

in the mining industry. Why not? Has not the industry kept a large population? Are not those people entitled to homes? Seeing that the Government have been building workers' homes in the agricultural areas, why should not the activities of the Workers' Homes Board be extended so as to give those engaged in industry on the goldfields an opportunity of securing homes? This proposal was placed before the Chief Secretary when recently in Kalgoorlie. The hon. gentleman pointed out to the people that there was quite an easy way of getting a home. The necessary building material could be made available by the Government: £50 would buy only sufficient material to build a shack. The amount should be extended to £200 or £250. The Government realise that there is business in that proposal. Money is available. Kalgoorlie people would acquire these workers' homes. The land belongs to the Government, a quarter-acre block being leased at 10s. per annum. The cutting of the timber required for the homes would give additional employment in the timber industry. Rents have gone up enormously on the goldfields, so much so that the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council have been stirred into activity. They are asking for a fair rents court to operate in that district. The mining industry is prosperous. The homes are needed. The full cost of a home need not be paid immediately. If a worker has to leave a home, the agreement should provide for the transfer of the home, the man leaving it to receive the money represented by his equity. I shall say no more this evening, as the Estimates will come later, and many points which could be discussed now, will have to be debated then. I desire that the Minister for Mines should carry on his good work, such as he has mentioned this evening, but more vigorously for the further development of the mining industry.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 7th September, 1932.

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

QUESTION—CENSUS, EXAMINATIONS FOR POSITIONS.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the Minister noticed, regarding the proposed taking of a census of the Commonwealth, it is intended that the examinations for the positions, which are estimated to last about three months, in connection with the tabulation of the census, are to be held in Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney only. 2, Will he approach the authorities with a view to having this State's tabulation done locally by our own returned men?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. The positions referred to, however, are in connection with the tabulation of the results of the census, and this tabulation is mainly carried out by special machinery which is not available in Perth. The work must also be done under expert supervision, and it would be almost impossible for the Commonwealth census authorities to decentralise it in order to allow the tabulation relating to each State to be done locally. 2, The collection of the census data will be carried out by the local Commonwealth Electoral Department.

QUESTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the great disability industry in this State is suffering through the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, is it the intention of the Government to introduce amending legislation during the present session of Parliament.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Consideration will be given to this matter.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £2,225,000.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.36]: Before proceeding to discuss the matters I propose to deal with, I hope you will allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate Mr. Thomson upon the excellent speech he delivered to the House yesterday. In spite of its length, it was full of information and gave evidence of great care and industry on his part. Unfortunately, like everything in this world, there was a fly in the ointment, and that also applies to the speech delivered by Mr. Bolton. They took this early opportunity of advocating a reduction in the number of members of this Chamber. Of course, Mr. Bolton has had no experience of the work of members of this House, and Mr. Thomson has had but a limited experience. Therefore, to advocate a measure of that description amounts almost to a reflection upon the 10 members they wish to get rid of. I feel certain that they did not intend their remarks to be regarded in that way. Yet one of those who have expressed such an opinion has had no experience of the working of the Legislative Council at all! I am certain the time will come when we shall have an opportunity to discuss this question and arrive at finality. When that stage is reached, I can assure hon. members I shall be quite prepared to voice very definite opinions of my own on the subject. In addressing myself to the Speech with which the Lieut.-Governor opened Parliament, I consider it does not require any lengthy or eloquent remarks. The Speech recalls to my mind that on a previous occasion, when speaking on a motion similar to that now before us, I compared the Speech to the daily weather report of the Meteorologist, inasmuch as it was "excellent in records, but very weak in forecasts." In following up the various accomplishments of the Government, I give them credit for doing the best they could, but, in my opinion, they have

not done as well as was expected of them. The only business forecasted in the Speech refers to a few Bills. At a time such as the present, as few Bills as possible should be introduced and they should be only such as have something to do with the altered circumstances of the country, or to correct mistakes made in previous measures passed by Parliament. I was disappointed to note that nothing was said in the Speech about the consolidation of existing statutes. Apparently, they are in a hopeless muddle. I will refer to land legislation, for example. I understand there are no fewer than seven Acts, including amending measures, in relation to land legislation. In the circumstances, how can any ordinary man know what the position is. Surely we have some clever legal man with experience who could take that work in hand. I have in mind a man such as Mr. W. F. Sayer, K.C. In 1898, when I was a member of the Government, I remember that we appointed Mr. J. C. H. James to undertake work of that nature, and his efforts in consolidating various statutes up to that time can be appreciated by a perusal of the Acts in question. I have a great deal of sympathy with the Government in their efforts to place the financial affairs of the State on a satisfactory basis. It is obvious to all that the Labour Party are in keen opposition to them. The public have before them two policies. The first is that of the Labour Party, which is, in their own terminology, the release of credits, whatever that may mean, the continuation of a liberal circulation of money, and high wages, giving great spending power. In other words, the policy is the adoption of Mr. Theodore's plan to raise and circulate £20,000,000 amongst the unemployed. How they propose to find reproductive work to be carried out by that expenditure, or anything like that amount, I cannot imagine. Therefore any such expenditure would merely serve to add to our financial embarrassment. Then, again, I am equally troubled as to where the £20,000,000 would come from, unless it were through the medium of the printing press. The other policy—that of the Nationalists—is embodied in what is known as the Premiers' Plan, which represents an agreement, on the part of the Premiers of the States with the Commonwealth Government, to balance Budgets. Any person who reflects on the position must see that the two policies are

in absolute opposition and entirely irreconcilable. Fortunately—I do not suppose hon. members who belong to the party will agree with me—the Labour Party are not in a position to give effect to their views. I am entirely in favour of the Premiers' Plan and consider the balancing of Budgets the only possible way by which success can be achieved. The Government of this State, through the Premier, agreed to the Plan and to balance the Budget. Unfortunately, they have not been able to carry out their pledge, and as they have acted in such a half-hearted manner, the deficit this year is larger than it was for the previous financial year. The deficit amounted to something like £1,500,000, of which the Treasurer claims £1,200,000 has been spent on unemployment and exchange. We are not in a position to criticise that expenditure and can but hope that it was effected as economically as possible. In my opinion, if the Premier had had the courage of his convictions, at least £330,000 of that deficit would have been wiped out. I shall suggest some ways by which it could have been done, although the Premier claims, according to the Governor's Speech, that he has economised in every direction. I am afraid it is not much use making suggestions. I made some last year, but the Government did not take much advantage of them. At the same time, it is the duty of hon. members to advance them, however unpalatable they may be to those in power. The first objection I raise is one that I mentioned last year. I refer to the payment of £20,000 to our free University of Western Australia at Crawley. That is most unjustifiable and wrongful expenditure to provide for an institution so highly endowed as the University. I believe I am accused of being opposed to the institution and to a free University. I am not opposed to either, provided the endowment money is used; but I am opposed to the taxpayers' money being granted to such an institution when we have numbers of unemployed, to a large extent, unprovided for, and farmers who, I am told, are almost starving. I should like to point out that in England and in other countries universities make sacrifices. Let me give one instance—

Generous sacrifices by the University of London in view of the imperative need at the present time for national economy were announced in a letter from Lord MacMillan, chairman of the University of London Court,

to the chairman of the L.C.C. which was read at yesterday's meeting of the L.C.C. Education Committee. Most important of these was the decision to forego, for the second half of the Council's current financial year, and the whole of the next financial year, 10 per cent. of the annual maintenance grant of £125,000.

