

have been left unsaid. If the Collier Government wish to keep the group settlement going, they will give Mr. Angwin a free hand and let him go right ahead and see what he can do. I am sure Mr. Angwin will do everything possible for the advancement of the State. I shall not speak on education to-night. I wish to congratulate the Leader of this House on holding that very fine portfolio and I hope that either when replying to this debate, or when introducing the Appropriation Bill, he will tell the House what I now tell the House from my short experience, that the officers of the Education Department are men of a very high standard and are doing marvellous work for the upbringing of the rising generation in Western Australia. Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Brown spoke on mining, and they appear satisfied that they now have a Government which will push ahead the mining industry as no previous Government did. However, the Mitchell Government assisted mining in every possible way, so far as I can see. They were absolutely satisfied that the right thing was to reduce mining costs as much as possible. They helped the mine owner and they helped the prospector, and they reduced the price of water. Yet we are told they did nothing for the industry. The proposed Royal Commission on mining may prove a very useful Commission indeed. What the present Government aim at, and what the late Government aimed at, was to reduce the tariff, so that machinery might be admitted cheaper and the industry generally assisted. It is to be hoped that through action on the part of the Federal Government something may be done to assist mining in Western Australia. I have read with great pleasure the reply given by Mr. Collier to the deputation that waited on him yesterday. The reply was most sympathetic, and I hope the goldfields people have something to look forward to in the way of reduction of freights.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Take some of the taxation off them.

Hon. J. EWING: I hope that may result. The hon. member last session did all he could to get taxation taken off. I hope the present Government will do what is desired in that direction, but I am not highly sanguine that such will prove to be the case. Another matter I desire to refer to before I conclude is the electrical power scheme which, on many occasions, has been before this House. I have on several occasions failed to carry a motion that I have submitted in favour of it, but as water dripping on a stone continually wears away that stone, so in this case has the subject eventually claimed attention. The previous Government appointed a Commission to investigate the possibilities of the scheme. Mr. Scaddan had declared the great bugbear to be the insufficiency of the water supply. It has since been proved that the Minninup pool, which is gigantic in size, contains sufficient water to meet all requirements. Mr. Taylor and the members of the Com-

mission satisfied themselves that there is ample water in this pool for all purposes.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Only for a small scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: Oh, no. Mr. Taylor said that there was more water there than there was in Perth.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Is it as good as the Perth water?

Hon. J. EWING: It is beautiful water. The amount required for the carrying out of the scheme is £216,000, and if the collieries are brought together, a proposition that will be for their own benefit, they will be able to pay 10 per cent. on the money invested.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is the small scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: It is the nucleus of the large scheme. It is said that there is enough water there for every requirement. The Minister for Railways has already investigated the matter at Collie and he has promised that when the money, which is the important factor, is forthcoming, the Government will take the initial steps. We all know that no country will succeed unless it has cheap power. Cheap power makes for the good of the State. In concluding I can only express regret at the defeat of the previous Government. I suppose that is only natural; but at the same time I extend to the new Government my congratulations and express the hope that under their management the progress of the State will continue.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th August, 1924.

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

QUESTION—WATER CONSERVATION, AVON RIVER.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: Has anything been done to carry into effect the motion tabled by me and carried by this House on the 17th Novem-

ber, 1920, reading as follows:—"That in view of the influx of large numbers of immigrants in the near future and their part absorption on closer settlement lines, the time has arrived when a thorough investigation should be made of the Avon Valley and Avon River to determine whether the fine fruit growing lands along this valley can be utilised for intensive culture?"

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (for the Minister for Works) replied: No.

QUESTION—BREAD, PRICE.

Mr. PANTON asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the statement of the secretary of the Master Bakers' Union published in the "West Australian" of the 28th July? 2, If so, will he consider the appointment of a board to investigate the proposed increase in the price of bread?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, inquiries are being made. Upon the result will depend the appointment of a board or other necessary action.

RETURN—TRAIN MILEAGE, ALBANY-KATANNING.

On motion by Mr. A. Wansbrough (Albany) ordered: That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing:—1, The total train mileage run between Albany and Katanning during the winter time table for the year 1922. 2, The total amount of away from home expenses paid during such period. 3, The total train mileage run over the same section during the winter time table for the year 1923. 4, The amount of away from home expenses paid for such period. 5, The saving made, if any.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the 31st July.

Mr. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.39]: Being a new member it is not my intention to inflict a long speech on the House on this occasion. I compliment the Government on their intention to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the mining industry. As one who has spent the greatest part of his life on the goldfields, I believe the Government are pursuing a wise course. The mining industry should certainly be shown a little more sympathetic treatment than it has received in the past. Members can see for themselves that it is a declining industry and in a few years will be a thing of the past, unless something is done to foster and revive it. I do not suggest for a minute that this should be done at the expense of the man on the land. We are here to legislate for the whole of the State. The man on the land should receive all possible

assistance, especially the struggler on the land, but in return for the assistance granted him by the State, he has a duty to other parts of the State. Take a settler struggling on the land with assistance from the I.A.B. I consider it the duty of such a man, in return for the assistance he is receiving from the country, to help to foster local industries such as the State Implement Works, where machinery is manufactured for the farmers. I am fairly sure there has been an organised attempt by some people in this State, who have been getting a living from the State Government, to cripple that industry. The I.A.B. people have purposely turned down requests by settlers that implements be supplied from the State works. Although this has not been done straight out, I have information that any fair-minded man would agree points in the direction I have stated. If I had my way the people representing the I.A.B. would be "tramped," just as they have been indirectly responsible for tramping men out of the State Implement Works. Settlers should be allowed to purchase their implements from the State works and, moreover, the I.A.B., being a Government institution, should endeavour to foster the industry and thus keep money within the State. I am pleased that the Government intend to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the group settlements. I had the pleasure of visiting a large number of group settlements with the Minister a little while ago. In my estimation, the land in the South-West is practically the best in the State. Still, I consider that group settlements could have been started in other parts of the State at far less expense than will be entailed in the South-West. If the land along existing lines had been brought into use for this purpose, it would have answered equally well and would have been far less costly. There is plenty of time to take in hand the work of developing the South-West, and the first of our group settlements should have been started on land less heavily timbered. In the next 20 or 30 years I believe the South-West will become the garden of the State. An inquiry should result in the collection of a lot of information that will be valuable to both sides of the House. I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Works on having restored the 44-hour week to the men that had lost it. During the debate last week some members were much concerned to obtain an assurance from the Government that the 44-hour week would not be extended to other workers. Personally I am a little concerned, too, and I sincerely hope that the 44-hour principle will not be allowed to stop there, but that in a few years it will be an established condition for all workmen throughout the State. I congratulate the Government on having included in their programme of legislation a Fair Rents Bill. If there is any place in need of such a measure, it is the metropolitan area. When the wages of the

workers are in dispute certain sections of the people immediately call for arbitration, but when the worker asks for arbitration in a matter of the landlord's wages, those people raise their hands in holy horror and say we are interfering with the liberty of the subject. The landlord's wages can be regulated just the same as the worker's wages are regulated in the Arbitration Court. The measure for State insurance will also be welcomed by the people of this State. Then there are amendments of the Workers' Compensation Act and the Arbitration Act, which are long overdue. As to unemployment, it has been stated pretty freely both inside and outside Parliament, and in the Press, that unemployment is not existent in Western Australia. One of our evening papers recently published a leading article asserting that unemployment was non-existent here except amongst the unemployable. I would like the editor of that journal to come to Fremantle one morning and tell the crowd of people waiting there for work that they are unemployable. He would not get home very quickly after doing so. When the Collier Government assumed office, unemployment was rampant in this State; and it is still bad, although the present Government have done a great deal to remedy the evil. The position must be described as still acute. This morning at Fremantle there were 300 men in one room and the corridor outside it clamouring for employment. The Government would do well to push on with all possible public works so that the men now unemployed may have the right to obtain the wherewithal to live. The high price of bread is another crucial point with the workers. Within the last few days bread has risen in price.

Mr. Marshall: But that is not due to the 44-hour week, is it?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Not at all. For the life of me I cannot see why bread should now be at the same price as it was during the worst period of the war. A select committee or a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire what is keeping the price of bread so high. Personally I believe that the solution of the difficulty is another State industry. A State flour mill would overcome the worst part of the evil. I do not for one moment believe that the baker is profiteering. In my opinion the profiteering happens before the flour reaches the baker. Again, there is the exorbitant price of meat. Meat and bread are the two chief articles of food in the household of the worker. Although I am quite satisfied that the Minister controlling the Wyndham Meat Works has done everything possible in regard to obtaining supplies of frozen meat for the metropolitan area from Wyndham, nevertheless I express the hope that this season he will start early and make sure that a plentiful supply of frozen meat comes down. I acknowledge that there are many obstacles in the way of getting frozen meat from Wyndham to the metropolitan area during the season

of shortage; that is why I throw out the suggestion. I represent the Fremantle electorate, to which all the undesirable characters are sent from every part of the State. Hon. members will know that I refer to "the House on the Hill." I trust the time is not far distant when 80 per cent. of the inmates will be removed from the Fremantle gaol. At least 80 per cent. of the inmates are not real criminals, and I consider they should not be there under lock and key. We are progressing, and we should shortly have something in the nature of a farm prison, or prison farm, where all except dangerous criminals could be sent for reformation. I have been through Fremantle Gaol quite recently, and desire to testify that in my opinion it is a well conducted institution. I fully recognise that dangerous criminals should be kept under lock and key, and I may add that any prisoner placed on the suggested farm and not prepared to stay there and do his best should also be kept under lock and key. Certain newspapers of the State, which up to a little while ago were anti-Labour, have latterly been shedding crocodile tears of sympathy with the Government because of the amounts of money members of Parliament are asking Ministers to spend. The development is quite a new one in the Press.

Mr. Thomson: They are realising their responsibility.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No party followed by the hon. member interjecting ever realised its responsibility. These expressions of sympathy in the Press are really an attempt to get the Treasurer to view the legitimate requests of members in the same way as those papers view them, so that the requests may be refused. I would be lacking in my duty to my constituency if I did not bring forward here the requirements of Fremantle, which town has been neglected for many years—in fact, ever since the railway workshops were removed. Since then the town has not had a fair deal, even from Labour Governments. The railway bridge at North Fremantle has been a burning question for a long time. I must bring that matter forward, because I value human life more than anything else in the world. The existing bridge should be removed, and a new bridge constructed. If that is not done, there will be an accident with consequences horrible to contemplate. Many valuable lives will be lost, and a new bridge will then be constructed. It is my duty to bring the matter before the House, and then, if nothing is done, I am free of responsibility. Let me quote a paragraph from the report of the Commissioner of Railways—

In my report of the 30th June, 1923, special mention was made of the North Fremantle railway bridge, and the exceptionally heavy cost of upkeep. During the period under review a considerable amount of renewals have been car-

ried out, included in which was the relaying of the down line with 80-lb. rails. Unfortunately, the renewals to the bridge can only be termed temporary, as owing to the inroads of teredo borers further repairs will have to be undertaken during the ensuing year. The necessity of constructing a new steel bridge is more apparent than ever, and will have to be seriously considered in the near future, especially in view of the very heavy expenditure which is entailed in keeping the present structure in safe condition. In view of that report I was very disappointed to hear the reply of the Minister for Railways to the effect that it was not the Government's intention to proceed with the erection of a new railway bridge at present. Having regard to the fact that during the last 12 months £3,855 was spent on the upkeep of the bridge, and the further fact that the upkeep has required £10,381 during the last five years, it is apparent that we should build a new bridge and not go on wasting money in repairs and renewals to the old structure. We are only tinkering with the question, and running the risk of a terrible accident. Having regard to all the circumstances, I say that the expenditure of £625,000, which the Minister stated would be the cost of a bridge across the river at North Fremantle is justifiable.

The Minister for Lands: Tell us first where we are to have the bridge.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It does not matter to me so much where we have the bridge. I have my views as to where it should go, and the member for North-East Fremantle may have different views. When the building of a bridge has been decided upon, the hon. gentleman and myself can debate the question where it should be built. The sum of £625,000 does seem large, but I claim that I am justified in asking for the expenditure of that amount in view of the human lives which are at stake, and which are more valuable than all the money in this country. Fremantle, being the chief seaport of Western Australia, is entitled to a dock.

Mr. Richardson: What about Bunbury and Geraldton?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not mind Bunbury getting a dock. I am perfectly fair. But Fremantle is the chief seaport of this State, and until it has a dock it cannot be regarded as an up-to-date port. I understand that there is at present in the Old Country a floating dock unused, a dock which was built for the Admiralty in 1919 at a cost of about £300,000. The dock has, in fact, never been used, and we can rest assured that in 1919 the British Admiralty would not construct anything that was not up-to-date. I am given to understand that the dock could be purchased for £55,000, and landed here at a cost of less than £100,000. In this respect the duty does not rest entirely on the State Government, but the Federal Government should also be

approached in the matter. The State Government should get into communication with the Commonwealth Ministry and see what they are prepared to do.

The Minister for Lands: Do you suggest a basis of fifty-fifty?

Mr. SLEEMAN: A floating dock is essential to Fremantle, which will never be anything like the port it should be, until it has a dock. Then there is the question of steamers trading along our North-West coast with black crews. Older members of this House will recall how Mr. Colebatch, as Acting Premier during Sir James Mitchell's absence in England, was approached with a request that he should recommend to the Federal Government exemption in favour of the steamer "Gascoyne" carrying a black crew. Mr. Colebatch refused to do so. But shortly after Sir James Mitchell's return the Federal Government was recommended, and strongly recommended, by the Mitchell Administration to grant the request of the shipowners for exemption of the "Gascoyne" with regard to trading on our coast. Let me give a few facts bearing on the question. The "Charon" employs 88 niggers, the "Gorgon" 85 niggers, and the "Minderoo" 87. These blackfellows get £2 10s. a month, or less than 2s. per day. The "Bambra" employs 65 white men at £12 10s. per month, representing with food and accommodation, over 10s. per day. The boats carrying black crews are no good to Western Australia, and I cannot understand why any of the business men of this country should support those boats.

Mr. Marshall: There is no war on now, and so there is no occasion to be patriotic at present.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Perhaps that is so. However, the State steamers pay £18,000 annually in wages, and those wages are spent in this country. About £8,000 annually is spent in wages at Fremantle in repairs to the State steamers. Further, the "Bambra" alone spends £100,000 annually in Western Australia for coal and stores. Compare those figures with the corresponding figures for the steamers carrying black crews, who spend practically nothing in Western Australia. Again, the wives and families of the white crews on the State ships live in Fremantle. I know that in some quarters this is regarded as a Federal question; but, as I pointed out previously, it was on the strong recommendation of the Mitchell Government that the "Gascoyne" was granted exemption. I trust that it will be on the strong recommendation of the Collier Government that the Federal Ministry will cancel the exemption to boats carrying black crews.

