is dealt with harshly in the report. I am satisfied that the farms of those who have left have been taken up again and are still being carried on, although the incoming settler has had to take on the responsibility

of the cost. It will be found that practically all the farms that were abandoned are occupied to-day by other settlers. I was talking to a settler in the Busselton district recently. He seemed very comfortable and happy, and had been there six months. He told me that the man who had been there before was a fool. He cleared out and left this wonderful property to him, and he intended to make a success of it. No doubt some will do well and some badly. Some have energy and enterprise, and others have not. A man with energy, enterprise and determination to work has a glorious opportunity in Western Australia. I wish to read rather a refreshing extract from the Commission's report.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think members can be permitted to deal in detail with the report. It is not mentioned in the Speech. It is quite permissible for them to refer to it in a general way, but there are 18 pages of the report and 200 of the evidence, and if the whole of this is to be taken into consideration on the Address-in-reply I do not know where it will end. It is perhaps better that the whole matter should be taken into consideration upon a debate later. I ask the hon. member to address himself as briefly as possible to the report.

Hon. J. EWING: On all occasions I am in the habit of addressing myself briefly to the House, but on this occasion I am justified in taking the earliest opportunity of speaking upon this question.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is the most important one in the Speech.

Hon. J. EWING: I am sorry if I have transgressed, or, in your opinion, spoken at too great length. This is an opportunity when any member can say what he likes on every conceivable subject affecting Western Australia.

The PRESIDENT: At a reasonable length.

Hon. J. EWING: You cannot curtail a man's tongue unless you pass a motion, moved by the Leader of the House, to limit the length of speeches. I do not wish to weary members, but desire to do my duty. My duty now is to condemn, with all the emphasis I can, this report. I stand or fall by what I say. I have no feeling towards any member of the Commission. I know that each one endeavoured to do his duty, but wrong deductions have been drawn from the evidence. A report has been put in that is most disadvantageous to the State, and that is likely to be the most damaging thing

that has happened in Western Australia. We have coming here from the Old Country representatives of the Press of the Empire and of the world. They are coming for the purpose of seeing the group settlements and other things worthy of investigation. Now, it is a nice thing to put in their hands, as a commencement, such a report as that of this Royal Commission? Unless our visitors go into the matter and study the question for themselves, very severe damage will have been done to the State. Mr. Latham's minority report touches the crux of the whole matter. He says he cannot subscribe to the figures and statements of the majority report. Mr. Latham has got exactly the right hold of the subject. He realises that there was no undue haste in starting the scheme, and that the work has been done faithfully and well. He points out things that might be improved, but he stresses the great advantage the group settlement scheme is to the State. Therein lies the whole question—the uplifting of the State of Western Australia, the taking of this State out of a quagmire and improving its finances so that Western Australia stands in its present excellent position. In conclusion with regard to this matter, I would ask hon. members as soon as possible to visit each of the groups, and see whether the women are disappointed and are going to induce their husbands to leave their farms. The woman is generally the one to urge on, so far as I can see. Often the wife is the stronger party. Instead of inducing the man to leave the group, she will keep him there for the sake of their children. That is one weakness in the majority report. There are other weaknesses which I might point out, but by doing so I might be taking undue advantage of my position here, a thing I have no wish to do. Let hon. members go to any part of Western Australia where group settlements have been started, and I shall be very surprised indeed if they do not come back convinced of the value of those settlements to the State. Undoubtedly there have been difficulties, and undoubtedly there are difficulties; but those difficulties, great though they are, will be overcome by experience. Look at Mr. McLarty's criticism of the majority report. That criticism is quite enough for me. Mr. McLarty is a wonderfully good man, with a great knowledge of the State. Let hon. members read what Mr. McLarty has to say about the majority report. No doubt he sub-