That shows that universities elsewhere are prepared to make sacrifices instead of trying to extract from the Government all the money they can. In reply to my remarks last session, the Minister said there was an honourable understanding with the University that could not be broken. Well, there have been many honourable understandings. When the elections were on, there was an honourable understanding to do away with State trading concerns, and we had only to listen to the speech of Mr. Thomson yesterday to learn how the Government are doing away with the State Sawmills and State ships. The Minister in charge of those departments is doing all he can to bring them into competition with private enterprise. My next proposal is rather a bold one, namely that all expenditure by the Government on free secondary education should be withdrawn. In existing circumstances such expenditure is not justified. People will probably say that mine is a preposterous suggestion and will follow it up by asking, "If that were done, what would happen to all the teachers? They would be unemployed." Certainly they would be unemployed, but how are we going to square the ledger if we continue to spend money in that way? This would be a justifiable withdrawal of expenditure. Are we justified in expending a million and a half of money that we have not got? That is the point to be considered. Education is costing the State some £600,000, and the saving on secondary education would reduce the expenditure by £200,000. Seemingly, people think nothing of spending a million and a half of money that does not belong to them. I do not know where it comes from. A system of free education is not by any means adopted all over the world; it is not adopted in England, as the following will show:—

A good example in this direction (a bolder policy of economy) has just been set by the London County Council. One of the biggest items of expenditure by the L.C.C., as by most other local authorities, is education. The high cost to the taxpayers and ratepayers of the country is due to the fact that in past years all political parties seem to have acted on the principle that it was impossible to spend too

much money on education. They are now beginning to discover that money can be thrown away on education, as on other forms of expenditure, and the Education Committee of the L.C.C. decided to make substantial economies. In particular, it proposes to increase the fees for secondary and higher education, and to spend less money on giving prizes. The amounts involved are not very great, but the principle is most important. In effect the L.C.C. has recognised that the primary obligation of paying for the education of a child rests on the parent, so far, at any rate, as secondary schools are concerned.

Personally, I am in favour of free elementary State education to the age of 14, and the system should be extended as far as possible into the country for the benefit of the children of farmers and others. I am also in favour of technical education and the training of teachers, while for those boys and girls who are clever, scholarships and bursaries should be provided. On good authority I learn that not 10 per cent. of children are clever. I doubt whether there are 10 per cent. of clever men, and I am told there are not 10 per cent. of clever children. Consequently the provision of scholarships and bursaries would not be necessary to a great extent. Apart from this aspect, we have five first-class high schools which any boy can attend for a payment of 15s. per week. If any parent wishes his son to be educated beyond the elementary stage, surely he can afford 15s. a week to pay for him, instead of getting the taxpayer to do everything for him. Thirty years ago, when Minister for Education, I visited Sydney and found even then that that State was spending over £1,000,000 a year on education, and the expenditure has been continued ever since. Let us consider some of the results. I suppose that in Sydney there are hundreds of disloyal people, and that not only in Sydney but throughout Australia, one-third of the people are helping Labour to obstruct the Governments in their various efforts to put the finances on a proper basis. So where does education come in? Coming to our own State, we have only to refer to a paragraph under "Current Comment" in yesterday's "West Australian" remarking upon the theft of all sorts of things from the railways. I consider that was a most terrible indictment, and this sort of thing has been going on in spite of advanced education. The third item on which a saving should have been made is the Agent-General's office. An Agent-General is not required. There is nothing for him to do. There are no loans

to be negotiated; there is no migration requiring his attention; there is no purchasing for improvements, because we cannot afford to do any improvements. The secretary to the department could do the business required as well as could the Agent-General. If this was the only occasion that the withdrawal of the Agent-General had been suggested, one could understand some objection being offered to the proposal, but several other States have withdrawn their Agents-General and have made considerable savings by so doing. The Commonwealth Government have withdrawn their High Commissioner. I suppose it will be said that Mr. Bruce will take his place, but he is not in London yet. Some of the States, however, have withdrawn their Agents-General, and have made a saving. The State trading concerns should have been closed up in order to save further loss. None of them is paying. The Minister smiles. I suppose he is smiling at the thought of the success of the State trading concerns against private enterprise. Mr. Thomson dealt so admirably with the point yesterday that I do not intend to pursue it further. The Government shipping concern was never intended to carry tourists all over the world. I am one of the representatives of the North-West, and I consider that shipping conveniences for the North-West should be provided by tender. Tenders should be called from companies prepared to provide a service at scheduled rates for passengers and cargo, with provision for bringing women and children south during the summer. Alternative tenders might be called for ships manned by white crews and for ships manned by coloured crews. At present the State shipping concern is used for vote-catching purposes. The whole business should be taken out of the hands of the Government and operated on an economical basis. Nothing is to be gained by referring to the Wyndham Meat Works. The Minister went to Wyndham and, judging by the Press report, saw that things were going so badly that he was able to effect no end of improvements, showing that Government management in the past had fallen a long way short of perfection. The Premier has frequently stated that he wished to prevent or reduce unemployment. I often wonder whether he can be really sincere. If he were sincere, he would have taken steps to abolish the Arbitration Court and its awards, and leave the workers to make their own agreements. Had this been done

a couple of years ago, half the unemployed at least would be in work to-day. The impossible awards of the court and the activities of Labour officials prevented men from accepting any rates below those prescribed in awards, and it is common knowledge that the employers could not pay those rates. The removal of the Arbitration Court and its connections would represent a further saving of at least £10,000 a year. I understand the Treasurer is preparing his Budget. I would suggest an amendment of the conditions of income taxation by cancelling all exemptions, except perhaps a small one for children, and making everyone who has a vote pay 10s. up to £100 of income, after which the taxpayer would come under the legal rates. At present the limited number who are liable for income tax have to pay heavily, while thousands escape who could well afford to contribute out of their incomes. There is no doubt that the people of Western Australia were treated very leniently last year in the matter of taxation, and the Premier has now apparently realised the need for increasing taxation. Two pieces of legislation have done incalculable harm to Australia, one, that providing for the Arbitration Court which to a large extent has prevented the industrial development of the Commonwealth owing to extreme and unreasonable awards, and the other, the old-age pension, which gives a statutory right to people over a certain age to demand a pension. Nothing has so sapped the spirit of thrift and independence amongst the young as the feeling that they need make no provision for their old age or for their parents or dependants. Of course those people who are really destitute should be provided for by the Government, as they are now. I was much concerned by the statements made yesterday regarding the Agricultural Bank. I intended to look up the information, but Mr. Thomson fortunately gave it. The Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board between them have something like £16,000,000 invested. That is a large sum, and it is the money of the taxpayers. In looking through the report of some remarks in another place yesterday, I found that no fewer than 905 properties are on the hands of the Agricultural Bank, in respect of which £846,000 is owing to the bank for principal and £261,604 for interest. Those two items alone amount to a million of money. It must occur to everyone that no Government

is justified in speculating to the extent of 16 millions of the taxpayers' money in wheat growing. We all know that farming is speculative, but to spend such a huge sum of money under the control of men whom I might call irresponsible, is beyond me. I should say that they were just as irresponsible as the President of the Arbitration Court, who makes an award and to whom it does not matter whether that award is carried out or not. That kind of thing is a huge tax on the people. At all events, I hope that in the future those in control of some of the farms that owe so much money will be able to repay that which the State has advanced them. In criticising the Government I hope members will not think that I am in any way hostile or unfriendly to them. Nothing would induce me to vote or do anything to remove them from office, especially with the alternative of the Labour Party succeeding. Amongst the Labour Party there are a number for whom I have great respect and friendship, but I cannot see my way to support their platform. It contains many planks which in no way appeal to me. I suppose everyone knows what those planks are and therefore, it is unnecessary for me to enter into details.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Yes, let us have them.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Very well, if the hon. member desires to hear them. The first is rather on a wholesale scale. It deals with the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange. The second is the State basic wage to be declared on a unit of not less than a man, his wife, and two children, plus child endowment. The third refers to a maximum working week of not more than 44 hours. I am in accord with that provided the wages are reduced proportionately. The fourth relates to preference to unionists. Then comes the greatest class legislation—State Fire, State Life, State Accident, State Sickness and State Unemployment Insurance. The sixth refers to departmental construction of works by the State and Federal Governments. I presume that means day labour. The seventh is nationalisation of banking and all principal industries, a fair rents court and the control of prices of all commodities. I do not see how you can carry out nationalisation of banking unless you have a bank of your own. That is an enigma to me, and I think it is also to most