Mr. Marshall: The recommendation will need to be as strong as the smell of the boats that carry black crews.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Now I come to one of the most important factors in the life of the community—education. Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton all have their high schools;

but Fremantle, a considerably larger centre, has no high school. The children of Fremantle who wish to attend a high school must proceed to Perth. That requires them to leave home very early in the morning and to return home late in the evening. The size and importance of Fremantle should justify the provision of a high school there. A block of land has been reserved for high school purposes, and in fact everything is ready for the Government to proceed with the work of erecting the building. Let us take the attendances at the high schools in the other parts of the State and see whether or not Fremantle by reason of its importance is entitled to such an institution. The average attendances are as follows:—Albany 100, Bunbury 150, and Geraldton 71. I trust it will be possible for the Treasurer to provide the money to permit the Minister for Education proceeding with the work of erecting the school. I shall not detain the House any longer because I shall have many other opportunities of speaking in this House before the session closes. I consider that I have placed a sufficient number of requests before the Treasurer, and also provided food for the papers to talk about. Doubtless they will refer to the parochial views of the members of the various constituencies. Personally it does not matter to me what they say, and in spite of whatever comment they may make I shall go on with the job just the same. I am here to do my duty not only to Fremantle, but to the whole of the State, and I intend to carry out that duty to the best of my ability and without the fear of newspapers.

Mr. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [5.3]: It is not my intention to occupy much of the valuable time of the House by repeating what we, of the North, are sick and tired of hearing about—the vast empty spaces and the wonderful potentialities and the hidden wealth of that part of the State. What we want is greater activity and more Government sympathy than the people of the North have had, so that others may be encouraged to make their homes in the tropical parts of the State. At the present time we are suffering from a decreasing population in the Kimberleys. This is due mainly to the excessive cost of living, high wharfage rates, seasonal employment and that to which I have already referred, unsympathetic administration on the part of past Governments. The improvement in health facilities should become of the first concerns of the Government. There is a medical practitioner in each district, but the hospital methods are crude. If the Government were to interest themselves and force the Federal authorities to do what has been done for Northern Queensland, namely, the supplying of a tropical laboratory and an X-ray plant, the people of the Kimberleys would be saved the enormous expense they are subjected to at the present time by having to travel south to seek proper medical attention. The people who live in the far North are not able to afford this cost. If

there were an X-ray plant and a research laboratory in at least one Kimberley centre, perhaps one-tenth of the existing trouble might be obviated. Another matter of considerable importance to the North, and which I intend to stress, is that of providing cheap excursion fares to the cooler latitudes. In this respect previous Governments have already recognised their obligations to the residents of what are in the southern parts termed the backblocks. Why should there be any distinction between the people living in the north and those living in the south? Those who live in the southern parts, places like Albany, Busselton and Bunbury, get the benefit of cheap excursion fares at Easter, Christmas, during the summer months and at holiday time, but the people of the north are never permitted to avail themselves of such a privilege. I feel confident the Government will interest themselves in this regard and provide for the people of whom I have been speaking, and also give them a long-awaited improved shipping service. There should be consideration shown for the pastoral, as well as the other industries that I have heard so much about, industries such as farming, mining and timber, all of which are more favourably situated in the southern part of the State and about which so much has been said since I have been in the House. The pastoral industry is of considerable value to Western Australia and should receive attention at the hands of the Government at once, as the stocking and the improvement regulations have been sadly neglected. On many large holdings not as much as a shilling has been spent in improvements for years past. The stock are all scattered about the natural water frontages, and the result is that the feed about there is eaten out. Then too, the stock have to travel such distances to and from water, that they become poor and often die in thousands. This tends to the breeding of miserable-looking and undersized stock, and members will agree with me that if the industry is to be maintained, we must grow quality as well as quantity. If the leaseholders were forced to improve their holdings, in the direction provided by the Act, they would be able to carry more stock and get better results. The recent appraisements were very unfair in many cases. I know of small holders, as far as 240 miles from a port of shipment and without a yard of river frontage to their leases, having to pay the same rental as the big absentee holders that are only 16 miles from a port of shipment, and who, in addition, have miles of river frontages on their properties. This is very unfair to the small holders. I suggest that the Government should appoint a board in the pastoral districts with instructions to see that matters of this kind are attended to. Another question to which I desire to refer is the administration of the Hut Accommodation Act. Under the Lands Act—that section applying to pastoral leases—stockmen are to have provided for them certain accommodation, but we

find them living in tents 6ft. by 8ft. The Hut accommodation Act should be made to apply to all pastoral leases. I have referred to seasonal employment, and the pastoral industry might come under that category. Stockmen are employed during the mustering and droving season, and as soon as the wet weather sets in they are put off, and the aborigines are kept to do the station work. Steps should be taken to minimise the exploitation of native labour. Another menace to the pastoral industry is the existence of dingoes. As we all know, this pest is a menace to sheep and cattle, and on that account a bonus is offered for scalps. Unfortunately, the amount offered for scalps is not sufficient to induce men to trap dingoes. I suggest to the Government that they should raise the amount to 15s. per scalp, and give the higher amount a trial for, say, twelve months to see whether it will have the effect of increasing the destruction of the pest. Mining in the Kimberleys is a neglected industry. I know many men who would have been prepared to go out prospecting had they been able to get financial assistance. It was on account of the high price of supplies that they were prevented from securing requirements that would have lasted them for a sufficiently long period. The Kimberley goldfields have never had a fair trial. Some 38 or 40 years ago thousands of men carried out what can only be termed hurried prospecting under the greatest possible difficulties. They were situated a thousand miles from the then telegraph line, and the necessities of life were practically unobtainable. It is no wonder that they soon left the Kimberley goldfields. Now that there are more up-to-date methods of transport, and improved means of treating ore, I consider it worth the Government's while rendering assistance to prospectors who may desire to test the Kimberleys once more. A State battery placed in a suitable position might be the means of the opening up of a profitable industry. Western Australia has another valuable asset in the pearling industry, but unless drastic measures are enforced very soon, we shall find ourselves situated similarly to Thursday Island—under the control of Japanese. We have heard a good deal lately about the menace to the industry known as "dummying." Perhaps I had better define that word. Under the Pearling Act, it is provided that none other than a British subject shall hold a pearl fishing license. To circumvent this provision, aliens make tempting offers to weak-minded white men who are thus exploited. A white man will take out a license in his own name, and thus he acts as a dummy licensee for the Asiatic. Recently a public meeting was held at Broome to discuss ways and means of eradicating the evil. Mr. Perry, the mayor of Broome, who presided at the meeting, gave a definition of the word "dummying." He said that Webster's dictionary declared that a dummy was a man who played a merely

nominal part in an action, a sham character. Then proceeding to address the meeting Mr. Percy said—

This is not the "dummy" as I know him, and when I came to Broome 28 years ago there was no dummy, and I am sorry I cannot say the same to-day. My definition of the "dummy" as I understand him is, he is a carrion, thief, and a perjurer. A carrion is a bird that lives on dead flesh, and there is nothing dirty enough for a dummy. There being a dummy gives an opportunity for shell and tucker to be put aboard the dummy boat that is thieving. He is a perjurer when he goes into the shipping office and makes a declaration and calls Almighty God as witness that that declaration is true. He signs that declaration, knowing it is a lying document, and that man takes a shilling stamp with the image of His Majesty, and seals the lie. There is nothing more contemptible to my mind than the dummy. I will now give you a description of the system of dummying, that is, as I understand, but not as Webster understands it. The system I will take as 1, 2, 3. The dummy I will call A, B, C, and the other parties X, Y, Z (that is the Asiatic). No. 1. Mr. "A" brings his boat into the bay in November. He finds he has no money and cannot get his boat out the following year. He approaches "X" and says, "I have my boat on the beach and am prepared to let you have it, can you assist me?" Of course "X" has to see his friends, and he comes back in a few days and says, "I will work your boat and will give you £200 a year and 10 per cent. on shell (that is two cwt. in every ton)." "A" goes and takes his license out and "X" works his boat, finds everything and pays £200 a year. Next take "B." He approaches "Y." He finds he has a little money, but not sufficient to put out his boat, so he approaches "Y" and says, "I have a little money, but not enough to put my boat out." "We will go fifty-fifty." He, too, of course, has to see his friends first, who, of course, are agreeable. No 3 is a different man. He has four or five boats and plenty of money. He approaches "Z," who is probably a storekeeper or boardinghouse-keeper, and says, "I want divers and tenders and am prepared to give £100 a boat if you can find them for me." "Z" goes round to somebody else's men and says what a fine fellow "C" is. "I think more better you come work that place next year," he says. These conditions work for 12 months, but he is not prepared to take the £100 now. He is prepared to find divers and tenders or crews if you will work a boat for him for 12 months. He likes a gamble, and says to himself, "I will get my friend for a diver and I might get a £1,000 pearl." That is the system of the "dummy" as I under-

stand it. There are several others, but I am not going into them to-night. Now I am going to be very brief. I am going to ask you to-night to consider in what way you can eradicate and suppress this "dummy." The only way is by standing shoulder to shoulder and putting an end to the system and letting Broome get back to its former position. I appeal to you to give this matter your most serious consideration for the future of your race and security and safety of your country. Let me read you the resolutions carried at the same meeting:—

That this meeting of the residents of Broome give their full and unqualified support to the following recommendations: (a) For the better suppression and dealing with dummying the Government be asked to appoint a special commissioner in Broome with powers similar and equal to royal commission, the appointment to be a permanent one. (b) That the resident magistrate be appointed the commissioner. (c) That the pearling inspector be empowered to refuse any or all applications for pearling licenses in all cases where he has reasonable grounds for suspecting that such pearling boats are being, or are intended to be, worked irregularly, and that the onus of proof be on the individual. (d) That the pearling inspector be empowered to cancel any or all pearling licenses previously granted in all cases where he has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pearling boats are being worked irregularly, and that the onus of proof be on the individual. (e) On the refusal of a pearling license or the cancellation of a license by the pearling inspector, the commissioner to have power to deal with same at once, and be empowered to call for all evidence he may require, to examine all bank accounts, and to call for and examine all books, papers, and accounts he may think necessary belonging to the applicant or any person whatsoever, to subpoena witnesses and take evidence on oath, and appoint when considered necessary a duly qualified auditor to investigate all books, accounts, etc. (f) That any person guilty of dummying or irregular working of a pearling boat be prosecuted and all his plant forfeited to the Crown, and further prosecuted for making a false declaration.

Let me explain some of the evils arising from the dummying system. First of all, a dummy imports all his goods and supplies for working from the Dutch islands. This means money leaving Australia, and is therefore an obstruction to trade. Secondly, dummy firms are driving legitimate firms out of business by thieving their shell, their gear, and their good divers. Then the dummy firm falsely sign on their crew at a much higher rate of pay and percentage, and so the genuine pearler cannot compete with them. A large number of pearls fished by dummy firms are smuggled out of

Broome, and so the Treasury is robbed. Another objection is that they decrease the white population by employing no white shell-openers. Dummying has become so rampant that on 179 boats at Broome only 71 white men, including owners, are employed at shell-opening. Again, white men standing out of dummying arrangements at Thursday Island were driven out of the business, and white men standing out of dummying arrangements in Broome can see their fate sealed in the same manner. You have heard what the people of Broome think of dummying; and since the people directly concerned carried the resolution I have read, you will realise that there is something radically wrong with the existing Pearling Act. This State can compliment the Government upon the intimation in the Governor's Speech of their intention to bring down an amending Bill. I hope that when it does come down, and is passed, it will, like reinforced concrete, stand the test of time. In conclusion let me say I am prepared to voice whatever I think necessary for the advancement of the North, regardless of whom I may please or offend.

Mr. NORTH (Claremont) [5.20]: I should like to draw the attention of the Government to one or two small matters connected with elections generally. The first has to do with inmates of the Old Men's Home. It has been suggested to me by a number of electors that it would be more equitable if, when the next Redistribution of Seats Bill comes down, provision is made for inmates of the Old Men's Home voting by postal vote in their respective electorates. It is unfair that 600 men should all have to vote in an electorate in which they have no interests, instead of voting in the electorates whence they came and where their interests lie. I suggest, also, that the Government should set apart one day during the year for all elections, municipal, State and, if possible by arrangement with the Federal Government, Federal elections as well. Thousands of pounds would thus be saved. At present very large sums of money, and a great deal of time are wasted over elections happening within short periods of each other. We have the same old cars running round each time, and it all costs a great deal of money.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We want compulsory voting, and no cars.

Mr. NORTH: That is also a matter that, no doubt, the Government will consider. I have seen three elections held in my electorate within two and a half months, which means wasted effort on the part of the people. We often hear the complaint that people do not care much about politics. Probably that, if true, is because they get too much politics, whereas if we had one day in the year set apart

for elections and declared a public holiday, the public might take a greater interest in political matters. Then there is the question of subscriptions. It is wrong that members of Parliament should be at the beck and call of their electorates in respect of public subscriptions for this or that. By saying this, probably, I have settled myself for the next election. However, one's Parliamentary allowance will only go as far as it will, and if a member is to contribute to all these subscription lists it means hundreds of pounds out of his pocket. Some members, of course, cannot afford it, whilst those who can are really bribing the electors by that means. Therefore I think the Act should be amended. At present under the Act one cannot make a gift to an institution just before an election; that principle should be extended to the Parliamentary life of every member. Coming to the larger questions in the Governor's Speech, it is ironic that the Labour Government, succeeding to office after so many trials, and the making of so many promises, and with so many ideals to fulfil, find themselves without a feather to fly with. In other words, they can neither fulfil their promises nor carry out their ideals. That is a very curious position for the Government to be in, although from the point of view of the Opposition it is not so objectionable. The Premier has said he is in favour of handing over a great many of the existing departmental activities to local authorities. In making that offer he practically admits that the load of State enterprises is too great for the Government to carry, and is suggesting that the time has come when State enterprises should be either curtailed or be given a new line by being handed over to the local authorities, so as to allow Ministers more time for the legitimate affairs of State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That might be unsound economically.

Mr. NORTH: I can give an instance where it is not so. In Cottesloe we had an offer from a private firm to sewer the district for £25 per house, whereas the departmental estimate is £150 per house.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That conveys nothing.

Mr. NORTH: It may convey nothing to the hon. member, but it conveys a lot to the district.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Possibly after five years your maintenance costs would be 500 per cent. greater than if the work had been carried out departmentally.

Mr. NORTH: Possibly; possibly not.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well, you have to probe these propositions before accepting them.

Mr. NORTH: We have had all the facts before us, and I am convinced we could save the metropolitan area a million pounds or more if the scheme, as opposed

to the departmental scheme, were extended throughout that area. This is very serious at a time when so much money is required for developmental works. The Premier, in answer to a deputation, said he favoured the influx of foreign capital into Western Australia. I am glad of that, because in the past it does not appear to have been the policy of the present Government when in Opposition; that is to say, by their statements of policy it has appeared to me that they were hostile to an influx of foreign capital.

The Premier: I do not think so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You were very young then.

Mr. NORTH: It means, I take it, that apart from the enterprises the Government propose to enter upon, foreign capital will be quite welcome. The difficulty is that in the past foreign capital has not been brought here to any extent, because foreign investors have been frightened by departmental schemes that the present Government and previous Governments have introduced. Here is another problem: whereas three-fourths of the world is in want of room to live in, Western Australia has an enormous area and incalculable undeveloped wealth, notwithstanding which there seems to be difficulty about bringing people here and opening up our resources. At present we are merely scratching at the land. We are using very little of our coal, and practically none of our asbestos, none of our aluminium and none of our iron. We are merely dealing with one or two of what, speaking relatively, one might term side lines. On the other hand it seems an extraordinary thing that there are millions of persons in the old country who do not even know of the opportunities awaiting them in Western Australia. I have two suggestions to make to the Government. One is that we should learn more of what is going on in the outside world in the matter of the modern advance of engineering and science, in directions that would be helpful in developing our natural assets. The second point is that we should take more care to become better known than is the case now in other parts of the world than England. I had the privilege of being educated for some years in England. I have always been very proud of this country, and I used to feel that there was too little known in England concerning it. The Agent General's office had in it nothing but a stuffed emu and a few pamphlets, and no one ever went there week after week.

