

their mutual interests and regard their relationship with a greater feeling of amity instead of the enmity that is displayed at present. The Arbitration Court fixes the wages of the individual often on age and irrespective of production. I do not know how an industry can prosper unless the party receiving wages and the party providing the employment can devise some method whereby the industry will yield the requisite wage. Production is the only method by which that can be determined. The age of the individual is not going to influence that important fact. The production of the industry and nothing else will enable it to stand. Unemployment is reflected in the statistics concerning imports and exports published a few days ago. The total imports of Western Australia last year amounted to £18,376,440, an increase of £1,913,868, while our exports were only £15,151,959, an increase of £570,302. Thus the total excess of imports over exports was £3,224,481. That statement of our trading operations reflects the industrial position of the State. It shows that there has not been operating the arrangement essential to bring the two great forces, employers and employees, together, and bind them into one harmonious whole working for the common good of the State. Here is Western Australia importing to this large extent, and thus working the greatest possible detriment to its own people. Reference has been made to Government buildings. I would remind the Leader of the House of certain questions I asked last session regarding the Lands Titles Office. On that occasion I stressed the importance of Government action to have a suitable building erected for that department. I ask that attention be given to this matter. It is not necessary to refer to some of the comments I made recently when addressing the Royal Institute of Architects regarding our Houses of Parliament. Probably the Minister will also keep that matter in mind. A matter that affects my constituency perhaps more than others is the increasing number of motor accidents. In Washington nearly two years ago a conference was held to consider this important matter, and in England efforts have been made to devise means of minimising these risks. The local Automobile Association has taken steps to the same end, and it would be well if the Government considered means by which the loss of life could be lessened.

I cannot undertake to support any measure of State insurance that will exceed the measure that this House accepted last year. In conclusion, I express the hope that the present year will be attended with the greatest possible success to the country.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th August, 1927.

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

QUESTION—GROUP SETTLEMENT.

Mr. LINDSAY asked the Minister for Lands: What is the total debt charge, including drainage, owing on the 500 group settlement blocks from which it is proposed to remove settlers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: The estimate of a reduction of 500 holdings by linking and abandoning existing holdings is based on progress results of reclassification now proceeding. Until this is completed, the actual holdings from which settlers will be removed are not known. The developmental expenditure on 500 holdings in the areas concerned, based on the average expenditure on groups therein, is roughly estimated at £800,000. The assets on linked holdings will not be lost, and salvage of movable assets will also reduce the loss. Drainage is not completed, and its cost cannot yet be allocated.

QUESTION—ABORIGINES AND DR. COOK'S REPORT.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Health: In view of the fact that the Broome Road Board and other public bodies are in possession of a copy of the report of Dr. Cook's inspection of natives in the North and North-West, will he reconsider his refusal to lay the report on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: Dr. Cook's report was confidential. He is not an officer of the State departments. The fact that the Broome Road Board and other public bodies are in possession of a copy does not remove the obligation to regard it as confidential. Until the Commonwealth authorities release the report, it cannot be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTION—FRUIT, COOL STORE AT FREMANTLE.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, In view of the growing importance of the fruit export business, is it the intention of the Government to construct a cool store on the Fremantle wharf, thereby providing necessary pre-cooling facilities conveniently located for shippers? 2, If so, when?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1 and 2, Ample cold storage accommodation is available at the W.A. Meat Export Co.'s Works, Fremantle; therefore the erection of permanent costly buildings on the Fremantle wharf is not warranted at the present time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.38]: It is very often said that the last session of a Parliament is mainly occupied by members in talking to their electors, having in mind the approaching elections. I think it is also proved that in the first session of a new Parliament, when dealing with the Address-in-reply, members mostly indulge in a repetition of their electioneering speeches. It is perhaps inevitable and to be expected, coming as we do

straight from the polling booths, saturated with our campaign speeches, and literally breathing the atmosphere of the campaign, that we should to a great extent repeat our utterances on the hustings. So I think that the speech of the Leader of the Opposition on Tuesday evening was made up chiefly of statements that he made during the election campaign. The hon. member even brought up our cartoons. We each had a fair share of them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I thought you had them all. I could not have brought them up before.

The PREMIER: I admit that ours were better, and in that respect I sympathise with the hon. member in the lack of imagination possessed by those who conceived or designed some of his party's cartoons.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was due to lack of White City funds. We had no money.

The PREMIER: No. If there were any White City funds in it, the hon. member was responsible, because all the functions and affairs that have been conducted in White City had their origin during the time when the hon. member was Premier.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think so.

The PREMIER: It was in those days that gambling flourished at White City. During the past year or two the gambling element has been reduced by about 90 per cent., compared with what it was during the days when the Leader of the Opposition had control over it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is all very fine.

The PREMIER: It is a fact.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The money was not used for political purposes.