people. The eighth plank deals with adult suffrage for the Legislative Council with a view to its ultimate abolition. That is rather uncomplimentary to us all. The Labour Party are in a good position to carry out their ideals. I find they have no less than 35,300 members in their unions and that those members made the substantial contribution for last year of £69,134. Consequently, I think, the Labour Party are in a strong position to carry out their aims. In addition I find that a subscription of 6d. per employee is now being collected for the forthcoming State elections. They are getting well ahead.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Are you sure that that statement is correct?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I am giving it to the hon. member for what it is worth. He may be in a position to deny it.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: I wish you meant it.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Anyway, I was asked to give this information; I would not have supplied it otherwise. I need not take up the time of the House any longer. I thank members for having given me a quiet, in fact an almost uninterrupted hearing. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) [5.6]: There is no semblance of artificial optimism about the Speech we have before us. It is bare of controversial matter and it seems to have been prepared with a due sense of responsibility. Similar discretion is not always exercised by those in high places. I may give an instance. From time to time we have been told by people who ought to know better that we have turned the corner, and that we have not far to go before Western Australia returns to prosperity once more. Like Mr. Holmes, I regret to say I can see no reliable evidence of this. Part-time work on sustenance basis, the funds for which are provided by discounting bonds—in other words short-dated promissory notes—is not a forerunner of prosperity. Yet I do not blame the present Government or any Australian Government for the crisis which has arisen. In my opinion, until the whole world sets its financial house in order, Australia, which depends to a large extent on its export trade, must remain in the parlous condition in which it finds itself to-day. Every part of the earth is similarly affected.

It is true that for some years past there has been an increase of production in the world. But the present disorder, in my opinion, is not due to over-production. There has been an increase of production to the extent of three per cent., while the population of the civilised world has increased only one per cent. Surely it is an anomalous position that while the world has goods of every variety to sell, food supplies, clothing, luxuries in abundance, millions of people are bordering on starvation and are unable to sell their labour to keep the wolf from the door. And because they cannot sell their labour they cannot buy the goods, and the owner of the goods is consequently at the mercy of the banker. It seems to me to be absurd for any one to argue—and I have given this subject a great deal of consideration—that every nation has become famine-stricken and financially embarrassed because it has been producing more riches than ever before. Does it not go to show that there is something wrong with the medium of exchange which superseded barter many years ago? In my opinion that is the position in which the fault and the evil lies. Gold is the medium of international exchange and its value, or in other words, its purchasing power, increases when it is scarce, and decreases when it becomes plentiful. As I have already implied, the prices of the world's goods are regulated by the supply of gold. If there is a plentiful supply of gold, prices go up; if there is a shortage—I mean a shortage for trade purposes—then the prices come down. This is no new economic doctrine. It is as old as the gold standard. All the recognised economists have taught it and still teach it; they teach that if the gold standard is operating successfully as a medium of exchange, there must be sufficient available for the requirements of trade. That is to say, if I interpret this doctrine correctly, there must be an increase of the gold supply with the increase of production. But what is the real position? Instead of an increased gold supply, there is a diminished gold supply. As everyone knows, it has been constantly represented that a huge proportion of the world's gold supply is and has been locked up for several years past. From 1925 to 1929 America and France held from circulation over 60 per cent. of the world's gold. Since 1929, I understand, their holding has increased until it is something like three-fourths of the world's supplies. Even

if there had been no increase since 1929, if the holdings were the same now as they were then, it would mean that twelve hundred million pounds' worth of gold is as useless for the purpose of trade as if it were buried in the depths of the sea. In consequence of this, trade has been paralysed from China to Peru. Gold in circulation has become scarce, prices have fallen in sympathy, factories have closed or reduced their hands, and our primary producers in every country have found it difficult to carry on. Millions of men have been thrown out of work, have become impoverished, and under-consumption of all classes of products has followed, thus intensifying the seriousness of the situation. I am convinced that what the world is suffering from to-day is the strangulation of the gold standard by America and France, with all its consequences of low prices, unemployment, poverty and the resulting under consumption. It is impossible to conceive that an increased production of useable commodities in all parts of the world is responsible for this depression. The only effect I can see from a wide-spread increase of wealth is that the standard of living should be raised higher than it had been previously, always provided that the volume of gold as the medium of exchange was sufficient for the purpose of international trade and to keep pace with the growing production. At the present time there is not even half enough liberated gold for that purpose. For even if we count the hoarded gold, there has been an increase in supply of only £200,000,000 in seven years, although production has increased by 3 per cent. each year during that interval of time. Until the monetary problem is dealt with successfully—and it is not an Australian, but an international problem—I very much fear we cannot hope for any great increase in the prices of our exportable products and the return of prosperity which has been so often predicted during the last few weeks. There is in the community a feeling that the banks have not adhered to the principle of equality of sacrifice, that is, where their own interests are affected. I am referring to the principle on which the Financial Emergency Act is based. It would be a good thing if that feeling could be dispelled, for in many other respects to my knowledge the banks have played a fair game. It is difficult to get reliable information as to what rate of interest the banks

are now charging and what reductions they have made since the Financial Emergency Act has come into operation. About three months ago I addressed a fairly well attended meeting in a farming community. If what was then told me openly as the rate of interest charged is correct, then certainly there are grounds for investigation and explanation. Last year, when the financial emergency legislation was before this House, we all realised that the banks had been taking money at fixed deposit over long terms at a high rate of interest, and that in the circumstances they were entitled to every consideration. But things have changed since then. Many of those deposits must have matured, and it is only right that the banks should make general reductions in order to meet the new position. In 1930 the interest rates on fixed deposits in the banks were as follows:—Three months, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; 6 months, $4\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.; 12 months, 5 per cent.; and 24 months, $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. To-day those rates are as follows:—3 months $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; 6 months, 3 per cent.; 12 months, $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; and 24 months, 4 per cent. With such a great reduction in the rate paid to depositors, one could reasonably expect that the clients of the bank would get some substantial benefit therefrom. We have the right to know whether or not this has been so—that is to say, if the Financial Emergency Act is to come up for re-enactment. Two years ago the banks claimed that they were short of money, and so overdrafts were called up or reduced. Now they say they have more money than they want, and that the rates paid to depositors were reduced with the specific object of discouraging people from investing money with the banks, and with a view to encouraging them to invest it in enterprise instead.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I believe the bank rates in Australia are from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 per cent. better than in England.