Mr. Thomson: That is altered now.

Mr. NORTH: I am convinced that 30,000,000 out of the 40,000,000 people in England do not know what the opportunities are for them in this State to make a good start with a little capital. There are many desirable immigrants who have money of their own, and would not need to be

brought here at great expense to the country, and who would undoubtedly come here if they were only made aware of the opportunities that exist. The Government might publish a handy brochure in pamphlet form, and made up in an attractive style, giving details concerning the country, and send one to every member of every Parliament of the various countries that would be likely to contain persons who would come to this State. The cost would not be much but the publicity that should follow ought to be of great benefit to Western Australia. In this age publicity is half the battle in developing a country. In this regard, during the course of the next few years, Western Australia will be celebrating its centenary. I would suggest that between the Bunbury bridge and the causeway the Belmont side of the river might be reclaimed and levelled off by depositing there all the dust and ashes that at present come from the power house. When the Goodwood race-course is completed there would, with this other levelling off, be a fine piece of ground on which to hold an exhibition. The cost of reclamation would not be great. In due course, therefore, there would be ample room for the holding of an exhibition worthy of Western Australia. This work should be commenced two or three years before the due date, so that the world at large might know that the exhibition was to be held. That might bring the State more prominently before other countries, and effect more good than many other activities which have cost a good deal of money but have not yet met with great success. I have also another suggestion to put forward, namely, that the Government should look into the question of obtaining some of the money that might be forthcoming under the Trade Facilities Act of England. Under this many millions of pounds were offered free of interest for five years on condition that the country using the money purchased all British goods. Assuming that this offer will be validated, it should be of the utmost importance to Western Australia, in view of the Premier's statement regarding our loan indebtedness and the difficulties of raising money. The Government, at all events, should not lose sight of it. If some of this money were forthcoming it might save us a great deal of trouble in the future, and give us time to handle the bigger schemes that the departments are at present unable to bring forward from lack of funds.

The Minister for Lands: A sum of £5,000,000 would not feed 5,000 settlers on the groups for long.

Mr. NORTH: I do not suggest that the money should be used in that way. It was suggested in an article that appeared in the "Daily News" that for the sum of two million pounds our railways could be electrified, and that within five years the work could be completed, and that the saving in cost would ultimately cover the whole of the capital expenditure. By the time the interest on the loan had to be met the electri-

fied railways would be in a good position to pay it. The Collie power scheme is bound to come forward very shortly. If money borrowed under the Trade Facilities Act could be used in that direction, we would the sooner be able to come into line with developments in electricity elsewhere in the world, and instead of utilising the scheme only for a distance of 45 miles to Bunbury, we could have the bigger scheme extending the odd 95 miles to Perth. This would undoubtedly be a boon to the manufacturing industries in the metropolitan area, enable us to electrify the railway system between Bunbury and Perth, and greatly assist in opening up settlements in between. Now I come to a question that has worried me a good deal. I have wondered why Canada and America, with their backward systems of private enterprise and commercial domination, as opposed to our evidently popular system of State enterprise, can produce in their factories so much more per man than we can do here. The Commonwealth statistician showed recently that the factory output per man in Australia was £329 per head. The factory output per head in the United States was £501, and in Canada £591.

The Premier: The explanation is, efficient up-to-date machinery.

Mr. Pantou: Henry Ford will tell you how he does it.

Mr. NORTH: Possibly the answer has been given by the Premier. The trouble appears to be that manufacturers in the Commonwealth will not go to the same expense as those in America do. The figures are shown on the same return from which I have quoted. I have been trying to find out why local business men will not invest in modern appliances, such as is done in Canada and America, where so much better returns per worker are given, and where so much more wealth is produced. In America every worker has his piano and motor car, while in Australia the worker has his mouth organ and bicycle. The answer given by men I have approached is that business men in this State will not invest in modern machinery, as they would like to do, because of the bogey, as they call it, or the fear, of the State interfering and competing in their industries.

Mr. Marshall: That is too old.

Mr. NORTH: I should like an assurance from the Government that this is not so.

The Minister for Lands: They have not the money.

Mr. NORTH: If the Government would give an assurance that during their term of office they would not interfere with private industries no doubt these gentlemen would go to their banks, and instal the necessary plant so that the average worker might produce something like £500 in a year instead of £300. These are important matters. With our vaunted democracy and civilisation we want to feel that for the same hours of work we are turning out articles as good as those now being produced by our contemptible

neighbours, who live under the old-fashioned system of private enterprise.

The Premier: So we can, man for man.

Mr. NORTH: In America there are 400,000 miles of privately owned railway; the telegraph, the telephone and all such facilities, that are run by the State in Australia, are also entirely run by private enterprise. Of course we know that in America there are numerous millionaires and grafters and so forth, all of whom have to be supported.

The Premier: Do you say that the United States standard is one we should aim at?

Mr. NORTH: No. I should like to feel that this country, with its present system, can produce articles as good as those produced elsewhere. I should be delighted to feel that after three years of office the present Government can show that their policy has had that effect. There is no harm in saying that a backward country such as the United States is doing better than we are in this direction.

Mr. Panton: The Australian worker is the best in the world, given the opportunity.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. If we want to induce our manufacturers to instal the necessary plant, we must allay the bogey of State enterprise. I hope that will be done during the next few years, or will at all events be done as regards certain industries, so that people may know where they are and can go ahead safely along the lines in which they are interested. A great deal of what I have said may have been said before. Probably, after two or three years, I shall know better what is common knowledge. The Premier and his Government may possibly be encouraged a little more to go ahead with their schemes of development when they realise that the public debt in other countries is greater than it is in Western Australia. France is a country very similar to ours in possibilities, except that it is fully developed, and there is very little room for expansion there such as there is here. The indebtedness in that country is £12,000,000,000, and based on the rate of exchange on the franc the indebtedness per head of the population last year was £323. The indebtedness per head of the population in Western Australia is £160. This shows that there are other peoples in the world who are worse off than we are, in spite of our troubles. There is a limit we have not yet reached in the matter of expenditure, if the occasion should arise, that would still leave us one pound per head of the population better off than, for instance, France. There are many parts of the Speech that we were pleased to read, because it follows out the policy of a previous Government. This goes to show that during the discussion and ensuing debates we shall be in happy collaboration with the Government in what is, after all, a national policy. In respect of that part of the legislative programme, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, it is our duty to afford the Government every assistance. I

have made these remarks with the object of assisting the Government in certain directions not covered by the Speech. It is no advantage for me to speak at great length now, because I have not yet had an opportunity of knowing what transpires in this House, and how far certain matters that I might want to deal with have already been discussed at length. I took up politics partly because I wanted to point out what appeared to me to be a danger in too many portions of our enterprises being turned into State enterprises. Civilisation should be as solid as concrete. It cannot be as solid as concrete if the sand of socialism is too freely mixed with the cement of private initiative.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [5.45]: I rise, after an absence of some six or seven years from this environment, feeling that there is quite a lot I would like to say. Even after struggling to keep down my feelings I am conscious that I will speak at comparative length. In that respect, however, I ask the indulgence of hon. members. I do not propose to go back, as did the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) and take up my last speech and proceed from that point. If I did that I might unduly weary the House. In my own case it would not be as appropriate because in the meantime I have been relegated from front bench responsibility to back bench responsibility and freedom to-day. As to my absence from this Chamber I have one consolation in feeling that my absence was not due to any acts of omission or commission regarding purely local matters. My defeat as a member of the Legislative Assembly was due to outside questions apart from my association with the affairs of the State. I decided to take a line that was distinctly unpopular at the time, a line that brought me into disrepute, but a line that, nevertheless, had been adopted from my earliest childhood. The point of view I adopted was that it was not safe for any country to absolutely lose its head during times of national stress. My attitude in Cabinet, in Parliament and at numerous conferences I attended was always one of a steady influence. I wished to prevent the making of extravagant promises that no one in his saner moments would contend, after analysing them, could be fulfilled. One of the tendencies at the time was shown in the desire of the Federal authorities to transfer the great burdens that they should have shouldered, by handing them over to the States. Those who adopted an attitude in opposition to the transfer of those responsibilities from the Commonwealth, who should have carried them, to the States with their limitations and problems regarding finances, were adversely criticised. The result is that the States are carrying the burden of those responsibilities even to-day. That course was so unfair that I strenuously opposed it. That brings me to the question of soldier settlement that was raised by the Premier the other evening. One of my most

unpopular acts from an Australian point of view, and one that was most successfully raised against me, arose from the fact that I was present as Minister for Lands at the first conference convened by the Prime Minister of Australia for the purpose of evolving a scheme for the settlement of returned soldiers on the land. That conference took place in Melbourne in 1916 and when the conference assembled, I drew some consolation from the fact that Senator Pearce, a representative of Western Australia, who was acting Prime Minister at the time, was in the chair. I thought that the chairman, as a representative of this State, would extend special consideration to Western Australia, having, as he did, a knowledge of our position. What did we find? The whole scheme was submitted by a committee appointed by the Federal authorities. It was not binding upon any one but it was the basis, or agenda, for the conference regarding the settlement of returned soldiers. Right throughout that scheme we found—it had been done deliberately with the sole purpose of transferring the difficulties and responsibilities from the shoulders of the authority who should have accepted them, it could not have been done better—evidence of attempts to take the responsibility from the Federal authorities and place it upon the States. It was done most successfully. From the time the conference opened I took strong exception to the attitude adopted. I appealed to the conference over and over again, and I regret to say that my voice was a lone one on behalf of the States. I did not get support from even Mr. Theodore, who was a delegate from Queensland. My appeal to conference was aimed at getting them to recognise the huge responsibility regarding the work of soldier settlement and a recognition of the task ahead of us in providing work for the men. I attempted to show that that was beyond the capacity of any State, and particularly beyond Western Australia. Then, again, I pointed out that Western Australia had a huge territory and that her possibilities for settlement were not limited to the men who had gone from Western Australia, but that our inducement would be so great that we could invite people from other parts of Australia and of the Empire as well to settle here. Our inducement, I pointed out, was so great that recognition from the financial standpoint should have been proportionately greater to Western Australia than that extended to other States. One would have thought that the burden of the financial responsibility would have been carried by those best able to bear it, instead of casting it upon the States. Hon. members will agree that the question of providing for soldiers is associated with defence and with the Defence Department. They will agree that the protection of Australia, and the question of coming to the help of the Empire in time of need are essentially matters that the Federal authorities should deal with. As a matter of fact, they deal

with matters of such importance, but when it came to the liability for expenditure on a huge undertaking, a task that has caused considerable anxiety to those administering it, and a deep sense of responsibility on those charged with the work—it was left to the States to attend to. I have the report of the conference here and it bears out what I have said. It is illuminating to-day when we find what has actually taken place since 1916. We have had the returned soldiers thrown upon the State. We have accepted the responsibility of settling them. There was no reason why we should not have accepted the responsibility, but it should have been done at the request of the Federal authorities and not at the request of individual soldiers. It is the States that have to see the soldiers through. This casts a heavy burden upon the States, because of the limitation of their finances, in addition to which so much money is necessary from the standpoint of general development that we cannot do justice to the settlement of soldiers on the land. We find on the one hand the Federal authorities transferring this unfair burden, although they have millions of pounds as a surplus, and on the other hand we have the State accepting the burden, and having to face a deficit of millions of pounds. We were placed in a position that was unjust to Western Australia and we were placed in that position because the States' representatives could not speak as with one voice to protect the soldiers and themselves. The States should have spoken with one voice in protesting to the Federal authorities, who deliberately then, and have ever since, endeavoured to transfer their responsibilities to the States. The Federal authorities have evaded their responsibilities in connection with the States, and particularly in connection with the development of this isolated part of the Commonwealth. That was one of the first moves I made that brought me into conflict with public opinion. The "West Australian" newspaper was unfair enough at the time to attribute this hostility to the transfer of responsibility to the States, to hostility to the soldiers. That assertion went forth, together with the knowledge that I was against conscription, that I was anti-war, for war did not appeal to me, and that I had expressed such views, with the result that the impression gained was that I was hostile to the soldiers and was not prepared to do justice to their cause. That was the start; and from that time I was viewed with the public odium associated with anyone who expressed that point of view. The result was that I lost my public position. To-day we find that reason has prevailed at last. We can look at these questions through different spectacles to-day and I am proud to say that the position in Western Australia has altered considerably. As to State matters, one cannot speak without devoting special attention to the question of finance. I was deeply interested in the remarks of the

Premier and Treasurer when he gave his brief survey the other evening. He was wonderfully temperate in his remarks, because we must know that the position to-day is far worse than ever before in the history of the State, and God knows we have gone through some very trying times. I congratulate the Premier, who has been able to influence the Federal authorities to increase the amount that was originally proposed for Western Australia as the result of the Loan Council's decision or suggestion, whatever it may have been, and that Western Australia will get further consideration owing to our responsibilities. That, of course, affords considerable consolation to us in our great need for loan funds for developmental purposes. It would be pertinent to express pleasure at the decision of the Federal authorities to appoint a Royal Commission of inquiry regarding the special circumstances of Western Australia. Members will probably be interested as to the scope of that inquiry. From the remarks of the Federal Treasurer, when he announced the Government's decision during the course of his Budget speech, one would gather that it was intended to limit the inquiry to a consideration of Western Australia's special circumstances from the Federal tariff point of view. I hope that is not so, but that the Commission will have a far wider scope. Naturally it must give special attention to the tariff question but there are several matters of great importance to Western Australia that should be specially investigated. It is difficult to set out all those different matters and indicate the justice of our claims in such a concentrated form that the Federal authorities can be convinced. The Federal Government have taken a step in the right direction by appointing the Royal Commission, but if its inquiry is limited to tariff conditions, we will not get that measure of justice that we are entitled to receive. I gave notice to-day of my intention to move a motion regarding this matter and when drafting it I had intended suggesting that the Government should anticipate the appointment of the Federal Royal Commission and set up some tribunal to prepare Western Australia's case. After all there is a State point of view, and if when the Federal Royal Commission come to Western Australia we leave it to individuals to present the case, it may not be presented so satisfactorily as it would be if done by individuals supported by an organisation created, say, by this Parliament. Such an organisation could make proper preparations for the tendering of evidence, thus guaranteeing that our special circumstances and special needs were properly presented.