The PREMIER: It was used for the same purpose and by the same people. No new people have gone to White City during the past three years. It is the same body, and the same organisations have utilised it for the past three years that utilised it during the term of the hon. member. Those are the facts with regard to White City.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are not all the facts.

The PREMIER: They are all the facts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Charitable institutions run the place.

The PREMIER: The same charitable institutions are there to-day, and the same

bodies that may be regarded not as charitable. Precisely the same bodies that were there when the hon. member was there are still there, with the difference that gambling has to a large extent been eliminated.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am not sure that you have been there.

Mr. Davy: What about turning White City into a nice garden?

The PREMIER: It is not a bad idea. It will, however, do no harm to have the facts stated clearly and definitely.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you suggest that the same people who are there now were there before?

The PREMIER: I asserted it, I did not suggest it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: For political purposes?

The PREMIER: I did not suggest it, but I made a definite statement that these were the facts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We will have a select committee.

The PREMIER: The only cartoon of importance put out by the Opposition that I noticed was a map of Western Australia, containing the advice that "This is your country. Remember Queensland and New South Wales, and place Labour last." The suggestion was that Queensland and New South Wales had been ruined by Labour Governments. I am quite prepared to credit the people of those States with just the same political intelligence as is possessed by the people in this or any other State in Australia. They may be trusted to look after their own interests when the elections come round. I know, too, that Mr. Lang was worked overtime during the elections. He was brought out upon every platform, and was arraigned before the bar of public opinion in Western Australia, although I do not know why that should have been done here. He is not engaged in serving this State, but he was nevertheless tried, sentenced and executed a thousand times over during the election campaign.

Mr. Lindsay: He was very much alive, was he not?

The PREMIER: Perhaps so.

Mr. Mann: You do not take any exception to that, do you?

The PREMIER: No, but I decline, on behalf of the Government or the Labour Party in this State, to accept any responsibility for any alleged shortcomings that Mr. Lang may have, just as I do not wish

to claim credit for any virtues he may possess. There has been a considerable amount of discussion with regard to the year's financial operations. In some quarters people have been busy examining and analysing the financial returns, to show that the surplus is no real or tangible thing. As a matter of fact, I think I am safe in saying that a considerable number of people in this State are positively annoyed that a Labour Government should produce a surplus.

Mr. Marshall: They are disappointed about it.

The PREMIER: It is quite contrary to all ethics of their politics that a Labour Government should be so discourteous as to produce a surplus. Therefore, those people set themselves the task of proving that the financial result of the year's operations does not represent a surplus at all. The "Sunday Times" says that we actually had a deficit of £750,000. The Leader of the Opposition made it £250,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I was under the mark.

The PREMIER: The "West Australian" was more modest and brought its claim down to two figures. There is rather a discordant note in these statements, and I suggest to them that it would have been wiser if they had taken Lord Melbourne's advice when he said to his Ministers, "It does not matter a damn what we say, so long as we all say the same thing." Had these people consulted with each other—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you suggest I should have consulted them?

The PREMIER: —there would, perhaps, not be so much confusion in the minds of the people of the State to-day as to the real position. Some have said, "Well, there has been no surplus at all," while others, admitting the surplus, say, "Well, even if there is a surplus, it is not to the credit of this Government but it is due to the generosity of the Federal Government." The Press and other critics say that we have had the benefit of the Federal disabilities grant, and the grants for road-making and for other special purposes. Each one of those critics knows perfectly well that not one penny of the Commonwealth money from any of these grants during the past three years has benefited Consolidated Revenue at all.

Mr. Latham: It has relieved Consolidated Revenue.

The PREMIER: In what way?

Mr. Latham: In various ways.

The PREMIER: The inference has been that in some way the money has come directly into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Latham: Not at all.

The PREMIER: It has, and the statements have been made with that purpose in view. The object has been to give people the idea that the improvement in the finances has been brought about because of the Federal grants. I assert again, not one pound of the Federal money has gone into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Mann: But the grants have been of great benefit to the State.

The PREMIER: I do not say they have not been of benefit. I do not say it is not of benefit to the State to have roads made, or to receive a grant that will enable us to reduce taxation. On the other hand, the case has been stated so often by these critics in a way to lead people to believe that the money has gone in some way or other into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Sampson: Even the road board subsidies have been cut down.

The PREMIER: And the expenditure of money in connection with road boards has increased in various directions. The hon. member cannot have it both ways!

Mr. Sampson: The incomes of the road boards have been reduced.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At any rate, the Commonwealth grants have saved the State expenditure.