mitted his criticism to his Minister before publishing it, and no doubt the Minister agreed with it, and thereby the criticism becomes almost a Ministerial utterance. A man like Mr. McLarty would not issue a statement of this kind on a matter of such vast importance without first consulting his Minister. In my opinion there is a great opportunity for people to make good on the groups, and also in land settlement elsewhere in the State. Difficulties and want of experience are being overcome, and as time passes we shall find a most happy, contented, and prosperous people on the groups. Perhaps this reference of mine to the group settlement scheme has taken up a good deal of time, but I would like to mention a few other subjects which appeal to me. There is the great advance in wheat cultivation in Western Australia, due again to a policy very much like the group settlement policy. The man without money was taken to the wheat areas to grow wheat. For a long time it was thought that he would not make good. It was stated that on the wheat belt people were living in hessian tents, and otherwise under great disadvantages. All that may have been true, but the majority of those people have made good, and to-day are prosperous and happy. A considerable proportion of the farmers on the eastern wheat belt started with no money at all, being practically in the same position as the settlers on the South-Western groups. Notwithstanding the fact that only a few years have passed since Western Australia did not produce enough wheat to provide the flour requirements of its people, we have now attained a production of 23 million bushels, and the production is going up by leaps and bounds. The Governor's Speech informs us—I am sure this will greatly interest Mr. Kirwan—that between Salmon Gums and Norseman there are 350 wheat farms ready to be settled. Good work has been done there, and I hope the farms will soon be settled. Work must be found for those who unhappily are without employment on the goldfields. Something must be done to help those people along. I cannot speak on the mining question as I would like. To me it is a matter of great regret that the report of Mr. Kingsley Thomas, who was appointed by the Government to inquire thoroughly into the gold mining industry, should contain certain references to the mine managers of this State. It was thought, and rightly thought, by the Gov-

ernment and everybody else that a good many things could be done to improve the position of the industry, in spite of what has been done by the Commonwealth Government and by the Parliament of Western Australia to encourage gold mining. These things did not seem to be enough, and therefore the Government appointed the South African expert to see if he could recommend something that would advantage the industry. He came, he saw, and he went, leaving behind him some stinging criticisms and some scathing remarks on the position in the Kalgoorlie belt and the work done there, and being done there, by the mine managers. I regret that very much. I do not regard the criticisms as justified, though perhaps I should not say too much on the subject. However, my feeling is that Mr. Kingsley Thomas might have omitted all those criticisms on the mine managers and on the Chamber of Mines.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It would be no use appointing him if he was not to tell the truth.

Hon. J. EWING: I cannot imagine that men like Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Sutherland, and others controlling mines on the Kalgoorlie belt—

Hon. J. R. Brown: They should have been pensioned off 20 years ago.

Hon. J. EWING: Pensioned off! Men of that character are invaluable to the State.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Who?

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Hamilton and—

Hon. J. R. Brown: He is in his dotage.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Sutherland, and other managers have done wonderful service to the State in the development of our gold mines, and the hon. member interjecting knows that better, possibly, than I do. I regret that Mr. Kingsley Thomas should have made those statements. In advocating the gold bonus Mr. Hamilton found it necessary to combat Mr. Thomas's remarks. So the position has become doubly troublesome to those who are administering Western Australia. The Government wish to do something, but they find themselves between the devil and the deep sea, or suspended between heaven and earth like Mahomet's coffin. On the one hand they have the report of a man from a country where mining is carried on principally by black labour. On the other hand they have the statements of men of experience in our gold mining industry. So the Government find it difficult, if not impossible, to know what to

do in order to improve matters. Unquestionably our gold mining industry is declining. The time seems to be coming when low grade ore must be worked, or a much greater decline faced. I hope Ministers will be able to separate the good from the bad in the report of Mr. Kingsley Thomas, and thus be placed in a position to do something that will assist gold mining. The harbours of the State are mentioned in the Speech, and I am indeed pleased to know that Sir George Buchanan, who has been in Australia for some time examining harbours on the east coast, is coming to Western Australia in order to investigate our harbours. Geraldton harbour is advancing by leaps and bounds. At Geraldton everything is being done that can be done to make a safe and commodious harbour—I think those are the words used. I wish the Geraldton people well of their harbour. They have the right to possess an adequate and safe harbour. When one sees the port of Bunbury—in this respect I do not blame the present Government more than any other Administration—one realises that a large sum of money should have been spent in providing adequate accommodation. The development of the South-West has been proceeding so rapidly that that is an absolute necessity. There was recently a dredge at Bunbury, and doing good work there; but we have no guarantee that it will remain there. In any event, Bunbury wants something further than that. Every port of this State should have as much money spent on it as is justifiable. I feel sure the Leader of the House will be able to tell us that one duty of Sir George Buchanan will be to investigate the harbours of Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany, and I hope Busselton.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Why not Esperance?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, and Esperance.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: A deep water jetty is wanted there.