The Minister for Lands: There is a Royal Commission in existence to-day. Anyhow, it has never reported.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know whether it is still functioning, but if it is still in existence, there is scope for it to do a great and valuable work in preparing evi-

dence for the Federal Commission. My notice of motion contains a totally different proposition, but I propose at a later date to give some consideration to the difficulties that concern us in reaching an understanding of the State's special circumstances from a revenue point of view. We are all authorities on expenditure and we have the Auditor General to assist us in that connection, but we have no organisation to investigate the special circumstances of the State from the aspect of revenue. If a special organisation were appointed to prepare the necessary material, our case could be presented full and complete to the Royal Commission. The financial position to-day is much the same as that of 1911, only to-day it is worse. Before the 1911 elections there was, as there has been on this occasion, a great effort on the part of the Administration to secure the best set of figures possible for presentation on the eve of the elections, in order to convey to the people that the Government, by reason of the improved conditions, were deserving of a further term of office. In 1911, as in 1924, the figures for July did not confirm the improvement revealed by the figures for June. Year after year it has been necessary to take the figures of June in conjunction with those of July in order to arrive at a correct understanding of the State's position. People outside Western Australia, who study our financial position for investment purposes, do not take the general figures as conveying anything. They take the Budget speech delivered by the Treasurer. Those are the figures on which they base their judgment. I do not think any member would take the general figures as being the last word on the financial position of the State. They wait for the public accounts, and those who study the finances still more closely wait for the Auditor General's report in order to ascertain the true position. The Government in 1911 in order to secure impressive figures—I am speaking from practical experience—neglected maintenance works. Railway maintenance particularly was deplorably neglected and the state of the rolling stock was even worse. Members who were in the House at the time will recollect that the Government received a somewhat alarming report as to the rolling-stock requirements of the Working Railways to move the impending harvest. The Working Railways reported that they could not cope with the demands and it was necessary to work overtime at the Midland Workshops, let contracts to the Rocky Bay establishment, and create special works at Maylands in order to meet the needs of the day. While most of those works would have been financed out of loan expenditure, quite a lot of work had been neglected that would have made demands upon the revenue of the State. The maintenance of harbours, jetties, schools and public buildings generally had been delayed. There was an attempt to grab every penny of revenue possible so that, by including all the revenue and de-

ferring as much expenditure as possible, the figures did not convey the true position of the finances. I am of opinion that in 1924 the position was somewhat similar. Those who move about the State know well that maintenance has been neglected during recent years.

Mr. Marshall: The Commissioner of Railways shows that in his report.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have never seen schools in a more dilapidated state than are those in my electorate. There is one that is a disgrace to the Government. It is in such a state that children should not assemble there for education. I wrote to the Minister and intimated that its condition was such as to be demoralising to the children and not encouraging to the teachers. When we see instances of this kind, it is fair to assume that the maintenance of schools throughout the State has suffered similarly. Possibly much money is required to put our schools into a decent state of repair. In 1911 the North-West particularly had been neglected, and it would be interesting to get a report giving particulars of the state of the jetties, buildings, and other public works requiring repairs, in order to ascertain how things stand to-day. My chief reason for raising this question was to express regret that the Treasurer had not got away from the system of grabbing all the revenue by keeping the books open till the 10th July and of allowing departments to delay expenditure. Speaking of one department of which I know something, the Midland Junction workshops, I find that the materials necessary for repairs have been cut to a minimum. Instances can be quoted where material has been purchased retail in order to keep the workshops going, instead of buying wholesale and therefore more economically. Right through the works men have been eased off and, instead of the works operating to their maximum capacity, there is a general tendency to postpone work, with the result that what might be repairs at one stage becomes, through neglect, reconstruction at a later stage.

The Minister for Railways: That does not apply this year. The works are going full and strong at present.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister is not altogether correct. There were occasions in June when material was very short. The shortage may not have been so great this year as in previous years, but there was a shortage. This practice has grown up in years past, and to-day we are adopting a penny-wise-pound-foolish policy by delaying expenditure prior to the end of the financial year and postponing really necessary works. In 1911 we were in a rather unfortunate position from a revenue point of view. We had a fairly substantial deficiency, but the deficiency on revenue could be relieved by the enormous amount of loan money available at a comparatively low rate of interest. The Government were able to relieve

the demands on revenue and increase activities from loan, and these activities kept the State going.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: By a sort of turning the wheel.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes; instead of working from revenue, activities were transferred to loan. We had a wonderful scope at that time, because at least 600 miles of railway authorised by Parliament were ready for construction and nothing had been done. All parts of the State were crying out for the railways to be started; money was available; money was cheap.

The Minister for Lands: We could not get it at the time.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We did afterwards. There was little difficulty in getting loan money. All the difficulty there was we overcame and did an enormous amount of development work out of loan funds. Thus the strain on the revenue was relieved and the State was not disorganised. The difficulty now is that there is a far greater shortage of revenue than there was in 1911, and there is also a difficulty in connection with loan funds. I extend my sympathy to the Treasurer in his day of trial. I do not know how he is going to surmount the difficulties. We have a deficiency of over six millions pounds, and there is no doubt the deficiency will increase. I do not care what Government is in power; there is no opportunity to rectify the position with our present population. Therefore the deficiency on revenue account must continue, besides which we are faced with an enormous difficulty as regards loan funds.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Before tea I was dealing with the present financial position, and to some extent comparing it with the difficulties confronting the Labour Government that took office in 1911. I have already expressed my sympathy with the present Treasurer in the special difficulties that he has to face from a financial aspect. I have pointed out that in 1911 the financial difficulties could be overcome by loan funds, which were then available. The difficulties of to-day, however, are combined difficulties of revenue and loan, and the one cannot relieve the other. Consequently the outlook is such as must cause every student of Western Australian finance some anxiety. However, it is worth while to investigate why successive Governments for years past have failed to make the ledger balance from the revenue aspect. It is my opinion that the position can be sized up in one sentence: the whole of Western Australia's financial difficulty is due to the fact that we have a mile of railway for every 100 people. That is a burden which this country cannot carry. The fact that we have so many miles of railway and so few people must impress itself upon the minds of hon. members. Our interest bill is necessarily enor-

mous. Associated with those railways are centres in nearly every one of which there is but a limited number of people. Wherever we have even a limited number of people, we have expenditure, and, comparatively to the numbers, expenditure of the maximum type. Schools and school teachers have to be provided for small numbers of pupils, and the expense is just as great as if the number of children to be educated at each centre were considerably larger. One can leave it to hon. members to infer what is the expenditure on all those activities on behalf of a population scattered so far and wide, and encouraged to scatter by our scheme of railway construction. Could it have been avoided? If this is the difficulty, how did it come about? What has caused it? Let me say right here that the whole cause of it has been want of statesmanship regarding land settlement. The entire difficulty was created prior to the advent of the Labour Government of 1911. It was wholly caused by a wild desire on the part of individuals who were anxious to make themselves famous in respect of land settlement. They thought it would be a comparatively easy thing in this country of huge distances and small population to make themselves famous as land settlers. The result has been that contract surveyors have been employed broadcast throughout the country. The more land they surveyed, of course the bigger the cheques they got. The more land they surveyed, the greater the opportunity for the land settlers to advertise various lands as open for selection. Again, there was land thrown open to selection prior to survey. That feature has been removed, largely, but nevertheless it has added to the difficulties of Western Australia. But the point we arrived at was that we had lands thrown open at Ongerup, Gnowangerup, Nyabing, and even at Lake Pingrup. To-day we hear of a railway being built to Lake Pingrup. But the Lake Pingrup land was thrown open years ago, and the Agricultural Bank advanced thousands of pounds on it. The settlers of that day left; settlers are now taking up the Lake Pingrup land for the second time. The explanation is that the land was thrown open long before it was suitable for settlement. At the same time we had that huge belt of country along the Wongan Hills line thrown open, and land in the Chapman Valley and elsewhere. The result was that the eyes were picked out of the land by a small number of people; and that small number of people were encouraged to take up more land than they could farm because it was available, because it was there adjoining. A settler would take 1,000 acres, and possibly another settler would pick the 1,000 adjoining. The second settler would then discover an area more suitable, and his neighbour would get the abandoned block. So it went on until there were huge accumulations of land in the hands of but a few people. Practically in every case the set-

tlers were promised railways, with the result that when in 1911 the Labour Government came into power, they found that the Government prior to 1911 had promised railways to various groups of settlers and had passed quite a number of railway Bills to provide the promised lines. They did not have to finance the construction, but simply passed the railway Acts on to the Labour Government that assumed office in 1911. The Labour Government had to construct the railways authorised by Parliament. A line was built to Gnowangerup to serve a limited number of settlers, and that line was extended to Ongerup. Then there were the lines to Lake Grace and the Chapman Valley, and the Dowerin-Merredin line, and a number of others—all built, why? Because settlers had been scattered throughout that huge territory in limited numbers, instead of being concentrated on a particular area, the whole of which could be settled and its land got under cultivation. That was the course adopted in place of piecemeal settlement, under which each railway would serve a given area sufficient to maintain it.

Mr. Thomson: It would have been very much better if it had been possible to build the railways first.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The policy should have been to confine settlers to given areas, to say to applicants for lands, "This particular area is now open for selection, and nothing more will be thrown open until it has been settled." Under such conditions the Government could have taken the responsibility of promising railways before production started. But that is our difficulty to-day, and the explanation of our present financial trouble. It is all due to the wild desire to effect land settlement simultaneously throughout the State. The lines to-day are comparatively payable, but look at the long term of years that has elapsed since they were built. Recently there has been increased settlement at Lake Grace to which area public attention has been directed. But the fact remains that the Lake Grace railway was built about 10 years ago, and that there is still land available in the district; and so we have evidence that the Lake Grace district was not thoroughly settled at the time the railway was built to it.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That does not apply to the Ongerup district.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: As regards the Ongerup district the position is worse. When the Ongerup railway was built, there was a comparatively large population in the district. That population is not there to-day.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But the Ongerup railway was justified at the time it was built.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The trouble at Ongerup was once more caused by the wild rush to settle country which was not understood. The Ongerup land was assumed to be better land than that at Gnowangerup. Now, Gnowangerup is perhaps the finest

stretch of country in this State. It was timber country, but in comparatively a few miles it changed to what is known as mort country. What did the Government of the day do? They started by putting in rollers to clear the land in a face. Huge areas were cleared by steam tractors and tree-pullers of all descriptions. An enormous organisation was created for the purpose. But after the growth was cleared, it seemed to grow faster than it was pulled. Ongerup was the scene of many sad individual losses, but the total of the individual losses was little as compared with the loss to the State. After the settlers at Ongerup had overcome the difficulty of regrowth, they found that the land would not produce those crops that they tried to get from it. Eventually all the Ongerup lands were practically abandoned until to-day, when people are going back to that district and resettling it as a dairying proposition, instead of, as originally, a wheat and sheep proposition. I am going to deal with the South-West presently, and I am relating these other experiences just to have a connecting link with what I have to say on the subject of group settlement. The whole of our difficulties are due to the fact that we rushed in, and did not experiment and make sure before we started. Tens of thousands of pounds were wasted in the Ongerup area, and at Lake Pingrup and also at Lake Brown. As the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) knows, Lake Brown was settled years ago. Tens of thousands of pounds of the Agricultural Bank's money have gone into Lake Brown lands, and yet members get up here and compliment the Government on the settlement of Lake Brown. The settlement in the Lake Brown district is resettlement. There is no use in crying over spilt milk. These things have been done, and it is just as well to know that they were done by one who claims to have served the agricultural industry of this State. Instead of serving that industry he has, by his wild recklessness of administration, run this country into a difficulty which, I say advisedly, is one that prevents Western Australia from getting out of its present financial trouble. I cannot see daylight through our troubles.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You took part in that wild administration, didn't you?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did not. The unfortunate part of it all was that there was no opportunity of stopping the thing after Labour came into power in 1911. The harm had been done then.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But you were concerned in all this.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I was a member of the House, of course, but I sat in Opposition. The responsibility for the doings of those days rests upon the Administration that has just left the Treasury bench and now sits in Opposition. We must realise these difficulties before we can arrive at a solution of them. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) the other night spoke of a railway running through a belt of

country known as Yorkkrakine and North Baandee. Let us review that situation. I say this, also advisedly, that that railway cannot be built, because the proposition is not economically sound. Why? Because of a political blunder made by the gentlemen who now sit in opposition. A line was built from Dowerin to Merredin. The Bill for the construction of that work was introduced by the late Hon. Frank Wilson, then Minister for Works. He got authority from Parliament to extend the Goomalling-Dowerin line from Dowerin to Merredin, and he stated definitely that the proposal was to run the line practically parallel with the Eastern goldfields line for a distance of 30 miles. The intention was to give the right of 15 miles deviation from the intended route as mentioned in the Bill. I think it was the then member for East Fremantle who opposed the 15 miles deviation, and the distance was reduced to five miles. The then member for Avon (Mr. Bath) pointed out at the time the special position of the Yorkkrakine settlers, and he appealed to the Government to see that the five miles deviation did not go north, that in order to do justice to the settlers, it should go south. Mr. Underwood followed in the debate and he too made an appeal which was against taking out the line a distance of 30 miles as proposed in the Bill. The definite declaration made by the then Minister was that the line would go 30 miles out. Many members who addressed themselves to the proposal asked that the five miles limit given should go south so as to reduce the 30 miles distance to 25. Had that been done everything would have been all right. But it was not done, and it is proposed now to spend £340,000 to put the matter right. What is the position to-day? A Bill was put through on the understanding that the two lines were to be at the most 30 miles apart. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) informs me that he knows the distance is 35 miles at one point, and the settlers of Yorkkrakine declare that it is 40 miles. So that instead of the deviation having been taken south towards Yorkkrakine it is taken north and away from them.

Mr. George: Then the five miles limit must have been exceeded.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Undoubtedly. There is no question about it that the distance between the lines at one place is 35 miles and that at another place it is 40 miles. We therefore have the unfortunate settlers at Yorkkrakine and Baandee in a precarious position. They are on some of the finest land in Western Australia. The production from that part of the State is as great as it is in any other good area in the State. We have settlers in a magnificent belt of country, where the production is very big, carting a distance of 20 miles in one way and 20 miles in another way, not as the crow flies but as the road goes. Of course they are up against a proposition that they cannot carry. It is only because the area is wonderfully good that they have

been able to carry on. Now, if we carry out the proposal of building a line through that area, instead of the carting being 20 miles it will be 10 miles to the Eastern gold-fields line, 10 miles to the proposed new line, 10 miles south and 10 miles north. In other words we shall be cutting up an area into four instead of into two. The trouble is that the 10 miles distance is a limited area, and it is so limited that we cannot expect the line to pay interest and working expenses of the whole of the line. It may be said that I am opposed to giving these people relief. That is not so. As Minister for Works I tried to overcome the wrong that was done before the advent of the Labour Government in 1911. I saw that it was economically unsound to build this particular railway, that the country could not carry it. We cannot finance it and we have too many railways of the kind already. What is the solution? I am sorry the Minister for Works is not here, but in his absence I will explain the matter to the Treasurer.

Mr. Mann: What about a spur line from Tammin?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What I propose is worthy of investigation. We find that motor transport is competing against the best equipped railways of to-day. We have motor transport from Fremantle to Perth, and the rates are cheaper than those imposed by the railway.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about the damage to the roads?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is another proposition.

Mr. Clydesdale: But you are only taking twelve miles.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is sufficient to justify an investigation as to whether my proposal is feasible.

Mr. Thomson: They go much farther than twelve miles in the Eastern States.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: As a matter of fact motor transport runs from Fremantle to York.

Mr. George: And taking high-class freight.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: And successfully competing with the railways to a limited extent.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Where?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Between Perth and Fremantle.