The PREMIER: In this morning's issue the "West Australian," commenting on the surplus in connection with the goldfields water supply loan sinking fund, referred to my statement that the surplus of £57,000—I understated the amount by £1,000, for the surplus was really £58,000—had been taken into Consolidated Revenue. The "West Australian" stated that my action amounted to "financial jugglery." That is a serious charge. The newspaper criticised me for having taken the money into revenue despite the fact that it had been paid into a sinking fund over a period of some 28 years. If there is any financial jugglery in the matter, it is to be found in the manner in which the "West Australian" has been endeavouring to show, during the

last month or two, that there has been no surplus.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You did not anticipate that when you delivered your Budget speech?

The PREMIER: No, but revenue comes in from various directions not anticipated when we compile our financial statements. Every year revenue that was not expected is received from various sources, and that is made clear by the fact that every Treasurer has under-estimated his receipts in many directions. I claim it is quite a proper and legitimate thing to pay such a surplus into revenue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you knew that money was there.

The PREMIER: I know the hon. member did not comment upon the fact that the Government had paid that money into Consolidated Revenue; I am merely commenting on the statements made by the newspaper. Over a long period of years sinking fund payments in connection with the water supply scheme were drawn from revenue, and when the loan was redeemed and it was found that a surplus existed, it was the proper thing to do to pay that surplus back to revenue. If it happened to come in this year, as the newspaper says it did, I am not responsible for that. I did not arrange the year in which it should come in. It was just the fortune of the political war, as it were, that it happened to come in this year. I did not arrange that it should be available this year in order to help to secure a surplus!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, but you knew that it was there.

The PREMIER: When the loan matured and it was found that there was a surplus of £58,000, it was only proper that the surplus should be paid into Consolidated Revenue. But the "West Australian" describes that as "financial jugglery"!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There was a surplus of £400,000 in June last. I suppose some of the bonds were sold at less than face value.

The PREMIER: At the time it was a matter of face value but subsequently they were sold at market value, which was less than the face value, so that the revenue benefited to that extent. Some of our critics have said that the lines of the Government have fallen in pleasant places, and that the Commonwealth Government have been good to us by making financial grants.

Mr. Mann: It was a very nice windfall to have £58,000 alone!

The PREMIER: Yes, but there is no year in which there are no corresponding items of unexpected expenditure on the other side of the ledger. No Treasurer would ever get very close to his Estimates unless unanticipated revenue came in to counterbalance the unexpected items of expenditure. The newspapers say that I have been boasting about the surplus. I have not said anything about it! I believe I have been extremely modest. When the financial returns for the year were available I gave them to the newspaper reporter.

Mr. Davy: And your face was wreathed in smiles.

The PREMIER: Perhaps so. The reporter asked me for some comments and I told him there was no need for comment as the figures spoke for themselves.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, there was something else you said.

The PREMIER: Yes, I think I said that it was the first surplus since 1910-11. The rest that appeared was written by the reporter. He said that I had a smiling face.

Mr. Withers: It was nothing to cry about!

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Latham: At any rate, the fact that you smiled was nothing unusual.

The PREMIER: Surely there was no justification to be sad about the matter.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You went further than that. Did you not say something about critics who had predicted you would have a deficit of £250,000?

The PREMIER: No, I did not say that at the time I issued the statement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, you did.

The PREMIER: No, I think that was later on. Treasurers who have held office in this State from time to time have looked pleased, and felt pleased, under less satisfactory circumstances. I have before me a newspaper clipping published at the time the financial statement was issued in 1903.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, that was in Daglish's year.

The PREMIER: I am wrong; it was the 1923 statement, not that issued in 1903. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the correction. When I read the statement I think hon. members will agree that I was modest in my very brief statement. This is how the newspaper report reads—

A smiling Premier, with a confident ring in his voice, announced the lowest annual deficit for seven years last night.

Mr. Marshall: It was the smallest baby he ever carried.

The PREMIER: The report continues—

Sir James Mitchell chose to make his statement to the annual gathering of members of the Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia. He bustled into the Savoy Hotel late, and when he answered the toast of "The State Parliament," proposed by Sir Talbot Hobbs, he explained the reason for his unpunctuality.

"To-morrow morning," he said, "there will be some very pleased people in the State. A few, of course, will be disappointed, disappointed that the figures disclose the achievement they do. The croaker does not like to be proved wrong."

Mr. Mann: You agree with that?

The Minister for Mines: The chickens are coming home to roost.

The PREMIER: I have no right to look pleased with a surplus at all!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who said so?

The PREMIER: Quite a number have said so. The report of the hon. member's remarks continues—

"The croaker does not like to be proved wrong. To prove him wrong I was a little late in coming to this meeting so that I might be able to tell you, and through you, the public, how the State closed its financial year."