Hon. J. EWING: I hope Sir George Buchanan will go to Esperance also, and I hope that as the result of his inspection he will be able to recommend the Government to expend the money needed to furnish the people of that district with a proper and commodious harbour. The development of the South-West, however, is impossible without adequate harbour accommodation at Bunbury. Last year we had only one ship taking fruit from Bunbury, whereas we should have had a dozen, to take the whole of the fruit.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do you say that all the fruit should be shipped from Bunbury?

Hon. J. EWING: All the fruit grown in that district.

Hon. H. Stewart: As regards its own quota I agree with you.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Stewart has a quota of fruit in his district of Mt. Barker. Much of the fruit grown in the South-West comes through Picton Junction right on to Fremantle, involving a great deal of unnecessary haulage, with the cost of which South-Western fruitgrowers are burdened.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: God made the South-West, and the devil made Bunbury harbour.

Hon. J. EWING: When God made the South-West, He gave to the State of Western Australia a wonderful territory; or, as the late Lord Forrest said, "A wonderful and again a wonderful territory." I have practically finished my remarks; I only wish to speak for a few minutes on the subject of electricity. I hope what I say will be taken note of by hon. members and the Government. For many years I have been moving motions in this House with regard to the need for generating electricity at the point where coal is produced or rivers flow—I care not what the source of power may be; let us have snow-clad mountains and a hydro-electric scheme. We have the seat of the supply of power in the South-West, at Collie. Time and again I have moved on this subject, and on two occasions I was refused by this House a resolution urging the Government to make inquiries. After a time the Mitchell Government did appoint a Royal Commission, as the result of which the fact was demonstrated that in the South-West there could be erected at small cost an electricity plant which would justify its erection. From the Governor's Speech we now learn that there was an increase of 5,000,000 units last year, and that a 2,500 kilowatt plant is to be erected at East Perth. But all that expenditure is going on in the city of Perth, and represents nothing but centralisation. It is time that the Government turned their attention to our great South-West and took steps to create electricity to assist those on the land and others as well, providing current at prices equalling those obtaining in other parts of the world. We know what is done in America and the wonderful schemes they have in operation there. We can turn to England, too, and realise what can be done there. Then we have the position in New South Wales as well. The Government here

should use some of the wonderfully cheap money available now to assist in this direction in the development of our territory. That could be done by the generation of electricity at Collie. The Government could start with a small scheme involving £200,000 or so. There is any amount of water available; that has been proved. All difficulties have been overcome and the opportunity is there. Let the Government utilise some of the cheap money that can be secured and develop the South-West with cheap electric power. If they were to electrify the railways, they would save all the necessity for cuttings and regrading along the railway lines, and if they were to do that, wonderful work would be accomplished for Western Australia. It remains now for me to refer only to the legislation the Government intend to introduce. We are informed that the Constitution Act is to be amended. I am interested to know what that means. We cannot have all the secrets revealed to us at once and we shall have to wait until the Minister introduces the Bill.

Hon. H. Stewart: It does not seem to be worrying the Minister.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. I suppose it will be something of advantage to Western Australia or he would not agree to introduce it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It may mean a redistribution of seats.

Hon. J. EWING: I hope so. The Electoral Act is to be amended. During the recess we have often heard the question asked, "Why was not the Main Roads Bill passed last session? Why did the Upper House block it?" It is unfair to say that the Upper House blocked the Bill. It was brought before us at the last moment and we were not in any way responsible for the measure not being passed. We were willing to go on with the Bill had the Government given us reasonable time to discuss it.

Hon. J. Nicholson: We offered to sit after Christmas.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. I am glad to have had this opportunity to deal with the questions I have raised, in the hope that some of my remarks may be of advantage to the State and to the Government. If any should appeal to the Minister in that light, I hope he will bring them under the notice of his colleagues. I hope the session will be a pleasant one, and that the Leader of the House will not be worked too heavily.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £1,913,500.

All Stages.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [6.5]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to be received from the Legislative Assembly, and to pass through all its stages at one sitting.