Mr. George: And to a very considerable extent.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not prepared to argue that. If motors can successfully compete with the railways there, the subject is worthy of investigation. We should inquire as to whether it can be done profitably elsewhere. If the Yorkkrakine settlers wait until we get the £340,000 with which to build them their railway they will have to wait too long. It is not fair to ask them to wait so long.

Mr. E. R. Johnston: The line was approved by the House last session.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know, but we have to provide the money. What I suggest is that it is worth while considering whether we can start a road from Tammin along to Yorkkrakine, from there to North Bannock, and joining up Bannock with the Eastern line, and possibly making a connecting link with the Dowerin railway. That could be done for about £50,000.

Hon. J. Cunningham: More like about £100,000.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member may be a better authority, but I will ask him to let my figures stand for the moment. In accordance with the policy adopted by the Federal authorities, money is advanced for making roads for the relief of those who cannot economically market their products. If there are any such settlers in Western Australia it is surely those who are in the Yorkkrakine country. I suggest that we construct a road in that particular area to enable the settlers to secure motor transport, which is comparatively cheaper at the present time than railway transport. Not only should we be affording relief to these settlers by so doing, but we should be saving the country the expenditure of the £340,000 which the railway would cost. Moreover these particular settlers would get relief at a considerably earlier period. If what I suggest is not done, these people will have to wait for a considerable period. The Minister for Works is a practical man and I appeal to him to investigate the matter. I know the area and I know that there are no engineering difficulties. As a matter of fact a good deal of the road is already made, and it could be so constructed that it would be an economical proposition to make it fit to carry heavy motor traffic. There is another matter that must be cleared up. We hear people talk about the settlement of the Yorkkrakine area having been a wonderful thing and that the settlement of that particular country was really the start of the settlement of the wheat belt. We gather also from the remarks of hon. members opposite that they were responsible by reason of their association with politics in this country, for the settlement of the wheat belt. Nothing is further from the truth. The member for Northam (Hon. Sir James Mitchell) was not a member of this House when the wheat belt was settled in a practical way. Long before he came to this Chamber the then member for Boulder, the late Mr. J. M. Hopkins, had propounded the policy of the settlement of what is now the Eastern wheat belt. It was he who convinced Parliament that wheat growing in that part of the State was a practical proposition and he demonstrated that by starting the Nangeenan settlement. It was that settlement that convinced us that successful farming could be carried on as far east as Nangeenan. The late Mr. Hopkins selected men from the goldfields to make a success of farming at Nangeenan. Yet to-day we find that the Leader of the Opposition is

declared to be the real father of the wheat belt and the man who is supposed to have conceived the policy of settling people on the eastern agricultural lands, and consequently claims the credit for the attendant success. I do not know of one thing that the Leader of the Opposition has done of a practical nature to assist agriculture. That is a big thing to say, but I defy hon. members to search the records and to find that that gentleman has been the cause of the development of agriculture and its success in Western Australia. I repeat that the original settlement was conceived and carried out by the late J. M. Hopkins.

Mr. Richardson: Hopkins was not a member of your party.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know.

Mr. Richardson: Then why complain about it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I desire to give credit where credit is due. We hear nothing about Hopkins now; he is dead and gone and gets no credit for what exists to-day, and others are prepared to pirate the credit due to him for work accomplished. What the late Mr. Hopkins did has been continued by succeeding Governments. The Labour Government did something and the member for Northam did something to help on the industry. The foundation, however, was laid by the late J. M. Hopkins.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The late Mr. Throssell, too.

Mr. Richardson: And a number of others helped.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am prepared to give the measure of credit that is due to any hon. member, but I am not going to allow one hon. member to pirate another member's work.

Mr. Richardson: You said the ex-Premier has no credit due to him for land settlement. I say he has.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did not say anything of the kind. I asked you to search the records of the House and find out what had been done by the ex-Premier to give practical assistance to the development of agriculture.

Mr. Richardson: I will tell you later on.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Well, I want to know. I do not know of anything he has done.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Tell us something of what you did when Minister for Lands.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What I did was merely part and parcel of the Labour policy. If you will search the records of the development of agriculture, you will find that 10 measures came from the Labour Party for every one from any other party.

Mr. George: Well, why talk about that?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Because it has been denied so often on the public platform. I want the party with which I am associated to get full credit for what it has done for agriculture.

Mr. Richardson: I am prepared to concede that credit.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Well, I am sorry the hon. member did not say so during the elections, when it was generally given out that the development of agriculture would be retarded if Labour were returned to power.

Mr. Richardson: I never said that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Your party did.

Mr. Richardson: Why accuse me?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member did not give much credit to the Labour Party for the part they had played in the development of that industry. I am now taking the points that I think are responsible for our financial difficulty. I say it has been due to want of discretion on the part of those administering prior to 1911, due to the scattering of a limited number of people over a huge area. Its only solution to-day is the quick increase of population. It is because I know we cannot absorb the people in sufficient numbers within a limited period that I say our financial difficulty is so great that we cannot see daylight through it. The number of people we can bring in will not be sufficient to overcome the difficulty set up by development considerably ahead of existing population. The Government must encourage immigration to the fullest extent. But the task has to be approached with extreme care. Particularly have we to see to it that the selection of migrants is very carefully made. We must exercise our full right of deciding who shall, and who shall not, come to Western Australia.

The Minister for Lands: We cannot do that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If we allow the Commonwealth to do it, not only shall we not get out of our difficulties, but we shall get deeper into them.

Mr. Mann: They are finding the passage money.

Mr. Corboy: Not finding it; only lending it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The passage money is but a small item.

The Minister for Lands: The Commonwealth are finding £5 10s., and the British Government the same.

Mr. George: And we have to nurse the baby.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so; we have to nurse the baby. The Commonwealth are calling the tune, and we have to take what they send us. We must exercise full discretion in the selection of migrants. If we cannot do that, the position is indeed black. I do not think the Commonwealth have the power the Minister credits them with.

The Minister for Lands: They have full power to oversee. We have two men there to nominate.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Those men can exercise supervision.

The Minister for Lands: They cannot go around the country making selections.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The sole solution of our difficulties lies in immigration. However, we must not be carried away. We have to exercise great care. That brings me to group settlement. I welcome the declaration that a Royal Commission is to be appointed to go into group settlement. Group settlement in itself has no special features. We had group settlement many years ago. There is nothing special in having closer settlement in the South. We must have closer settlement if that country is to be developed. The special feature in the group settlement scheme of the late Administration is the payment of 10s. per day for land clearing. Rob the group settlements of that, and they have no distinctive feature at all. Years ago we had group settlement on land that compares with any land now under group settlement in the South-West. I allude to the Denmark estate. It is excellent karri country of a class that will respond to treatment and carry dairy stock. We settled Denmark on the basis of a group, and we made a failure of it. We had practical experience at Denmark, yet we had to write off £76,000 capital expenditure in one lot, and I do not know whether the area can carry the liability still charged against it. Why was that £76,000 written off? Because we went about the clearing in exactly the same way as we are going about it on the group settlements to-day, although in a more aggravated form. Denmark was cleared on a face, and as soon as cleared it started to reforest. In that country the growth is worse than the original, and harder to get rid of. We rushed in on a huge scale, and we are repeating the thing in our group settlements of to-day.

The Minister for Lands: They are not exactly similar to Denmark.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, they are worse. The point is that the unemployed cleared Denmark on a face. The settlers, fine settlers they were, were brought down from the goldfields. There was not a loafer amongst the team. Yet after years of struggling they had to admit failure, and the Government had to write off £76,000 and reorganise the whole thing. Even to-day Denmark is not flourishing.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Was the land all cleared for them?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It had been cleared, but it was regrown and they had to reclear it themselves.

Mr. Richardson: Which year was that?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: In 1908 or 1909.

The Minister for Lands: That was the time we sent the goats down.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, I could tell a pretty tale about that.

Mr. Mann: Do you think the difficulties of the South-West are greater than the original difficulties in Gippsland?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, I should say they are about the same. Although I have related that experience at Denmark, I still think the South-West can be success-

fully settled. It must be settled. Unless we can make a success of the South-West, the dairying outlook in Western Australia is pretty bad indeed. Dairying is the outstanding anomaly in Western Australia to-day. We go to the Old Country and ask people to come to our wonderful State, where land is available and where the production is enormous. Yet every month we have to disclose in our returns the fact that we cannot feed ourselves, that we have to bring in butter, eggs and other dairying products.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The settlement of the South-West is an attempt to overcome that difficulty.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Then it will not do it.

Mr. Sampson: Are we to sky the towel?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We tried to do it at Denmark, but we failed. To-day we are trying the same thing in the group settlements, and will again fail. The weakness is that we are trying to do by human effort what should be done by nature. We cannot economically clear that country in the green. In the wheat belt the land must be cleared in the green, but in the South-West that plan will not work. There we cannot cut down the timber and burn it, for it will not burn. You can blow it to pieces and you still have difficulty in burning it. It can be burnt but the cost of clearing is excessive. How can success be made of settlement in the South-West? It can be done in one way only, and I believe that will be endorsed by other members. You have to send the ringbarkers through the country ahead of settlement. The country must be ringbarked and sucker-bashed, the small stuff cut down, and a fire put through. The next year another fire must be put through and the country must be sucker-bashed again and if necessary fired once more, and the process repeated for a period of five years.

Mr. J. H. Smith: And it will be another 100 years before you settle the country.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. In five or seven years you can put on the tree-pullers, and everything can then be burnt and the country cleared at a minimum of cost. When you have the country cleared you have sweeter land than you would otherwise have. You can put in your fodder crops and feed your cows in a few months, and the groups can take the cows and start their dairying industry.

Mr. Chesson: That is sound.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The cost of clearing in the green is excessive. When the country has been cleared there is all the re-growth to cope with, and the sourness of the land is being perpetuated. In five years you will still be struggling with the sourness of the land, and the dairying industry will not have been established because you cannot grow the crops.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The ground is not sour at all.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am only declaring my opinion.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It is wrong. Your opinion is all right in theory.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I shall be pleased to read the report and evidence of the Commission to see whether that is right or wrong.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It is certainly not right.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Where in the hon. member's electorate are cows being maintained to-day on newly cleared country?

Mr. J. H. Smith: There are no cows there yet.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If there are any cows in the hon. member's electorate they are being fed and milked on land that has been ringbarked for years.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The clover is growing to-day as well on the green country as on the ringbarked country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must warn members that they cannot be permitted to continue these interruptions. The hon. member will have an opportunity of speaking later.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The hon. member challenged me, and that is why I answered.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Let us take Bridgetown, for instance. Where is the greatest amount of stock carried there? Is it not on country that has been ringbarked for years? That country was not cleared in the green, but was ringbarked, and the firs did the work that the previous Government were trying to get human beings to do and setting them an impossible task. You can settle that country in a manner that will be productive to the State, and will not be a financial burden that perhaps will have to be written off, and you can do it in five or seven years by the method I suggest. What I am declaring is practical, and I know it to be so from my experience of the Denmark area. I rode over every farm in that locality and investigated every one. I reported to Cabinet in regard to the great difficulties of Denmark. The trouble was clear. It was that the land was too sour. Go to Denmark, or to Nelson where the karri grows. We find that the tops of the hills is the place where you get some of the finest crops. We have waxed eloquent about the wonderful lucerne on the tops of the hills at Denmark. That land was ringbarked, and the sun being allowed to get into the ground sweetened it. There is a far sweeter growth on the hills than there is in the gullies. In the gullies the lucerne is of stunted growth, but in the hills it is growing as well as it does in any part of Australia. What is required is to let the sun into the ground so that it may be sweetened. That is what happens at the tops of these hills, and that is what will happen elsewhere if the right procedure is adopted. Whilst I am pessimistic in regard to the present method of settling the South-West, I have the utmost confidence in the

land ultimately producing more than sufficient for this country. It can yield an enormous wealth of dairy produce. The only way this can be done is to ringbark the country, and prepare it for settlement for five or seven years before any attempt is made to put people on it. We are trying to do by human effort at great expense what should be done by nature at a minimum of cost. As a farmer I was amused at the cry that was started some years ago to increase production. One gathered from the remarks of Ministers, backed up by the Press of the country, that the great question in Western Australia was increased production. They said, "What we want is more wheat; we want 25 million bushels where now we have only 18 million bushels." There is no difficulty about production in Western Australia. Does anyone want to run away with the idea that, because a Minister going through the country says, "Put in more wheat," the farmer will put in any more? The farmer puts in every acre he can. Generally speaking, he tries to put in too much and does not do the work thoroughly, with the result that the production per acre in Western Australia is not as great as it should be. It was an empty cry and of no value. The problem of Western Australia is not increased production, but the problem—that is recognised by the Federal authorities as the problem of Australia—is one of markets, not production.

Mr. Griffiths: You are quite right there.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Federal authorities are going to spend some money investigating this important question of markets. Australia is suffering to-day, not because she does not produce sufficient, but because she cannot market profitably that which she does produce.

Mr. Mann: That does not apply to wheat.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know. A Minister, instead of going through the country saying what he does, would better serve it if he devoted his energies to a study of the market problems, even those of wheat. The wheat marketing problem is a difficult one. Enormous sums are wasted, that could be saved if some expert went into the matter and advised what could be done. Wheat farmers help one another in the way of producing wheat. They talk to one another on the question of soils and how to cultivate the land, and they exchange views. They help each other in all kinds of ways, as to the kind of wheat to be grown and the amount of super to be used. They are all authorities on the question, because every hour of the day they are studying it. It is their problem, and they can help one another in solving it. There are, therefore, no difficulties about production. The farmers exchange their views over the fence and they help each other very materially, but they are helpless altogether in regard to the markets. They cannot discuss that question with any authority. We have nothing in this country to investigate from the pro-

ducer's point of view so all-important as the question of markets. Marketing is the function of Government. That is what Governments are created for. Their function is not to do for the people that which they can do for themselves, but to do for the people that which they cannot do. Unquestionably the people of this country cannot solve the marketing problem, and I am glad to say this difficulty has been recognised by the National Parliament. The Mitchell Administration failed because they lost sight of that question. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) will know that the people in his district are concerned about marketing facilities.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is true.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: And that they did not get much assistance or encouragement from the previous Government.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Oh, yes, we did.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I shall be interested to know what was done.

Mr. Corbo: I know they built a shed at Bridgetown.

Mr. J. H. Smith: We had a fruit advisory board created, and the Government paid something towards the expense.

Mr. Mann: And the transport.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: At all events the result has not been very satisfactory.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It has been of great benefit.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: With regard to the marketing of the products of the country, there has been only one organisation that has attempted it, and it has done so under grave difficulties. I refer to the farmers' organisation, their co-operative movement. Everything should be done to foster and encourage any organisation that attempts to relieve or assist the Government in its function of solving the marketing problem. I appeal to members to appreciate the fact that in this country we have an organisation of which we ought to be proud. I refer to the co-operative movement, with which, I am proud to say, I have been associated for some years. There are members who question the genuineness of that movement. Let me say, as one who has studied co-operation as closely as any member in this House, that it is a very fine organisation. In the first place the co-operative societies in Western Australia, of which there are now 75, and the Westralian Farmers Ltd., are purely co-operative concerns. I defy contradiction of that statement. The rules and articles of association and administration are truly co-operative, as we understand the term, and as our knowledge goes regarding the huge co-operative societies of Great Britain.