Hon. J. M. DREW: But we want to know exactly what the position is. In May last some interesting figures, relative to the business of the banks, were published in the "West Australian." Those figures dealt with the position as on the 31st March last, and showed that there had been an increase of £19,000,000 in the amount of deposits in Australian banks, exclusive of the Commonwealth Bank, during the previous 12 months. They also showed that the deposits were in

excess of advances by nearly £54,000,000 more than they were a year before, and £38,000,000 more than in March of 1930. Advances to clients have come down during the year by no less than £18,000,000. This seemed inconceivable, indicating either that the banks had been calling up their money or that people were voluntarily paying off their overdraft. It has been said that a substantial proportion of the deposits bearing interest represents overseas capital, which continued to accumulate owing to the high cost of transfer of orders to New York and other centres, and so had been placed on a safe interest-bearing basis until conditions improve. This is all very vague, and some specific information on the point is highly desirable, even in the interests of the banks themselves. The huge increase in one year of £19,000,000 of deposits in private banks may possibly be explained by the fear of people with small savings to trust Governments and Parliaments, who have shown no scruples during the last couple of years in repudiating the most solemn agreements—statutory agreements at that—in order to make easy the task of administration. The reduction of £18,000,000 in advances in one year is a matter on which some light should be thrown. It is not possible to be specific in connection with a matter of that kind, but certainly I will require some clear information on the point. Is it that the banks are hampering enterprise, that they have more money than they want and have decided not to make further advances in order to encourage enterprise and assist in the development of the country? Not only the farmers and the pastoralists, many of whom in both sections are living practically on sustenance, but the business houses also, should be encouraged at a time like this.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Put up a reproductive proposal to the banks, and you will get the money you require.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Then apparently very few people have reproductive proposals to put up these days. But the banks are advising private enterprise to spend money and assist the people in business and industry.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have not they financed short-term loans for the Commonwealth?

Hon. J. M. DREW: Yes, I understand the Commonwealth have financed a loan, and that if they want the bonds discounted they go to private banks. But my point is

that the private banks are discouraging the public to deposit money at the present time. That information has been gleaned from one of their own circulars.

Hon. J. Nicholson: They have difficulty in investing just now.

Hon. J. M. DREW: We may be able to get some information on that point. I have not heard whether the banks have refused advances or overdrafts on any large scale or in circumstances which would scarcely justify them in that attitude, but what I wish to concentrate upon is the rate of interest they charge. Is it a fair one in view of the legislation adopted by this Chamber to ensure that there should be all-round sacrifice?

Hon. G. W. Miles: They have come down $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Hon. J. M. DREW: But for the extraordinary things the Federal Government have done in the past, it would come as a shock to me that the present Federal Administration have put through a Bill making provision that their representatives shall dictate the manner of expenditure of moneys borrowed by Western Australia. The legislation not only covers a grant from the Commonwealth, but also an amount of £145,000 which this State itself has borrowed from the local banks. I have nothing but good to say of the gentlemen who have been appointed censors. In my opinion they are eminently qualified for the position, and I have every confidence in them. But what I object to, and what every Western Australian will object to, is the power that has been usurped by the Federal Government in dictating to us how we shall spend our own money.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Was not there a person named Lang in politics?

Hon. J. M. DREW: It does not matter; nor does it matter what Lang's character may have been. But this is an invasion of the rights of the State. I use the word "usurped" because I know of no authority which has been given the Federal Government to do what they did. There is nothing in the Federal Constitution to permit it, nor is there anything in the Financial Agreement to permit it. The Financial Agreement clearly sets out the position. Under that agreement the Commonwealth, in borrowing money, is simply acting as the agent of the financial partnership. The financial partnership is the Loan Coun-

cil, representative of the Federation, and the States. When any money is borrowed, it is borrowed by the Federal Government as agent for the Council. The Federal Government have no alternative but to borrow the money at the dictation of the Council, if the money be available. The Council have no say in the spending of the money, nor have they ever assumed that they have. That has never been hinted at or suggested. Provision has been made in the agreement to overcome a possible dispute between members of the Council with respect to the allocation of the money. Unless a unanimous decision is arrived at as to how the money shall be shared, the allocation is based on the previous five years' expenditure. This applies only to the States. The Commonwealth are entitled to one-fifth of the amount. No conditions are laid down as to how the Commonwealth or the States shall spend the money, and yet we find the Commonwealth putting through a Bill which allegedly ties the hands of every State in this respect.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you seen the Bill?

Hon. J. M. DREW: No, but I have read the Premier's statement, which I accept as correct. Conduct such as that is monstrous and is another Federal encroachment on States' rights. The time is over-ripe for a convention representative of the Commonwealth and the States, with a view to making the Constitution what the people believed it was, and what they were told it was when the Bill was first submitted to the electors in 1900.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I quite agree.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I wish to draw attention to a few matters affecting my province. With regard to the refusal to grant sustenance work to men who have not drawn relief from the State, but have been unemployed for long periods, I endorse the views expressed by other members. I feel sure the Government will reconsider the matter, and will not allow it to be said that the people are penalised because of their thrift and honesty. Few regulations can be framed to stand the test of time, but when a defect is discovered common sense should dictate the necessity for remedying it. During a recent tour of the Murchison goldfields I had to listen to protests everywhere against one of the amendments of the mining regulations made by the present Government. For some years rebates on a sliding scale have been made for crushing low-grade stone. That

system was recently abolished in favour of one which imposed a flat rate. Prospectors whose crushings yield from 8 to 10 dwts. to the ton, pay exactly the same rate for crushing as is paid in the case of stone yielding 4 ozs. or 20 ozs. to the ton. This is a case where the burden should be fitted to the back. The prospector with a rich crushing can well afford to extend relief to his less fortunate brother. Such a principle is applied to income tax, and very seldom is a voice raised in opposition to it. Were that principle applied, I am sure it would encourage prospecting to a considerable extent. I have been informed that the Government have 600 prospectors on sustenance. I met some of these men during my travels some six weeks ago, and was pleased to note they were working energetically. Since then one of the men has struck something rich. I commend the Government for their action in this regard. The Minister for Mines has done very well for the gold-mining industry in my province. He has erected a battery at Yalgoo, and converted the Cue battery from 5 to a 10-head mill. The results in both cases are showing that his action was warranted. I notice from the Press that the Railway Advisory Board have approved of a railway to serve the farmers in the Balla and Dartmoor districts. I have had no official intimation of that as yet. When I was Minister for Education, and approved of the erection of even a small school, I notified every member of Parliament concerned whether he was a member of this House or another place, and without distinguishing between parties. The only information I have gleaned about the recommendation of the board is from the paragraph which appeared in the Press.

Hon. J. Cornell: The first intimation of such recommendations usually comes with the Bill itself.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I claim no credit for what I did during my term of office. It was not simply an act of courtesy; merely a recognition of right. It is not the first time this sort of thing has occurred. I do not wish it to be inferred that I think party has anything to do with the matter.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I had not heard about it.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: And I was not advised, either.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Members of the Chamber are entitled to be informed when any big undertaking is proposed.

Hon. J. Cornell: We have never been informed of the board's reports until the Bills have come before Parliament.

Hon. J. M. DREW: That is not the case. In the past I have been informed when my district has been concerned.

Hon. J. Cornell: I have not been informed.

Hon. J. M. DREW: When I have taken a deep and an active interest in a matter from its inception, I should be informed. A member of another place was notified, and it is right that every member of the Council representing the province affected should also be notified.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I agree with you.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I hope the claims of East Yuna have not been overlooked. One line could serve both parts. A proposal has been made that sustenance men should be employed in the formation of the earthworks, and that second-hand rails from lines that are being re-laid should be utilised in the construction of the railway. That is a good suggestion. It is impossible to raise money for the construction of any railway of great length. This line is justified, which view has been confirmed by the recommendation of the board.

Hon. J. Cornell: Parliament has not yet authorised its construction.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I fully understand that. At the right time I will give elaborate details concerning the districts, but at the moment will give a few facts. I understand the advisory board say that 300 farms can be established in this centre. In 1930 the crops averaged 26 bushels to the acre and in 1931 the average was 27 bushels. The highest yield was 30 bushels. The average rainfall is between 11 and 12 inches, and most of it comes at the growing period. In the first instance there was a lack of water, but sub-artesian water has now been secured by boring at between 180 and 200 feet. Some four years ago the Collier Government reserved 50 acres for the carrying on of an experimental farm.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Is the water good?