This is a very urgent measure and it is necessary to pass the Bill in order that the Treasurer may have funds with which to carry on the administration of Government affairs. Despite the fact that the Treasurer has been away from the State, considerable headway has been made with the Estimates and it is anticipated that these will be presented to Parliament not much later this year than last year. All expedition will be used and no unnecessary delay will take place. I hope, in the circumstances, the House will agree to the motion.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [6.7] in moving the second reading said: The Bill provides for the usual supply for two months, based on last year's expenditure. The amount asked for covers the following items:—Revenue Fund, £850,000; General Loan Fund, £750,000; Government Property Sales Fund, £10,500; Land Improvement Loan Fund, £3,000; and Treasurer's Advance, £300,000; making a total of £1,913,500. Last year's revenue and expenditure were each greater than were estimated, the revenue by £217,141 and the expenditure by £79,465. There was, consequently, an improvement, compared with the Estimates, of £137,676. There was also an improvement over the previous year, of £170,759. The revenue showed increases respecting almost all items compared with the returns for the previous year. The increase on account of taxation was, on the whole, £59,463, although the amount of income tax collected was £23,623 less than the collections for 1923-24. It will be remem-

bered that the surcharge of 15 per cent. was reduced by half last year. There was a small increase of £3,875 in the collection of land rents, while timber returned £36,740. Against this latter item there was an increase in the contribution from revenue to the reafforestation fund. Under the heading of "Departmental," which covers general fees collected by departments as well as recoups of interest on moneys advanced by the Treasury, there was an increase of £201,961. Although almost all departments show increases, the bulk of this amount has been due to increased recoups of interest. The most gratifying increase is that in connection with public utilities. These returned £189,115 more than in the previous year. The principal increases were: Railways, £144,114; Fremantle Harbour Trust, £36,623; Electricity Supply, £24,071; Metropolitan Water Supply, £14,519; and Tramways, £7,016. There were, of course, decreases on some items. The railway results have been very satisfactory. The revenue for the year, according to Treasury figures, was £3,334,008, while the expenditure was £2,361,761, leaving a balance of £972,247 to meet interest and sinking fund. The interest is calculated at £813,849, and the sinking fund at £126,000, making a total of £939,849. Thus, there was a profit over all charges of £32,398. The increased expenditure, totalling £345,092, compared with the previous year, is arrived at as follows: Special Acts, £271,370; Public Utilities, £65,400; Governmental, £8,322. I wish to draw attention to the way in which the expenditure of £8,439,845 last year was incurred. Special Acts, principally interest and sinking fund, accounted for £3,352,721.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What proportion is that to the total expenditure?

Hon. J. Nicholson: At any rate, it shows how heavy our indebtedness is.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have not worked out the percentages but, roughly, it is in the proportion of three to eight. The expenditure was also accounted for by public utilities absorbing £3,097,631, while under the heading of "Ordinary Governmental," there was £1,989,443. Under the last-mentioned heading all free services, such as education, police, hospitals, lunacy, charities, etc., are included, and these services account for £1,196,093. That is expenditure over which no Government has any control.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Except that we can check it sometimes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps so, and that may relieve the position a little. The expenditure under the General Loan Fund amounted to £4,159,236, as compared with the previous year's expenditure of £4,413,606, and £3,936,833 for 1923-24. The bulk of the expenditure was under the heading of "Development of Agriculture," the total of that amount being £2,259,276. Of that amount group settlement accounted for £1,103,972, the Agricultural Bank £257,072, soldier settlement £597,359, and assistance to settlers £192,710, making a total of £2,151,113 spent in assistance to settlers on the land. The expenditure under the heading of "Railways" was £511,630, of which £157,781 went for rolling stock. On the extension of the electricity supply £59,014 was spent, while the expenditure on water supply and sewerage works was also large, amounting to £633,277, of which the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage absorbed £539,482.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time, and passed.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 4th July, 1925.

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

CONDOLENCE—THE LATE MR. J. B. HOLMAN.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.32]: It is with the deepest regret that I rise to move a motion of sympathy respecting the death of the late Mr. J. B. Holman, a member of this House who passed away since the close of last session. Mr. Holman was one of our oldest members, having been first elected for the Murchison district in December, 1901, and having represented that constituency continuously for more than 20 years. Mr. Holman was a prominent member of this House and took a most active and keen interest in its deliberations. More than 20 years ago he held office as Minister for Railways and Labour in the Daglish Government, and from 1911 to 1917 he filled the office of Chairman of Committees. In that office his conduct of business was such as to earn the praise and approval of every member of the House. Mr. Holman was a thoroughly conscientious representative of the interests he espoused in the House. He was possessed of rare energy and determination. He served the people of this State well, and I am sure every member of the House deeply regrets his passing. Older members will recall the tenacity of purpose with which the late member maintained his opinions on measures that came before the House. Though for 25 years he filled a prominent position in the political life of this State, it was perhaps in the industrial