Mr. Thomson: That is a little bit of a change.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Not on my part. I believe the organisation has been very much misunderstood, and possibly misrepresented.

Mr. Sampson: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have been connected with the administration in a purely honorary capacity for some years. I am not paid, and do not draw a penny out of it. I have been working for years to build up the co-operative movement. There is absolutely no connection between the Westralian Farmers Co-operative Society and the Primary Producers' political organisation.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Why have they members of Parliament on the Executive?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will take that point. Why have me, a prominent member of the Labour movement, a member of the Westralian Farmers? Why have Mr. Diver, another member of the Labour Party, or Mr. Lathlain, one of the oldest farmers of Bruce Rock, and also a member of the Labour Party, connected with that organisation? Why say, because Mr. Basil Murray is associated with the Executive of the Primary Producers' Association, that this association dominates the Westralian Farmers Ltd.?

Mr. J. H. Smith: I did not say that. You said there was no connection between them, and I say there is.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is the same connection between the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and the Primary Producers' Association as there is between the Westralian Farmers and the Trades Hall: no more and no less.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Oh, no.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You are absolutely right.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I want the hon. member to be fair to the organisation of which we are so proud, and not to make such a definite pronouncement without investigation.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I am only saying what is true.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You are saying what is incorrect.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member is misrepresenting the position. There is no connection between the two bodies. I give the hon. member that assurance. I would like to give him an opportunity of making a thorough investigation of the whole question, for that would prove to him that he is wrong. I would welcome the opportunity of taking the hon. member down and giving him the fullest information.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They said that some members of the party were not fit to be members of Parliament.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The trouble is that some members do not want to be informed.

Mr. Richardson: You are not in accord with the policy of the Primary Producers' Association, are you?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No.

Mr. Richardson: You do not believe in the P.P.A.?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No.

Mr. Richardson: It is just as well to know where we are.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If I believed in the policy of that association I would be associated with it. It is because I believe in the policy of the Labour Party that I am associated with that section. I am now as enthusiastic a labourite as ever I was, although I am a farmer. The co-operative movement is one that should be fostered by the Labour Party rather than by commercial interests.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I agree with you there.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I make an appeal to members of Parliament and particularly to members of the Labour Party to rejoice with me that we have a co-operative movement of such magnitude in this State, and one organisation that is purely Western Australian.

Mr. George: You are saying that there is no political connection between the two organisations.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. George: That is all we want to know.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If I have convinced the member for Murray-Wellington then I have convinced other members as well, for he needs convincing more than others.

Mr. Richardson: We have got all we want to know about it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Then I have convinced the hon. member, too.

Mr. George: You are simply telling us that there is no connection between the Primary Producers' Association and the Westralian Farmers Ltd., that is all.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Apart from the general difficulties with which this concern has been faced, and which faced our producers generally, there is the question of marketing, and our market is dominated by Eastern States organisations. I have asked the Premier to place upon the Table of the House a return showing the number of commercial concerns operating in Western Australia whose head offices are situated in the Eastern States. I wish to secure that return to bring home to hon. members the necessity for a motion such as I have given notice of regarding another matter. I wish to emphasise the enormous grip the commercial interests of the Eastern States have upon Western Australia. It is impossible for an individual to fight against that grip; we must fight it. If we take the position regarding butter we find practically the whole distribution is in the hands of those wholly interested in butter production in the Eastern States. They are not anxious to market the results of Western Australian production, and that is the chief difficulty in connection with dairying. Why is it that the butter factories established in different parts of the State are not flourishing in proportion to the quantity of butter fats they receive? It is because the difficulties of marketing are so great. Why is that so? It is because they are up against the huge interests dominated from the Eastern States. Those interests must maintain their grip on Western Australia which has

proved such a glorious market in the past. It is because of this they wish to maintain their grip on the market at all costs.

Mr. Richardson: That is our difficulty in connection with everything we undertake.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Subiaco supports my views now. In order to get over this difficulty we must put our heads together.

Mr. Richardson: You had better come over here.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We must realise that we have a responsibility to the country, and we should work to overcome those difficulties. A point I wish to make is that the individual cannot do this. It requires an organisation or a combination. The only organisation that can be expected to cope with the position is the co-operative movement of Western Australia. What is that movement? There is a capital invested in that concern of £200,000, every penny of which was subscribed by the producers of this State. Why? To help in marketing their products. That capital is small compared with what is required. Therefore, I am justified in making an appeal to Parliament, and particularly to the Labour Party, to realise that, just as the Federal Government have appointed a commission to investigate Western Australia's special position, so we should see whether we cannot foster and encourage this co-operative movement to a greater extent. It has not had much encouragement from Parliament to date. We should see if we cannot get over some of the difficulties and assist in the struggle against Eastern domination. As it is, the co-operative movement is surely but gradually overcoming that domination, but the progress is slow in proportion to the capital required to do the job. This is a matter in which the Government could assist, not only by direct help, but in small considerations as well. They can assist by merely understanding the co-operative movement and by recognising that there are men who have their hearts and souls in the task. People criticise Mr. Basil Murray, the general manager of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. I differ from him in many things, but I take off my hat to him on account of what he has done in fighting the commercial interests that have dominated Western Australia for so long. I take off my hat to him for the manner in which he has overcome many of the difficulties encountered from time to time and the way he has steered the organisation away from pitfalls. I honour him for the work he has done in the interests of the people of Western Australia.

Mr. Mann: He found it necessary to join two combines.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: He has shown judgment in many respects. Those who have profited by his work—and there are several members in this House who have done so—know the organisation and know what he

has done. We should be able to do more if Government assistance were available. I do not know that I need say anything more on this particular point. I believe marketing is the main problem, and in addition to what the Government can do in affording direct assistance, we must realise what this Western Australian association has done in extending its operations on a co-operative basis. Instead of having a turnover of £3,000,000 as the organisation had last year, which is enormous considering the development of Western Australia at the present time, and instead of being a partner in a huge buying and selling agency in London having a turnover of £4,000,000 last year, we should be able to do more if we had but a few words of encouragement, and if, when we were up against difficulties, we could go to the Government and point out what we were doing for Western Australia and secure some assistance. We were up against difficulties that we could not overcome at the time; Government assistance, if available, would do much to assist in furthering the movement.

Mr. Thomson: You are suggesting the wheat pool.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I believe the wheat pool is established and I do not think we will have any difficulty in that connection. There is the question of marketing fruit, however. Let me give the House one illustration. I will take the position in my own electorate of Guildford. Growers there were producing dried fruits and they sold a quantity of fresh fruit as well. The products were marketed without any difficulty. Men made good profits and the industry increased until it carried a fairly large population, all of whom were carrying on satisfactorily. The idea got abroad regarding dried fruits, particularly of the quality grown in the Swan district, that there was a wonderful opportunity for expansion. The Government bought large areas of land suitable for the purpose, and apparently as good as other holdings where satisfactory returns were being secured. Then the Government established returned soldiers there, and the result was that production was multiplied by about 100 per cent. The trouble was that no provision was made for marketing the produce.

Mr. Thomson: That is so.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The position today is that the men who were making a success of their holdings are now struggling against the difficulties of marketing, and new settlers to-day, who cannot possibly compete with the old ones on a profitable basis, feel the position keenly and will have to get out. What is required is some kind of organisation that will enable those concerned in this industry to make a living. If that is not done there is no alternative but for the returned soldiers to walk off their properties. Last year they did errate an organisation to help themselves and endeavour to regulate the market. As is so

often the case with such movements, there were a few who broke away and the few who did so got the advantages resulting from the establishment of the organisation. As a result of their actions, what promised to be a successful marketing organisation in the early part of the season failed through the disloyalty of a few. What is required is better marketing facilities. I do not propose to weary the House any further on that point. I have dealt with matters of importance, but I have not touched upon questions affecting my own constituency other than the brief reference to the position of the producers on the Upper Swan. I may be forgiven, therefore, if I make an appeal on behalf of the more remote parts of the State. When I had the opportunity I went to the North-West and the North to see what kind of asset we had there. I wished to know whether we were getting a maximum result from those areas, and whether we were developing them in such a way that we could not procure better returns and at the same time assist in the general advancement of the State. I found there one of the finest countries one could gaze upon. There is no doubt about the magnitude and the enormous wealth of the far North. There is no doubt about its possibilities provided the country is developed in the right way. In 1911 the Labour Government attempted to organise the North-West on a basis that would provide better results than are being obtained today. We have to carry a burden there that has retarded development. I refer to the extension of the pastoral leases to 1948. That was an outrage. We had been waiting for 1928 when the leases would run out, and we were looking forward to an opportunity of reorganising the settlement of that country on a basis that would bring about increased production. Before 1928, however, unfortunately for Western Australia, the monopolistic land owners had a Government in power at the time whom they could influence, and the Government then extended the leases for another term until 1948. If hon. members consider some of the properties there they will understand the position. Take Minderoo Station. I built the wool shed on that station in 1908, so I know something about the property. It is on the Ashburton River, and I have seen 40 feet of water come down the river, one of the finest streams one could ever wish to see. There are glorious opportunities for damming it and conserving it. But the Minderoo estate runs for miles along the river, monopolising all that length of it. It was taken up by the late Sir John Forrest and his family. In that estate we have a million acres. The back portion of the land cannot be used, because it has no provision for water supply, the station depending on the supply in the Ashburton River. If the country were cut up the other way, and wells and dams put in, the whole of the area could be developed. Then the back, rather than the front of it, would

carry the maximum number of sheep. However, all that land is monopolised so as to prevent other people getting the benefit of the full production of which the land is capable. Nevertheless the Bill was passed, giving an extension of that lease and all other leases till 1948. A Government that is determined can see that even that is discounted. I do not say reversed, because I am no believer in confiscation; but when we have a limited number of people controlling so vast an area, we require to see to it that they contribute to the revenue in proportion to the area they hold. And when, moreover, we see the enormous wealth those people are getting from their holding, and the further enormous wealth they are not getting, but other people would get if the land were differently cut up, it is time we stepped in and adjusted the anomaly. The pearling industry is subjected to a control that limits its effectiveness from a revenue point of view, and limits also its employment of white labour. The Government ought to overcome that. When one goes along the coast and calls in at the ports where the steamers are regular, where ice is distributed from the steamer's freezing chambers, and where vegetables are obtainable, it is remarkable that the people of the port advocate the employment of black labour, declaring that the North-West is no place for white people. Yet when one goes inland to Marble Bar and Nullagine, one finds men who have been on the tin fields for ten years with never a coloured man amongst them. Why? Because the coloured man could not live under the same conditions. Where the minerals are found inland we find the white man to develop them, but along the coast, where the grog is to be found and the vegetables and ice, all the people cry out that it is no place for the white man. That country up there is worthy of special attention. In 1912 or 1913 the then Government did try to develop it, but their efforts were cut short by the outbreak of war. However, the opportunity is again here to do something with the North-West. I trust that we may all put on our thinking caps and realise that we have there a huge country under the control of certain people. Our commerce is dominated from the Eastern States. That also ought to be investigated. Our great North-West is in the hands of those who are not doing justice to it. By close administration the Government should do that which has been neglected in the past. As for the South-West, I appeal to the Government to make the earliest possible announcement in respect of the investigation, and to start that investigation without delay. A change of administration is required to make the South-West attractive, to make of it a place where we can produce economically and allow Western Australia to carry on until it has produced. But the burden imposed upon us to-day is altogether beyond the powers of the 350,000 souls in this State.

Mr. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [8.51]: I realise that I have not yet the confidence that, I expect, will come with greater experience. It is trying for a new member to speak to a House like this. However, I am not the only one, for the Premier, addressing a meeting at Wyalcatchem a few years ago, said it cost from £300 to £400 to educate a new member and make him of some use.

The Premier: Not I.

Mr. LINDSAY: Therefore I take it I still have time to improve. The Speech promises encouragement to greater production from lands served by existing railways, and says that legislation is to be introduced. I do not know what that legislation is to be, but when it comes along I will deal with it. Although I represent the primary producers, I think it is the land owner's duty to effectively occupy his holding. If he is not prepared to do that, legislation should be introduced to coerce him. According to the Speech it is also intended to introduce a Closures Settlement Bill. I do not believe it possible to bring idle lands under production without such a Bill, because a small land tax is scarcely calculated to burst up big estates. If the Government intend to introduce a land tax I should like them first to give us a better system of valuation than we have to-day. In my district we have had a revaluation raising the values 200 per cent. Although I am not prepared to say it is too high, still I do not think it right that an officer of the Taxation Department should be able to declare to a land owner, "You will pay so much." We should have some method of appeal against that sort of ruling. There is in the Land Act a section stating that the unimproved value is the price the land will bring in the open market under reasonable terms and conditions, as if no improvements had been added to it. But who is to be the judge of that? The departmental officials say they go to the Titles Office and look at the sales. In my opinion that is seldom done. If I want to buy a property for my son, there is nothing to prevent my paying for it at a sentimental value which is not the value of the land generally in the district. However, I do not think that is the way they make a valuation. When an officer, who did his work honestly and well, came to my place I asked him how he made his valuation. He asked, "Will your land produce 14 bushels to the acre?" I said it would. Evidently that is the way they make their valuation. Only a few days ago, at a meeting of surveyors in Perth, Mr. Campbell, an officer of the department, said that nine road boards had been revalued, and that the boards were rating on their new valuations. That is not correct. Two boards in my district have been revalued, but are not using the new valuation, because they consider it too high. I suggest that the Government should inquire into the New Zealand system. Under that, local courts are appointed and inde-

pendent experts, not taxation officials, do the work of valuers. Our sole method of appeal is to come down to Perth and appear before the court here. That is not possible to all of us. In New Zealand they appoint as a member a representative of the road boards, the Lands Department appoints another member, and those two sit with an independent chairman. Such a system is more likely to do justice by the appellant. We have all had experience of the Income Tax Department.

Mr. Panton: No. We here never have to pay income tax.