Hon. J. M. DREW: It is excellent. The experimental farm was not brought under cultivation until last year. Seven varieties of wheat were planted there and the yield was 19 bushels 20 lbs. to the acre. All around it lies this excellent land. The area is situ-

ated some 20 miles north of the rabbit-proof fence. There is also highly successful cultivation at Balla, and East Yuna has been settled for many years. At Balla and Dartmoor the farmers have to cart their produce 30 and 33 miles to the railway. At East Yuna the cartage involved is, in some instances, 21 miles. At this stage it is unnecessary for me to say more than that if this railway, when presented to Parliament, is authorised, it should open up the largest extent of agricultural country at present available in Western Australia.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [5.46] I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, but I would first of all like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your re-election to fill the position of President, the duties of which office you have so ably carried out for the past six years. I desire also to congratulate the Chief Secretary, Mr. Baxter, on his recovery from a serious illness. Further, I wish to thank hon. members for their welcome to me in this House. I cannot let this opportunity pass without referring to my old friend, Mr. Glasheen, who so ably represented the East Province for 12 years. If Mr. Glasheen had stood for this seat, I would not have opposed him, as I have always considered that he has given excellent service to the South-East Province and to the State. I sincerely trust that it will not be long before Mr. Glasheen regains his usual good health. I have been elected to this non-party Chamber, and hope to be able to live up to the traditions of my father, who was elected when responsible government was inaugurated. The Province seat which I am now filling was occupied for over 20 years by my uncle, who was very favourably known in this Chamber. As a new member, I have pledged myself to the reduction of the cost of Parliament; and I shall support legislation in that direction. We all appreciate the growing difficulties that have confronted and are confronting the Government in endeavouring to carry on. Many people say the Government have not effected sufficient economies, but I wish to congratulate Ministers on their honest endeavours to control the affairs of Western Australia. The Government have been and are faced with a world-wide depression, and a severe fall in values of primary products. Further, they have had to contend with the biggest unem-

ployment problem that has ever been known in Western Australia. I feel that I can speak with some knowledge regarding the adjustment of farmers' debts. As a practical farmer, a businessman, and a man who has employed a large amount of labour in agricultural development work, I know the disabilities under which the primary producer is labouring to-day. I have had a lifelong experience of, and been closely associated with, the man on the land; and I am also controlling the estates of numerous farmers under the Bankruptcy Act. This in itself has given me a clear idea of the disabilities under which every branch of the farming industry is labouring. I am pleased to note that the Government intend to re-enact the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, for unless our farmers receive encouragement, protection from their creditors, and security of tenure, it will be extremely difficult to carry on the industry successfully. But I do wish to congratulate the Government on having enacted the measure in question, which has given relief to large numbers of farmers throughout Western Australia. And not only has it given relief to particular farmers who have come under the Act, but it has also had the desired effect of supplying a basis on which merchants and financiers may work without forcing other farmers into the bankruptcy court. Farmers who have taken advantage of the debts adjustment legislation have in the majority of cases been able to carry on successfully, but it must not be forgotten that the merchants have assisted the director under the Act in bringing its operation to so successful an issue, while thanks are due to the director himself for the manner in which he has administered the measure. I feel that without this legislation numerous farmers would have been forced to leave their holdings. We all realise that the primary producer is the backbone of the country to-day; and unless he can produce at a profit, what hope have we of getting our unemployed back to work? To restore the farming industry, practical legislation and relief must be afforded to those in need of assistance, so as to tide them over their present financial difficulties; and I am of opinion that the Government should give further consideration to the report of the Royal Commission on farmers' disabilities, to ensure a more satisfactory and more lasting adjustment of farmers' finance, and to leave no doubt in the minds of deserving primary producers that they will be allowed

to carry on and remain upon their holdings. I sincerely hope that the Government will bring pressure to bear on the Federal Parliament to pay a bonus of 6d. per bushel on all export wheat, unless it rises to a payable price before harvest. Whilst I do not believe in the bonus principle, whilst I consider it wrong, yet it assists in the artificial carrying-on of secondary industries; and therefore I feel that Western Australia is justified in asking the Federal Government to assist this primary industry by means of a bonus. I would also like to see a bonus paid to Western Australian woolgrowers. They should receive a bonus equivalent to 2d. per lb., so that not less than 1s. 2d. per lb. would be received by them for their wool, as it is utterly impossible for them to produce wool for less than 1s. per lb.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Where will you get the 2d. per lb.?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: If the sugar industry and secondary industries are to be bolstered up why should not wheatgrowing and woolgrowing be treated similarly? I am pleased to note that wheat and wool prices are improving. The Federal Government have appointed a committee to go thoroughly into the question of stabilising the wool industry and I trust that one of the leading woolgrowers of Western Australia will be sent to Melbourne to give evidence before the committee. There is no doubt that our State is faced with the position of over-production in sheep. It will be extremely difficult for graziers both in the North and in the South to find a payable market for their surplus stock. In the South-East Province producers of fat lambs and sheep south of Wagin are confronted with great difficulties in transport by rail. Wastage is a very serious matter, on account of the time taken to reach the market. Certainly the Railway Department have come to the assistance of those producers, by putting on special trains which will greatly relieve the position. I would like the Government to make provision, if practicable, for the building of freezing works at the port of Albany. A deputation on this subject has already been presented to the Premier, and has asked him to make available funds sufficient for the surveying of the work. I consider that the work itself should be carried out by private enterprise, with money loaned by the Government. While

fully realising that the raising of money for this purpose is difficult, I still consider that such works should be carried out, as they will certainly prove reproductive. Further, I suggest that cold storage freezing trucks be installed on our railways as an adjunct to the Fremantle and the proposed Albany freezing works; such trucks would also be of advantage in connection with the Perth City Markets; and egg pulp could be carried in them from country centres at a profit. Would it not be possible for the Commissioner of Railways to arrange for frozen truck transport, similar to that used in America? The trucks would be frozen during transit; stock such as fat lambs, wethers, and poultry could be killed and dressed, and in fact every line of perishable goods could be carried in these trucks. Such a system would prevent wastage, and the animals could be slaughtered at the various centres. As regards the egg business, I can assure the House that the export trade leaves large numbers of smaller eggs, which are put on the local market. If it could be arranged to pulp these smaller eggs and transport them in frozen trucks, this method would result in the establishment of another fine export industry to the Old Country. I feel sure that frozen truck transport would assist our primary producers to transport their goods at a profit, and also help to bring down the cost of production. Further, it would avoid the heavy expense of abattoirs at the port of Fremantle. The export of poultry and pork must come into prominence in the near future, and every assistance should be given by the Government to our producers, so as to make transport; particularly on an export basis, easier and less costly for them. I have every sympathy with the group settlers who are endeavouring to carry on their holdings. With a large number of those in the Denmark area I am conversant, and I realise that they are faced with a heart-breaking task to bring their holdings to a successful issue, especially as the price of butter fat is on the downward grade. Western Australia has now reached the stage when it can supply the full quantity of butter required for its home consumption. Therefore it becomes necessary to arrange for the export of the surplus. Our fruit industry is on the up-grade, and many thousands of acres of land are suitable for apple and pear growing in the southern portion of