Mr. LINDSAY: We find that the taxation officials try to get as much as they possibly can for the State. In my district we have been forced to pay a firm £10 10s. per annum to protect us against the Taxation Department. I do not want that sort of thing in respect of land valuation as well. While I have said the land owner should effectively occupy his holding as a duty to the State, at the same time the State has a duty to the land owner. It is the duty of the State to provide him with facilities of production, and to furnish him with things necessary to keep him in the country. Now I wish to say something about the land in the Toodyay Valley. A few months ago, when I introduced a deputation to the Minister for Lands, we took with us samples of dried fruit. A slight mistake in the published report of that deputation made it appear that the fruit had been grown on my farm at Toodyay. I do not happen to have a farm there. I mention this because, when I speak of settling the land of the Toodyay Valley, I do not wish members to think that I have any land there for sale. I have been up the Toodyay Valley, and I can say that practically any crop that can be grown in Western Australia can be grown in that valley. The Minister declared to us that five men held 70,000 acres within 17 miles of Toodyay. I do not think that is right, for the bulk of that land is held under natural pasture, running sheep. Of course in a country like that, where we have railways, roads and schools, it should be a question, not of acres to the sheep, but of sheep to the acre. The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) referred to the wheat belt and mentioned the Dowerin-Merredin and the York-rakine railways. I happened to be with the Railway Advisory Board when they went through the Dowerin-Merredin country. The settlement of the wheat belt in my district took place from Dowerin with very little assistance from the Government, and the men who went there took up small holdings. The district has a fine rainfall. The settlers, in order to get a start, scratched in a crop, as it is commonly known, and some scratched their way to prosperity, while a few unfortunately ended in poverty. Those who followed and adopted similar methods had a similar experience. In 1915-16 Professor Paterson visited Wyalcatchem. We had had a series of dry years and had passed

through bad times. The Professor lectured on the growth of crops and, when he had finished, I was called upon to propose a vote of thanks. I said, "We have learnt quite a lot from your lecture. We know it is necessary to fallow and cultivate the land, but unfortunately the advice has come too late. The majority of us went on to the land with the assistance of the Agricultural Bank, and the officials of that institution assisted us to farm badly, after which they sent out experts to tell us we had done wrong. By our methods of farming we are gambling on getting 20 inches of rain a year and by our methods of financing we are gambling on getting 20 bushels to the acre. Owing to the dry season we got none, and the consequence was a load of debt. You advise us to return to safe methods, but we cannot. We gambled and got into debt, and now we have to gamble to get out of debt." We know there have been great failures in the wheat belt. They have been the fault of the Government. The Government are finding the cash and are paying the piper and should call the tune. The Government should have forced the settlers to farm their land in the right way. In other countries that have had big settlement schemes, there have been many failures. When the people of America went westward they went in years of heavy rainfall and mined the soil as we are doing, but when the rainfall diminished those places were abandoned. Later on settlers returned and adopted better methods, and those lands are now supporting thriving and prosperous communities. The difference between their settlement schemes and ours is that there the settlers provided their own money, while here the Government find the cash. We have an experimental farm and a Department of Agriculture. They are doing much good, but the Department of Agriculture should be able to instruct settlers in the proper way to farm and should encourage them to do it that way. We cannot wait for our children to grow up; we must educate the farmer who is on the land to-day.

The Minister for Railways: How many of the farmers say they would have been successful but for the department interfering?

Mr. LINDSAY: The Government found the money and the Government should have assisted us to farm in the right way. A man who goes on the land with the assistance of the Agricultural Bank receives an advance to clear his land and to buy a drill and horses. The whole system encourages a settler to merely scratch in his crop. The man must get a return quickly, and though the land will stand two or three scratched-in crops, once farmers get into that way they cannot get out of it. It is harder to give up bad methods than to learn the right method. In consequence of this scratching-in of crops the virgin fertility is going out of the land and weeds are becoming prevalent. The settler takes the view that he must get another good crop in order to be able to pay his creditors, and then he promises

to farm in the right way. These methods may have answered at Dowerin, but in the back country the methods employed are the same or worse than those adopted in the wetter districts. The farmers are not adopting the methods that should be followed in the drier areas. I have figures from the latest "Journal of Agriculture" showing the difference between good and bad farming. At the Merredin experimental farm in 1916-21 wheat grown after fallowing yielded 22.48 bushels per acre, whereas without fallow the yields were 10.47 bushels, the increase in favour of fallow being 11.96. In 1919 the rainfall in the six growing months was 7.48 and the yield was 26.16 bushels per acre. Therefore to produce a payable crop is not so much a question of heavy rainfall as of proper farming methods.

The Minister for Lands: The members of the I.A.B. have been abused up hill and down dale because they have assisted the farmers.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have heard similar talk, but I consider the members of the I.A.B. have not gone far enough. Even they themselves are not insisting upon the rule of fallow after the first year. There is a great deal of land in Western Australia yet to be settled. Although there have been failures we should recognise these facts and profit from our mistakes. If a man adopts wrong methods for a few years, he gets such a load of debt around his neck that it is almost impossible to get rid of it. I think many of us got out of that difficulty owing to the very high prices of wheat during the war. But for those high prices there would have been a great many more failures in the wheat belt. I do not wish to decry the wheat belt, because I believe the average yield for the State could be raised considerably if only farmers would adopt better farming methods. The Director of Agriculture is aiming at getting an average of 15 bushels for the State. In my opinion that is a very modest estimate. Our present wheat lands, if farmed properly, would yield an average of more than 15 bushels. My average since 1915 is 19 bushels to the acre. Last year the average for the State was 11.4 bushels. I was under the impression that our average was very low as compared with that of other countries. America supplies millions of dollars per annum to educate her farmers and this education goes beyond the mere carrying out of experiments. What is the use of experiments if you keep them to yourself? If you spend money in experiments the knowledge gained should be disseminated amongst the farmers, and the personal touch is best of all. The yield in the four great wheat states of America from 1890 to 1921 was 13.8 bushels to the acre. In North Dakota it was 9.2; South Dakota, 11.9; Kansas, 13.5; and Nebraska 14.1. When we adopt efficient methods I believe we shall equal their yields and probably exceed them. There is another matter connected with the I.A.B. Unfortunately, quite a lot of my constituents are clients

of the board, and I often have to go to the office on their business. On many occasions I have informed the trustees that people have taken up too much land. A man becomes land hungry and finishes up land poor. The Government should have decided long ago what was a living area, and if they find the money, it should be only in respect to an area sufficient to provide the man with a living, or probably slightly more. When a man selects 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 acres it is not in the interests of the State. Neither is it in the interests of the individual. If he is receiving Government assistance he will require 15 years to improve 1,000 acres and the balance represents a drag on him. He has to pay land rents and rates and taxes on the idle portion, which is also a breeding-ground for vermin. If another settler were established on the second block it would mean more population. One of the reasons why we cannot get the things we require in the country is lack of population. If there was more population in the country there would be more schools, more hospitals and more social life and greater inducements for people to remain on the land. I hope the Government will decide what is a living area and, if they assist settlers financially, they should do so only on condition that the living area is not exceeded. A thousand acres of fair land is quite enough for any man.

Mr. Chesson: How many acres have you got?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have 1,328 and I think I produce as much as any other farm of the same area. I would not ask others to do what I could not do myself.

Mr. Latham: The Government restricted settlers to 1,000 acres long ago.

The Minister for Lands: The settler's wife can take up another 1,000 acres, which means 2,000 in all.

Mr. LINDSAY: On the question of education, if I ask the Government for anything, I shall expect the landholders to do their bit as well. One reason why country life is unattractive to many people is the lack of educational facilities. The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) spoke about a school in his district that required repairs. My trouble is there are hundreds of children in the country that have no school at all. I recognise the difficulties in the scattered districts of Western Australia, but if we are going to keep people on the land, we must provide at least facilities for primary education. It is the duty of the Government to give primary education to every child before starting on secondary or university education. We have secondary and university education to-day, and yet there are many children in the country who cannot attend a school unless they come to Perth. When they come to Perth, it is not to be expected that their mothers will remain on the farm. One of the primary factors responsible for the depopulation of country districts is the lack of school facilities. Although we cannot have schools everywhere the Education

Department should make some provision for the education of every child. I suggested to the Director of Education some three years ago that in centres like the one I am speaking of school hostels should be provided, where the children could be educated instead of being sent to the city and where they could be boarded. That may be regarded as an innovation, but something must be done to remedy the present difficulty.

The Minister for Railways: What about the correspondence classes?

Mr. LINDSAY: They may be all right, but a farmer's wife has very little time in which to attend to that sort of thing. A farmer's wife is probably harder worked than any other woman. Very often she has to board the men. She, therefore, cannot sit down and supervise the education of her children. Correspondence classes do some good, but in hundreds of cases are not practical. I suggest that school hostels should at all events be given a trial. I have lived for some years seven miles from a school, and have had to send my children to Perth to learn their alphabet. The same thing applies to scores of other people. I have here a letter from the Education Department, dated the 14th September, 1922, to the effect that the Minister had approved of a portable school being erected at Muckinbudin, and that the Public Works Department had been asked to call for tenders as early as possible. That school has not yet been built. I have been told that the reason is that the people in that locality have since built a hall. This will be an important centre. I do not see why the settlers should be penalised because they have put up their own hall.

The Minister for Lands: I suppose the department have rented it.

Mr. LINDSAY: They built the hall with their own money. At one time we used to get a subsidy of 30s. in the pound for the building of an agricultural hall, but to-day we have to raise the first £150, and then the Government will lend an extra £250 on the personal guarantee of the settlers, the money to be paid back on the workers' homes system of instalments. There would be a fine commotion if the Government said to the owners of workers' homes, "We will use your home whenever it suits us." I have advised settlers in future to finance these halls through the bank, which I think is a better method than going to the Government.

The Minister for Lands: Does not the department pay rent for the use of the hall?

Mr. LINDSAY: I believe so. The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) referred to the Yarramony-Baandee railway. He put himself up as a judge as to whether it could be built or not. He said there was not sufficient produce in that district to warrant it. The Railway Advisory Board, however, held a different opinion. The Minister for Lands the other night in-

terjected that the line would be built in its turn. I say it will not, because its turn came round years ago. I agree the Dowerin-Merredin railway should not have been built where it was, but it is too late now and the people have been settled on the land. The settlers who were promised a railway further back should be given the line. The Yorkrakine settlement was one of the first in the wheat belt after Sir James Mitchell became Minister for Agriculture. It was first formed in 1908. I lived within two or three miles of the boundary. Some of the settlers there have been carting wheat since 1908, a distance of 23 miles. I have collected certain figures showing the wheat traffic between December and April, and for November and after. I received figures from the station masters. Two station masters have not yet supplied me with the details. On the Dowerin-Nungarin line, and on the Wyalatchem-Culcullin line 821,631 bags of wheat were delivered last year at the siding. In addition to this there are 50,000 bags of wheat of which I have not got particulars.

Mr. Sampson: Is that on the Baandee line?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have the report of the Railway Advisory Board for 1920 concerning the Ucarty-North Baandee railway. It says:—

The railway suggested to serve the country between Ucarty and North Baandee, the Railway Advisory Board has traversed the above country for which railway facilities are urged, and has the honour to submit the following report. Within lines drawn 10 miles from and parallel to existing railways, a stretch of country is contained, about 67 miles long with an average width of nine miles. Its area is approximately 448,500 acres, of which 289,900 acres is alienated or in process of alienation, and 158,600 acres is still Crown land. From returns received it is estimated that within the area to be served there are about 226 settlers, who have 126,529 acres of forest land cleared, 96,584 acres of forest land uncleared; total 223,113 acres cleared and uncleared (forest). This appears to be a liberal estimate. The approximate production for 1919-20 is returned at—185,588 bags of wheat, 6,914 bags of oats, total 192,502 bags, say, 16,000 tons.

Mr. Griffiths: That was four years ago. This year's estimate provides for another 100,000 bags.

Mr. LINDSAY: The report continues:—This tonnage may with railway facilities be reasonably expected to increase to 20,000 or 22,000 tons. The main centres to be served are Ucarty, on the extreme west of the belt, Hindmarsh, about 9 miles further east, Yorkrakine about 18 miles east from Hindmarsh, and Kodj Kodjin, about 24 miles further on. The best of the land surrounds these centres which are separated from one another by higher grade country at present not used to any

great extent, but which with railway communication might in the future be made productive. The settlers in the centres mentioned have in most cases to cart from 12 to 18 miles to the existing railways over roads which in many instances are heavy and sandy. The Board is of opinion that permanent transport facilities are warranted not only on account of the present reduction of the district, but also because of the probable increase of production given such facilities. The length of the line will be about 75 miles, and the estimated cost £135,000 on a one in 60 grade, and £75,000 on a one in 100 grade. In considering the construction of a line such as the one dealt with in this report, the fact that it will make the work of the farmer less laborious and relieve him of transport difficulties which are properly outside the proper functions of a farmer, must not be lost sight of. If farmers are compelled, owing to the distance from a railway, to spend two and sometimes three months of the year on the road they will be inclined to either reduce their cultivated area and depend more on stock, or leave the land as soon as they are able to do so. The development and proper cultivation of farms by owners not financially strong is seriously retarded owing to the time taken up by carting. In the approximate results of workings of district railways given in the report of the Railway Department for the year ended June 30th, 1919, it is shown that the majority of the agricultural lines do not pay working expenses, excluding interest, and, if it is essential, before the construction of further district railways can be favourably viewed in the future, that it must be shown that better financial results must be attained, the Government might be prepared to consider the question of imposing a charge on the land served by the railway, which if funded would go towards paying the capital cost.

That was four years ago; to-day the position is different. These people were put there in 1908 and promised a railway. This is one of the political railways. Before the last election some three or four years ago the Railway Advisory Board was sent there, and the settlers were promised a railway. Before the last election a Railway Bill was passed; but that was another song. The Minister for Lands said he told the people that the railway would be built in its turn. It should have been built years ago. It is surprising to me, not yet knowing all about political dodges, that the first time the Leader of the Opposition spoke from his present seat in the House he expressed the hope that the Government would build the Yorkrachine railway. The Leader of the Opposition was Minister from 1906, and was Premier for five years. One would have thought if he felt the railway was necessary he would have built it when he had the right to pro-

vide the funds. The Premier and the Minister for Lands were both at Yorkrachine a few years ago. Speaking as the Leader of the Opposition the Premier said his party were in favour of the railway, but could not give any promise as he had no authority to do so. He did, however, say he would support any Government that would introduce a Bill for the construction of the line.

Mr. Griffiths: That was just before the election.

The Minister for Lands: The railway we promised when we went there was that which was carried further over.

Mr. LINDSAY: I do not know why the settlers should suffer because of the ignorance of other people. I have here a letter from the Agricultural Bank in connection with the matter, although it does not apply to this particular case. It says there is no question as to the quality of the land, but that no settler over 12½ miles from a railway can be expected to farm so far from one and meet his obligations. These people have been trying to do this for the last 16 years. They have not been able to go in for better methods of farming because of the time spent in carting their wheat. The yield per acre is gradually declining, and the farmers will have to be given better facilities for growing wheat than they now have. It is not fair they should be penalised, and I hope the Minister will give the assurance that they will shortly have railway facilities. The prosperity of the State is bound up in the development of its natural resources. Owing to our great indebtedness per head of the population it is necessary to produce more from our land. With me it has never been a question of more acres, but more production per acre. I hope the Minister for Agriculture will bring the knowledge possessed by his Department before the farmers so as to encourage them to produce more per acre from their land. From my practical experience I know that great mistakes have been made in regard to agricultural settlement. Wrong methods have been adopted. We must improve our methods and improve them quickly. One matter that I have not yet dealt with adequately is water supply for the eastern wheat belt. I spoke on this subject some time ago, and a member of the House asked me why the people did not sink dams. During a considerable period I have been agitating for the extension of the goldfields water scheme to the wheat belt. Living in dry districts, we do not often get sufficient rain to fill our dams; but with good farming it is quite possible to obtain satisfactory results even if there is very little rain. In the far eastern country large areas of good land are found. Wherever there are considerable stretches of forest land, we find a big extent of flat country. I am sorry to say that the late Government did not deal seriously with the extension of the water scheme. Two years ago, accompanied by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths), I saw the ex-Premier, who, in reply to me, stated

that before I got home there would be a thunderstorm and I would not require scheme water. I hope the present Government will not deal with requests in that manner. Later the Mitchell Government promised to assist the people of my district with key dams. Departmental engineers have gone through the country and made certain investigations. Travelling through the eastern wheat belt, and especially the far east, where the ground is quite dry as far as the running of water is concerned, one finds that every eight or ten miles there are large rocks, which seem to have been put there by Nature to serve that country. I have to thank the present Minister for Water Supply, Mr. Cunningham, for the assistance he has given me. He has never yet told me to go home and await a thunderstorm. He has promised to help in the matter of water supply for the wheat belt. The hon. gentleman tells me that he is going up to that country with the Chief Engineer for Water Supply shortly, when I hope the problems I have mentioned will be investigated and money found to construct key dams. The matter is one of the most important we have to deal with in regard to the settlement of the wheat belt. In many cases it is not possible for the farmer to provide water for himself, his country being flat and occasionally not good holding ground. Water should be supplied through the natural channels and means that Nature has furnished.