Western Australia, from Mt. Barker to Bridgetown. The gold industry is certainly a bright spot in our State to-day, but I am surprised at the action of the Federal Government in repudiating their contract and cancelling the gold bonus, as undoubtedly the bonus has been of great help to the industry. Federal action in this matter has caused serious uneasiness amongst the persons who are trying to secure capital in England for developing mines in Western Australia. It is evident that the Government must face a grave situation in regard to road transport, which is interfering seriously with the income of our Railway Department. Freights on goods should be brought down to meet the situation, and the Government would be well advised in taking such a course. Provision should be made for permitting farmers and graziers to use their own trucks to carry their own produce to any port, siding, or railway station. Further, they should be allowed to load their own trucks back with goods for their own use, and this without having to pay extra traffic fees. The Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act has been one of the most helpful passed by the Government, and I am pleased to learn that its operation is to be continued. It has had an important bearing on security of tenure for persons under mortgage. It is a common thing to-day for anyone in financial difficulties to attack the banks. Mr. Drew just now made several references to the cost of interest, and to the reduction made by the Associated Banks. Unfortunately I happen to have quite a large experience of the banks, and can speak feelingly about the matter. During the recent conference of primary producers, a resolution was carried asking the Government to insist upon a reduction of bank interest by 22½ per cent., as promised under the Premiers' Plan. I control a large number of banking accounts in the Katanning district, many of these being under trusteeship. Of these accounts 90 per cent. are being charged 5½ per cent. interest. I think hon. members will agree with me that this is reasonable, especially in the case of running accounts, in respect of which interest is charged on a daily balance. In several instances farmers' accounts under my charge were paying 8 per cent. They are now reduced to a basis of 5½ per cent., representing a reduction of 31½ per cent. My experience has been

that in the majority of cases so far as primary producers are concerned, the banks have already made a reduction up to and in excess of the 22½ per cent. alluded to; but this relief has only been brought about gradually. Still, it goes to show that the banks realise their responsibility in this matter; and I look forward to still further reductions of interest. We hear many instances of the hardships forced on farmers by the banks. I have travelled the length and breadth of the South-East Province, and in many cases have heard of great consideration being shown by the banks to farmers who have carried out their work conscientiously and have played the game. Increased limits of overdraft have been granted to assist farmers in carrying on. Admittedly, in many cases interest has been compounded; but there is little doubt that a general adjustment of farmers' debts will have to take place when world prices are more stabilised. Undoubtedly our industry has a lot for which to thank the general manager of the Bank of New South Wales, as regards the stand he took in raising the price of overseas exchange. This is one of the main factors which have kept our primary produce up to its present value. One of the bright features of the present-day depression is that the Associated Banks have never been doubted as to their stability. Any undue interference with the banks by State legislation might divert a large amount of capital to the Eastern States, which would be disastrous to our primary and secondary industries. With regard to the Agricultural Bank, it is pleasing to note that the Premier informed the Press that a decentralisation policy had been carried out in the management of all country branches of the bank, and that branch managers would now have more power to deal with applications by their clients. Without doubt, the General Manager of the Agricultural Bank is most sympathetic and has done his best to assist the many clients of that institution. Fair-minded men must realise that without money the trustees have had a most difficult time in endeavouring to carry on. Replying to a deputation from the Zone Council of the Wheatgrowers' Union on the 15th August last, the Premier announced that the Agricultural Bank interest would be reduced to 5½ per cent. as from the 1st July. I feel that the thanks of all primary pro-

ducers are due to the Government for agreeing to that reduction. It is well known that the Australian Mutual Provident Society is advancing money on broad acres at 5½ per cent., and no doubt other insurance and trustee companies will fall into line. I understand that the Government intend to introduce a Bill to provide for the bulk handling of wheat. While I believe bulk handling to be efficient and economical if carried out on a large scale, I desire to have an opportunity to peruse the projected legislation before I commit myself to any definite attitude. My vote, however, will be greatly guided by the opinion of the wheatgrowers of the State. I also ask the Government to consider the introduction of legislation to secure the registration of wheat buyers. A move in that direction is essential and Parliament should have been asked long ago to legislate along those lines in order to protect the public. We often hear complaints regarding the Electoral Department. Having just fought an election, I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the courtesy of the officials of that department and the attention they gave to their work during my campaign. I am of opinion that the secretaries of road boards and the town clerks of municipal councils should be appointed to receive and fill in cards for those who desire to be enrolled. That method would save much expense, and would give satisfaction to people throughout Western Australia. From a Legislative Council point of view, those who desire to be enrolled are property owners, and the officers I refer to know full well who are property owners and could therefore easily register them as eligible for enrolment. I suggest that a small fee should be paid to those officials for carrying out that registration work. Dealing next with hospitals, I am glad to admit that in the majority of instances, hospital accommodation is excellent throughout the country areas. I congratulate the Government on making provision for a new hospital at the important centre of Narrogin. Although it may be pointed out that money is not available at the present juncture, it is essential that persons requiring hospital treatment should receive every consideration. Narrogin, being an important town, situated in the centre of the Great Southern district and with many branch railways leading to it, should certainly be provided with im-

proved hospital facilities, not only for the people resident in its immediate vicinity, but for those in the surrounding outlying districts. Regarding the unemployment difficulty, we all appreciate the grave problem the Government have to face, and I am not unmindful of the fact that a large number of excellent workers have lost their positions and have little to look forward to unless our primary industries revive and prices increase. On the other hand, I am not a believer in the reduction of wages, unless the cost of production is brought down correspondingly. Throughout Western Australia we have hundreds of men who have been thrifty, but are not eligible for sustenance work. I realise the Government have to draw the line somewhere and so those men cannot obtain relief work. That means that those people are gradually using up their small reserves and unless the position improves during the next 12 months, there will be a much larger number of unemployed than there are at present, particularly in the country districts. The Government are to be congratulated on their policy regarding the building of country schools. Whatever economies are effected, our educational system must be maintained. It is commendable that schools are being built of local timbers and in many instances unemployed labour is utilised. During my travels throughout the South-East Province I noticed, however, that some small brick and stone schools have been erected. If there are not sufficient children in the locality to warrant those schools being kept open, the buildings cannot be pulled down and removed as is possible with wooden structures. It is essential that our children, who are the future men and women of this country, shall receive every benefit from an educational point of view. In that regard, there is one important centre where improved school accommodation is required. I refer to Mount Barker, where the existing structure is unsuitable and the Government have now agreed to build this school. In my district I have always been regarded as an optimist. I must admit that I have had many financial difficulties to face, particularly during the past two years, and no one realises more than I the difficulties confronting us all to-day. It is pleasing to hear the Premier and his Ministers say there is a silver lining to the cloud and it is to be hoped that those who can afford to do so, will assist in every way possible to employ

as many men and women as they can. We all realise that the times are very strenuous, but it is useless going around talking about the depression. I feel that if we all do our best to assist the Government and, while voicing fair criticism, extend our help to them, they will be able successfully to carry on the affairs of this great State of ours and help to restore prosperity. I hope in the very near future the tide will turn and that, in the course of two or three years, we will look back on the years 1931 and 1932 as bad nightmares. I have just returned from a trip through the wheat areas in company with Mr. Wittenoom. We noticed a great improvement in the talk and attitude of the farmers from Dumbleyung to Lake Grace and through other parts of the wheat belt. The crops are looking splendid and there is no sign of yellowness in the growth. There is a general spirit of optimism and thankfulness apparent for what looks like a good season. When I was electioneering there some little time ago I could hardly hear a good word for the Government. On the trip we have just completed we heard very many complimentary remarks about what the Government were endeavouring to accomplish in the interests of the industry.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Do you think the good season had anything to do with that?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. So long as we can secure reasonable prices for our products, we can regard the present season as the turn of the tide. I support the motion and will render the Government every assistance in my power in the task of carrying on the affairs of the State.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [6.10]: At the outset I wish to express my great pleasure at the receipt from His Majesty the King of the message regarding the centenary of the Legislative Council. That is a matter for congratulation on the part of all members. Then, Mr. President, I think it was a happy thought on your part to compile the booklet indicating briefly what has taken place during the past 100 years. I shall always retain that book as a memento of an important occasion in the Parliamentary history of Western Australia. I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your re-election to the important office you hold, for it shows members appreciate the manner

in which you always conduct the debates in this House. I hope that for many years to come you will occupy your present position. I do not intend to detain the House for a lengthy period and I shall confine my remarks almost exclusively to matters referred to in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. I was a little disappointed with its contents because I expected a more comprehensive forecast of what we would be required to deal with during the present session. We have been told that it will possibly be a short but busy session. Apart from reference to half a dozen Bills that will be dealt with, the Speech practically amounts to a history of what has happened during the past 12 months, information regarding which we already possessed. At the outset I will deal with two matters that are not referred to in the Speech. No reference was made therein to the appointment of a new Governor. I would be one of the last to agree to the appointment of a State Governor being dispensed with, but, in times of financial stringency such as we are experiencing now, I believe it better not to fill the position. To maintain a Governor and his establishment necessitates the expenditure of much money. He has to be provided with residences, motor cars, aeroplanes and so forth. One establishment has to be maintained in Perth and another in Albany. Although I would be sorry to see much money spent in that direction, I think a certain amount should be spent on the residence at Albany. Since the former Governor, Sir William Campion, was last in residence at Albany, the grounds and the building itself have been neglected. I recently visited the Vice-Regal premises, and found them in a deplorable condition. Of the building is not looked after more carefully, there will not be much left for the next Governor to reside in.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Let the unemployed go there.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That might be a good thing.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not have a busy bee?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: We have busy bees in other things as well.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I was referring to the deplorable state of the Governor's residence at Albany.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Why not use it as a rest house for retired politicians?

Hon. J. Cornell: None of them has retired.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: It would be a very good place for them. They would certainly enjoy their visit, and their presence would probably lead to the expenditure of a certain amount of money on the building. The second item to which I wish to refer is the State Agent-Generalship. An hon. member who once occupied that position for some years advocated the abolition of the office in his speech this afternoon, and I need not say very much more. It is surprising that at a time when there are no loans to negotiate, no migration to supervise, and probably fewer dinners to attend, the office should still be continued. The necessary work of the office could well be carried out by a business agent on probably half the salary paid to the Agent-General. I understand that a fairly large salary is paid. The Speech mentions a deficit of £1,557,896. That is a large amount, but it is accounted for to a considerable extent by the expenditure on unemployment and exchange. Possibly no Government has ever been beset by such difficulties as have confronted the present Government during the last 12 months. The vexed question of unemployment has entailed the expenditure of huge sums of money, and the heavy exchange rate has been an item that no other Government has had to meet. The present Government have been spoken of as a farmers' Government, and they have certainly acted in a manner that would be expected of a farmers' Government. They have done much to relieve the difficulties of the farming community. The Commonwealth Government have decided to recommend Parliament to give Western Australia a disabilities grant of £500,000. Last year the amount was £300,000, and the extra money will be found useful. In view of our association with the Commonwealth and the severity of our disabilities, the amount should have been larger. South Australia is to receive £1,000,000, and that is a much older-established and better-developed State. It appeals to me that we should have received at least as large a grant as South Australia is to get. When the Federal Government treat us in such a manner, they are only inviting us to sever the Federal bond. That sort of thing will cause

many people who at present are opposed to secession to join the movement for separation. I hope the Government will submit to the people the question of secession, which, I feel sure, would be carried by a large majority. The Speaker's remarks that notwithstanding the low prices in the world's market, quantity production has increased over that of the previous years. That is satisfactory. Still, we have to remember that much of the 50,000,000 bushels of wheat was produced by the farmers at a loss, which has seriously increased their financial difficulties. The farmer cannot continue to produce at a loss. When touring my province I find many genuine farmers working 16 hours or more per day, and their wives as well, in order to keep their homes going. At times their homes are almost destitute of food, while the occupants are wearing the poorest of clothing. If we wish to keep our wheat and wool industries going, those people must be assisted to carry on and enabled to lead decent lives. Their interest burdens should certainly be decreased. It is satisfactory to know that something has been done in this direction. The Agricultural Bank has reduced its interest rate to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., but very few of the average farmers are able to work profitably on that basis. A rate of 5 per cent. is as much as they can manage. The interest charged by the Associated Banks has in many instances been reduced to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In some instances, however, 6, 7, $7\frac{1}{2}$ and, I have been told, even 8 per cent. is still being charged. Perhaps the last-named figure is exaggerated. We ought to relieve the farmers of one great worry, namely, insecurity of tenure, and they should receive all possible assistance to remain on their holdings. In spite of the disabilities confronting farmers, we are told that they will not receive the bonus they got last year. We do not know whether they will get $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. over the whole production or 6d. on the export wheat. In fact, we have been told nothing definite, and the uncertainty prevailing is very unsatisfactory. Assistance at least equivalent to last year's bonus should be given. The Government have done much by legislation to help the farmers. Time, however, has shown some defects in the various measures passed, and I hope an opportunity will be given to amend the Acts so that they may be made more favourable to the farmers. Farmers

in my province have expressed the hope that the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act would be re-enacted for a period of four or five years, but I understand it is the intention of the Government to re-enact this legislation from year to year. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act has proved satisfactory up to a point, but in certain directions it has given rise to dissatisfaction. Still, it has done a tremendous amount of good, and I hope it will be continued. The Traffic Act, though not popular, is essential legislation. I hope it will be amended and improved, particularly in the direction of allowing farmers to carry their own produce to market. Western Australia is still growing one-tenth of the wool produced in Australia. We have now over 10,000,000 sheep, and the number is rapidly increasing. Many of the farmers are wool growers, but the bulk of the wool is being grown at a loss. Sympathetic treatment should be extended to the wool growers as well as to the wheat growers. Security of tenure is required by the wool growers in the Great Southern and the South-West districts. A committee has been formed to investigate the wool position, and the only defect I see in the proposal is that a proper invitation has not been given to Western Australia to be represented.

Hon. A. Thomson: Some who have gone on the committee have fixed convictions against stabilisation.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Mr. A. J. Monger was invited to represent Western Australia, but unfortunately he could not accept the invitation. I do not know of anybody in the State who could have represented us better than he. What should be done is to give Western Australia two representatives, one from the North and one from the South, because the conditions under which the wool growers operate in the two parts are different. There are different associations for the North and for the South, and while the tenure in the North consists chiefly of pastoral leaseholds, in the south the land is held on various conditions. Queensland, in the north of Australia, is to have a representative; Victoria, in the south of Australia, is also to have a representative.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What should be done about Queensland?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Queensland is to have one representative and Victoria is to have one.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is rather typical of the Federal Government to leave Western Australia out.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The question of representation is important. Western Australia may be said to combine the conditions of both Queensland and Victoria, and the Southern Woolgrowers' Association and the Pastoralists' Association should confer with a view to securing additional representation. I intend to refer to a matter that is of great importance to the pastoralists of this State, and that is the question of the extension of the leases. It has been worrying me for a considerable time, and I hope when the Minister replies he will give us some information on the subject. The pastoralists have a certain number of years to go yet, but we should know something of the intentions of the Government. The times are exceedingly bad and I know of stations where although 400, 500, or even 600 bales of wool have been produced, the properties have been run at a loss. If the seasons had been bad the position of those stations would have been disastrous. Nobody will carry out improvements, or do more than can be helped until the Government make some pronouncement regarding the extension of the leases. The remarks I have made with regard to the difficulty experienced by wheat and wool buyers apply with equal force to the people on the groups. The Denmark groups are in my province and I have had the opportunity of seeing the condition many of the settlers are in. We are aware that their liabilities have been written down, and it is admitted also that a great deal of help has been given to them, but with the bad stock supplied in the first place, the low price they are receiving for butter fat, and the wasting disease amongst the stock to which reference has already been made, these unfortunate people require a great deal more help if they are to get on their feet. Many of them cannot breed calves, and there are some who have never yet bred a calf on their properties. One of the settlers, Mr. Kingdon, who has been there for 20 years, is one of those who has failed to rear a single calf on his block on account of wasting disease.