Mr. WITHERS (Bunbury) [9.34]: First of all I join in congratulations to the Premier and his Ministers on attaining power, and in the congratulations which have been offered to you, Mr. Speaker, on your elevation to a high and honourable position. I also desire to extend congratulations to myself, on the fact that I am a member of the party now in power. One naturally likes to be on the Government side, where one has an opportunity of at all events endeavouring to ensure that the promises put before the people from the hustings are carried into effect. With one's party out of power, one has no opportunity of doing that. I may be a little parochial to-night, but this is my first speech, and the subject is the Address-in-reply. Glancing through the Governor's Speech I noticed that there was mention of the Fremantle harbour and the Geraldton harbour. Without denying those ports the right to have their harbours improved, I certainly think Bunbury harbour is entitled to consideration at the hands of the present Government, having been neglected by previous Administrations.

Mr. George: Plenty of money has been spent there, anyhow.

Mr. WITHERS: I put forward Bunbury's claim because prior to the war, during the first five years of the Bunbury Harbour Board's existence, some £20,000 were remitted from Bunbury to the Treasury. Upon the outbreak of war Bunbury, the second port of Western Australia, largely

lost its trade, owing to exports being severely affected by the hostilities. Bunbury harbour, owing to the war, lost some £20,000 of revenue in four years. Notwithstanding that loss, however, Bunbury's contributions to the Consolidated Revenue during the years from 1921 to 1923 inclusive amounted to over £4,000. Thus there has been paid into Consolidated Revenue by the Bunbury Harbour Board, after allowance has been made for war losses, a total of some £26,000. Reading the latest report of the Bunbury Harbour Board I observe that exports have been increasing. The board predict that the ensuing twelve months will represent a further improvement. From inquiries made of the board I know that the year has been a record one for tonnage dealt with, and also for remittances to the Treasury. Those facts afford some justification for giving consideration in the near future to the claims of Bunbury harbour. The draught of vessels is getting deeper and deeper, and in Bunbury harbour one is down to rock at 27 feet. The oversea boats of 1912, 1913, and 1914 could call to-day at Bunbury and berth at the same berths as they occupied in those years. But to-day we are getting vessels up to 10,000, 11,000 and 12,000 tons. Hence the necessity for the increase requested by the deputation. Last year the fruit-growers of the Bridgetown district lost heavily on the export of their fruit. The "Bakara," which was coming to Bunbury to lift fruit, was discovered to have something wrong with her at her last port of call in the Eastern States, and she was ordered into dock. The "Fordsdale" was substituted, but as she drew 30 feet, she could not come into Bunbury harbour. Bunbury being her last port of loading, she was naturally down to about Plimsoll mark before she arrived here. In consequence the fruit to be shipped in that boat had to go to Fremantle. The Bridgetown growers are at an average distance of only 67 miles from Bunbury, and shipping their fruit via Fremantle involved an additional 115 miles of railage. If Bunbury harbour had better berths, the State steamers would call there. At present, however, that is impracticable. The Minister for Works has given us consideration by purchasing a Commonwealth dredge now lying at Albany, with a view to its being utilised at Bunbury. This is to be done as soon as the deal is completed with the Federal Government. Speaking to the Minister for Works on the subject a little while ago, I was informed by him that everything was in order, but that the Commonwealth Government wanted the cash. It was a hardship on the new Government coming into office to find such conditions existing. I learn now that the conditions of sale and purchase have been agreed upon except as regards one proviso, that the Commonwealth Government reserve the right to take the boat away from Bunbury at any time they desire. My own view is that not much difficulty is involved. The proviso most likely is only an urgency measure, to be used in

case of anything unforeseen occurring. Bunbury jetty has been extended year by year, until it is now like a dog's hind leg and runs about a mile out to sea. Ever since 1896 the Bunbury breakwater has been under construction, and has been extended and again extended. I trust that the new Engineer-in-Chief will be a man with an understanding of harbours and docks. He should be sent to Bunbury to find out where the residents could get a harbour that would suit the South-Western export trade of the future. Timber, of course, has so far been the principal export from Bunbury. However, we are looking forward to the time when the life of our native timbers will have to be conserved and its exportation restricted considerably. In that case we of Bunbury will have to look to other exports, principally the export of agricultural products. If the group settlements succeed in the manner that has been suggested, the South-West will become the salvation or Western Australia. The South-West will have to be looked to for the supply of all our dairy products. It is ideal country for dairying, pig raising, and the like. In no other part of the State can the dairying industry be fostered as in the South-West. Until the people there had thoroughly realised what the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) mentioned to-night, as to dairying by proper methods, they produced more butter than the people available to purchase it could consume. That was 35 years ago. What happened then? The people who were producing the butter were making more butter than could be sold, simply because other people were not there to buy it. Having large holdings and pastures, they turned their attention to stock raising, and produced on the country we now call the north coast lands some of the finest, if not the most numerous herds ever known in Western Australia. Some of those cattle have been on exhibition and they are a good example of what can be produced in the South-West. I trust that the Government will be able to do something in that regard, although the financial position is not very satisfactory. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) mentioned coal. I recognise that we in Bunbury are almost at the pit's mouth of Collie, but the railage from Collie to Bunbury presents practically the same difficulties as those experienced by the fruit-growing industry. I have been informed by the manager of the Amalgamated Collieries that it costs something like 6s. per ton more to bunker coal at Fremantle than at Bunbury and this increase is caused by the additional freight. The effect of this increase in the price of Collie coal means that at Fremantle it can only be procured for bunkering purposes at a cost little below that of Newcastle coal, which is regarded by some as the better article. In the circumstances it is not strange that many shipowners prefer to pay the extra few shillings in order to get Newcastle coal. Doubtless if they could procure

the Collie coal at 6s. per ton less it would be an inducement for them to take the local article rather than the imported. If berthing accommodation were provided at Bunbury so that ships of a deeper draught could utilise that port, the bunkering would be done at its natural port.

Mr. Mann: Where do the South African boats bunker coal, at Durban or Bunbury?

Mr. WITHERS: Mostly at Durban.

Mr. Panton: Where there is black labour available.

Mr. WITHERS: Most of the South African boats that call at Bunbury for timber are run by the South African Government, and it is only natural that they should utilise their own product. Much has been said regarding our education system, of which we have boasted for years that it is one of the best in the world. We have boasted of our free education; in theory the system is all right, but in practice I do not think it comes up to the standard we would desire. I have had personal experience in sending my children to the High School at Bunbury, and I do not think that institution is functioning as was intended. I admit that the system of establishing high schools in the country districts is in its infancy, and naturally some consideration must be extended to the department on that score. Children are not allowed to leave school until they have reached the age of 14 years. The average youth reaches the sixth standard at 13 years of age, if he has any ability or brains at all. When a lad attains that age at Bunbury, and passes through the sixth standard, he has to go to the High School in order to enter the seventh standard, and that means a large increase in expenditure. Had I bought new books for my girls who attended the High School, it would have cost me about £10; by purchasing secondhand books I paid about £7 10s. I know of an instance where a boy had reached the sixth standard and his record was one of distinction. His parents were in poor circumstances. Either he had to go to the High School to continue his education, or he had to remain in the sixth standard at the State School until he reached 14 years of age. The result was that he had to stay in the sixth standard for a year, during which he re-learned what he had been taught during the previous year. A child should be given facilities that will enable him to pass through the seventh standard, so that he may at least have a reasonable education in which to start out in life. As it is, many children are debarred from the advantages of the higher standards because their parents cannot afford the additional expenditure. Children do not realise what they miss at that age, but it is only in after life that they will feel the effects of their restricted education. In the latest report of the Education Department reference is made to manual training in the State schools, and it is stated that boys in the fifth standard have the benefit of that type of education.

At Bunbury the manual section has been transferred to the High School. This means that if a boy's parents can afford to send him to the High School, he will have only one year's tuition in manual work and that is not of much use. I have the support of the staff of the Bunbury State School in my contention that the seventh standard should be restored to that institution, and I believe the department have that matter in hand as well as the re-introduction of the manual classes. The same position arises in connection with the girls' course in domestic science. A girl attending the Modern School can decide what course she will pursue. If she desires to be a tailoress, or to go in for dress-cutting or millinery, she has the opportunity, when she enters the seventh standard, of being taught a course in accordance with her desires throughout her stay at that institution. Another trouble with the High School—

Mr. Mann: Do you want to get rid of that institution?

Mr. WITHERS: The trouble is that commercial education is not dealt with at that institution. I wished one of my girls to undergo a course of training in commercial subjects, and I had to send her either to a night school or to private classes. Children should have an opportunity of getting that type of education at the High School. Reference was made to the selection of a site for the agricultural college. I do not know whether consideration has been given to the south-west portion of the State in the selection of the site. Training that a lad will receive on a farm in the wheat belt is not that required for a lad who will be engaged in developing land in the South-West, where the country is heavily timbered. There is no comparison between the two methods of cultivation and an agricultural college should be established in some part of the South-West, for it is obvious that farming in the group settlement areas is different from that carried on in the wheat belt. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) mentioned that there was too much land in his electorate that was not linked up with railways. In the South-West the position is reversed, for we have too great a mileage of railway. The time is ripe, therefore, for the introduction of the measure foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech in connection with land taxation. I trust that when the measure is in operation we will find that areas such as those between Pinjarra and Pemberton will be forced into a state of productivity. When passing some of the land people in trains are apt to say that that land is not worth clearing. I have had experience in the South-West for over 30 years and I know that part of the State very well.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You try to buy that land that they say is not worth clearing!

Mr. WITHERS: In one part of the district I have seen subterranean clover growing luxuriantly on land that no one would

clear 15 or 20 years ago. To-day that land could not be bought for £50 an acre. There are hundreds of acres of the same class of land available in that particular district. I believe the dairying industry, under proper direction, can be made a success. Mention was made in the Speech of the Government's intention to introduce a Bill to deal with main roads. I come from an electorate where good main roads and good feeder roads are urgently required. I am sorry the Minister for Works has seen fit to close the quarry at Roelands. Although that concern may not have been paying, it has proved of wonderful value to the south-western districts. The stone was produced so cheaply, apparently, that the Government had to close down the quarry. I have been in communication with the local authorities at Bunbury and have been informed that it is suggested locally that the quarry should be taken over by the local bodies, and a smaller plant installed. In this way, with proper crushing and grading, supplies of stone could be provided at 6s. per ton. That will be a satisfactory price as against the present rate in and around Bunbury of something like 14s. per ton. All we require, if we are allowed to take over the quarry and place it under the control of the local authority, is fair consideration from the Railway Department regarding freights. In the past those charges worked out at about 1d. per ton per mile, and if we get the same consideration and also have the benefit of assistance from the Federal road grant, we will be able to do a lot in providing better roads throughout the south-western districts. Another question in relation to the railway service concerns cottages for railway employees. I notice that the Commissioner of Railways, in his report, states that a number of these cottages have been established in the country districts in particular. That is a worthy action on the part of the Commissioner and I believe it is capable of further extension. I know that in Bunbury it is a difficult matter to get a decent house at anything like a fair rental.

The Minister for Railways: The same applies to Perth.

Mr. WITHERS: But in Perth there are better facilities available. I would also like to see excursion trains run more frequently in the South-West. Many people avail themselves of those excursions during the summer months and I think they would take advantage of winter excursions, if they were provided. A burning question in Bunbury is that of the removal of the loco workshops. They are to-day exactly where they were in 1895, notwithstanding the expansion of the trade of the port. I know that the Railway Department has advocated their removal. It means a cost of some £35,000. That will be an important question for the Minister when bringing down his Estimates. It is

essential that something should be done. Another question regarding the railways that was not mentioned in the Speech, but which, I hope, will be considered, is the superannuation scheme. This scheme was turned down by a big majority, it being found altogether impossible for any working man. It meant nothing short of a reduction of wages. Under that scheme a man would have to pay as much on account of his superannuation as he now pays in rent. An improved scheme should be brought forward for the railway men, because after having brought up a family a man, on being retired from his position, has practically nothing whatever to depend upon.

Mr. Mann: Superannuation has worked well in the Police Department.

The Minister for Railways: Why it is absolutely insolvent!

Mr. WITHERS: Another question affecting the Railway Department is the long service leave, which was lost by one vote. I hope that will be given further consideration. The men of the service are very much disappointed at having missed the concession after getting so close to it.

Mr. Latham: That is a matter for the Government.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The Government could grant it to-morrow.

Mr. WITHERS: Then there is the question of Government hospitals in the country. Indigent people going into those hospitals are forced to pay, even though they cannot afford it. I know of a man with a family of seven children who, after his wife had been in hospital, was met with a bill of £22 12s. 6d. He went on paying it off as well as he could from time to time, but eventually fell ill himself. With nothing coming in for weeks, naturally he got into arrears with this hospital account. Then he received a summons for those arrears, and with it a bill for £1 9s. costs. I know of another instance of a man who fell into arrears in similar circumstances and who had exactly the same experience. Since we have these Government institutions for the relief of the sick, there should be some tribunal to go into such cases and treat them on their merits. Again, I have it on good authority that the food supplied to patients at those hospitals is not of a nourishing nature. One patient I know of, requiring special food and being unable to pay for it, received that food through the kindness of the doctor. Now one more point and I am finished: I hope the Government will be able, if not this session at all events next session, to raise the exemption from income tax. It is one of the planks of their party platform.

Mr. Latham: Raise it to what, £1,000?

Mr. WITHERS: No, £300 would do for the time being, and would bring it into line with the Commonwealth exemptions. One man, attending a deputation to the Minister for Railways recently, told the Minister that the policy of the party was a means of raising revenue. If that be so, I think we

ought to be able to use that policy as a means of raising the exemption from income tax. I hope that when the Estimates come down we shall find in them provision in respect of some of the matters I have mentioned; if not I shall take occasion to mention them all again.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 6th August, 1924.

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

QUESTION—ARBITRATION ROYAL COMMISSION.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Will he supply details of the expenditure incurred in connection with the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the working of the Industrial Arbitration Act and other matters? 2, Will he lay upon the Table the file covering the appointment and dissolution of the commission?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, The file, including details of expenditure, has been placed on the Table to-day.

QUESTION—CATTLE FROM NORTH-WEST, EMBARGO.

Hon. J. EWING asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Will he lay on the Table of the House papers dealing with the raising of the embargo on tick cattle from the North-West entering the southern portion of the State? 2, How many of these cattle have entered the southern districts since the embargo was removed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: I am tabling the file this afternoon, but I ask that the other portion of the question be postponed until to-morrow.