Hon. J. Cornell: Then he ought to get out.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: It is all very fine to say he ought to get out, but the hon.

member should not forget that after a settler has occupied a property for 20 years, that is easier said than done. Moreover, these people are all up against it and in their present circumstances could not make a fresh start elsewhere. Experiments are being carried out in the hope of discovering a cure for the wasting disease, and it would be better for all concerned if a report was presented showing what had been done and what was being done. Mr. Thomson has already referred to the two treatments, that of the Vita Lick Co. and McGough's. I have seen calves that have been treated by both processes and in both cases have noticed considerable improvement, especially so in the case of a calf that was treated with McGough's cure. I hope the Government will give consideration to the letter read by Mr. Thomson.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is very important to the settlers.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Another matter of considerable importance is the question of the export of fat lambs. It looks as if the breeding of fat lambs for the English market is going to develop into one of the biggest export businesses. I have no doubt, as time goes on, it will run side by side with the export of wheat and wool. In Western Australia, and particularly along the Great Southern, we have all the advantages possessed by Victoria. Another advantage is that we are a week nearer to the European market. We have also three good ports from which to export—Fremantle, Albany and Bunbury.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: And Geraldton.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Yes, Geraldton. Lambs can be grown in that part of the State as well, and exported from Geraldton. It is regrettable that there is a slump in the export lamb industry just now, but in all export trades there are slumps and rises. There is no reason why we should not now get to work and be ready for the market when it revives, I hope in the not distant future. Last year we exported from Western Australia 60,000 lambs. This year we expect to send away 100,000. We can multiply that ad infinitum. Thanks to the experiments carried out by breeders like Messrs. Monger, Davies and Burgess, and many others, breeders from Geraldton to Albany and in the South-West, lambs can be bred to arrive in the English market just when they are required, in the

months of October and November. We also know now the type of fat lamb that is sought. I object very strongly to the whole of the export taking place from one port, namely, Fremantle. I suppose it is because Fremantle has the advantage of up-to-date freezing works. Those works were erected by pastoralists and farmers at a time when they were looked upon as the wealthy men of the State, and although they were built for the purpose of handling wethers, they are capable of dealing with lambs at the present time. But we do not want the export to be limited to one port. Albany lends itself as a suitable port. It already has cool stores at the shore end of the deep-water jetty. At present those stores cannot be used for the freezing of lambs; they have been used for cooling fruit and butter. We are now going into the question of the cost of altering the buildings to treat 60,000 lambs per annum. I am pleased to say that the Premier has promised to deal with this subject, and it is being considered at the present time. The Government have done everything possible to encourage breeders to produce suitable lambs for export. Mr. Sutton has lectured in different centres, but it is no use asking breeders to produce lambs which will cost a good deal to raise if those lambs are to be exported from one port only, Fremantle. The freight would be entirely out of the question, to say nothing of the rough treatment the lambs would receive on the railway. With regard to the bulk handling of wheat, I understand that a Bill is to be introduced in another place, therefore I shall not say more than that I am in favour of the scheme provided it can be proved conclusively that the saving claimed can be effected. I shall support the proposal, again provided it is controlled by the growers. I am in favour of the control of lotteries by the State. I do not like the way they are being conducted at the present time. Regarding the newspaper competitions that are taking place, we know that 10 per cent. of the receipts goes to charities, but if all this form of gambling were controlled by the State, the charities would derive a greater benefit. I wish to refer to the Westralian Woollen Mill at Albany, the only woollen mill in Western Australia. There are 3,000 shareholders in that enterprise and a large amount of business is being done, a considerable

proportion of the output being purchased by the Government. Last session a member of another place referred to that mill at considerable length, and I am sorry to say he had little or nothing to say in favour of it. I thought it most unjust of him, and I am taking this opportunity to make a few remarks about the mill to-night. Some of the lines being produced in that mill are amongst the very best that can be produced in Australia and, better still, they are being turned out at a price which compares very favourably with those obtaining in the Eastern States. That statement is amply supported by the largely increased amount of business the mill has been receiving from practically all the other States, including Queensland, from which a very large order was recently received. Obviously, if it were not for the quality of the material being turned out at the mill, those orders would not be coming in from the Eastern States. In spite of lack of capital and certain other disabilities, I am sure the mill at Albany will constitute a very successful Western Australian secondary industry before very long.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You have some very good travellers out in the country.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Yes, we have. Another thing is that we have found it economical to use Collie coal in the mill. Until recently we were under the impression that Collie coal could not be economically used in that plant, that a ton and a half of Collie coal was only equivalent to one ton of Newcastle coal; but recent experiments have proved that that is not so, and consequently we are now using Collie coal in preference to Newcastle coal. This and other economies that we are effecting will mean an additional number of hands employed at the mill and an extra £2,000 or £3,000 in wages per annum. But I have a complaint to make against the railways. During the last year or two the wages of the railway employees have been reduced, and indeed the department have reduced practically everything except the freight on coal, which has not been reduced. The directors of the Collie coal mines have used their utmost endeavours to have the freight on coal reduced, but without avail. I hope the Commissioner of Railways will give consideration to this, and that before long we shall be able to have the coal transported from Collie to Albany

at a lower rate than obtains at present. This would mean more business for the coal mines, more freight for the railways, and would be of advantage all round. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 7th September, 1932.

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

QUESTION—MINING, WILUNA ARSENIC PLANT.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Health: 1, Is he aware that although the advice and recommendations of the Commissioner of Public Health are being enforced on the arsenic plant at Wiluna, the em-

ployees are still contracting arsenical poisoning and dermatitis, and suffering acutely therefrom? 2, Bearing this in mind, will the Government have further investigations made to see if anything else can be done to prevent the employees from contracting those afflictions? 3, If nothing further can be done, and the Government consider that everything that could have been done has been done, will they give consideration to the advisability of introducing legislation to prevent the operation of this plant?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Commissioner of Public Health is in close touch with the management in endeavouring to reduce the risk of arsenical poisoning and dermatitis to a minimum. 3, This cannot be done.

QUESTION—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY.

Pensions and Overseas Interest.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to endeavour to convene another meeting of State Premiers (a) to deal with the reduction or cessation of overseas interest until such time as our own people are properly fed and clothed; (b) to demand the abolition of Federal control in departmental spheres where the various States could act on behalf of the Federal Government, thus economising and making it possible for the Federal Government to pay more instead of less to old age and invalid pensioners of the Commonwealth?

The PREMIER replied: (a) The question of a reduction in the interest rate has been discussed and is now receiving attention at the hands of the Federal Government; (b) the elimination of overlapping has been considered by both Federal and State Governments and is now being dealt with. The State Government exercises no control over the payment of old age and invalid pensions.

QUESTION—NORTH-WEST PORTS, CARGO COSTS.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Lands: For the year ended 30th June, 1932, what was the average cost per ton for handling cargo at the following