Then the hon. member proceeded to make a long speech, which was freely punctuated with applause right through. And the genesis of it all was that he was announcing a deficit for that year of £405,000. So it will be seen that some people are justified in rejoicing over a deficit of nearly half a million, while I have no right to smile over a surplus. It will be seen how well the hon. member understands the psychology of the people when he said "There will be croakers." Of course they have no right to be croakers because of a deficit of £405,000, but they have every right to be croakers when there is a surplus. And there are croakers abroad to-day, when the position has been entirely altered. There are croakers to-day when we have a surplus, just as there were croakers in the days when the hon. member made this statement I have quoted. And the whole of his speech was punctuated with tremendous applause.

Mr. Sampson: Applause well justified.

The PREMIER: But there is no justification for even smiling over a surplus, although you may laugh till you nearly take a fit when you have a deficit of £405,000! The

then Premier concluded, apropos of what, I do not know, by saying—

So far as I am concerned, I don't care a tuppenny damn whether I am in Parliament or out of it, but so long as I am in Parliament I am going to do what I think is right. The hon. member has always done what he thought was right. Still, why this jealousy, this hesitation?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is not an atom of jealousy.

The PREMIER: Perhaps not, but why this hesitation to give any credit whatever this year, when there is a surplus?

Mr. Sampson: It is merely that inquiries have been made about interest payments and sinking funds.

The PREMIER: Not merely inquiries, but aspersions and charges that have no foundation in fact. The Leader of the Opposition on Tuesday said that with the elections coming on I budgeted for a surplus of £10,000 in order to make a good showing. That is true. I did budget for a surplus of £10,000. And the hon. member, unofficially during the election campaign budgeted for a deficit of £250,000. The difference between my budget and his budget has been that I was correct, while he was a quarter of a million out.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not know you were going to get that sinking fund.

The PREMIER: I budgeted in order to make a good showing for £10,000, while the hon. member and his followers said repeatedly that there was going to be a deficit of a quarter of a million.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would have been more than that had you not got the sinking fund.

The PREMIER: Nonsense! The sinking fund has not benefited the revenue by a single pound. Statements are made and repeated in order to impress the public that, somehow, we have benefited by the sinking fund and other means to the extent of a very large sum of money. Even when, last night, the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) said there was a surplus on paper, he did not so much as pretend to prove anything, to examine and show anything. Nevertheless that statement, just a passing statement—shall I be pardoned if in all the circumstances I characterise it as an irresponsible statement?—was quite sufficient for the newspaper this morning to give it a headline in the report of the hon. member's speech, so that it might catch the public eye and give

it out that the surplus was only a paper surplus. I want to say it is not a paper surplus, that it is a genuine cash surplus and has been produced without any financial aid from the Commonwealth Government. Not one penny of this money has gone towards producing the surplus, not directly. It is the result of precisely the same methods of financing as have been carried on all through the years. It is said of course—I am not taking any credit—that during the four or five years the Leader of the Opposition was in office his Government sowed the seeds, and that we are reaping the harvest. Well, I do not care.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope it will be a bigger harvest yet.

The PREMIER: I have not claimed any special credit for the Government or denied to any of the past Governments credit that properly belongs to them for the work done towards building up and developing this country. Yet we are told in the Press, and I believe it will continue till the last trumpet blows, right down to the final generation, that if anything good comes to this State it will all date back to the five years that the hon. member was in office. That will be repeated for generations hence.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Don't be jealous.

The PREMIER: I am not. I have never claimed any special credit, but I suggest to some of the critics that they just drop that puerile kind of argument, contending that all the bad things were in the years prior to the hon. member's occupation of office, and that all the good things from now henceforth shall be due and date from the time the hon. member was here. Surely Governments before and after the Mitchell Administration have done just a little to contribute to the State's present satisfactory position! I think therefore that it ill becomes any citizen of the State or any journal to try to damage the financial reputation of the State by proclaiming to the world that the surplus is actually a deficit. The statements are broadcast in Australia and other places, and it is not a very good inducement to those investing money in our country or establishing businesses here to read in responsible journals that the State has really had a deficit, but that it has been faked into a surplus. That, in fact, is what is being said, and it is not in the best interests of the State. I submit that if for mere party purposes political propaganda is attempted to be made by juggling with figures and de-

claring without an atom of proof that a surplus is really a deficit, it is a paltry and miserable attitude for anyone to take up.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In 1912 much was said about a small surplus.

The PREMIER: I sat over there for seven years when, unfortunately, the State was experiencing very heavy deficits, but you will search my speeches of that period in vain to find the carping criticism in regard to the finances that is indulged in to-day respecting this Government. It is frequently said, "Oh well, if the finances have improved, it is because of certain circumstances. The present Government have had an enormously larger revenue to deal with than had the previous Government."

Mr. Mann: That is fair criticism.

The PREMIER: I will endeavour to show that it is very stupid, foolish criticism. A member speaking in another place the other evening quoted figures to show that we had received several millions of pounds more than had been received by our predecessors.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Gross revenue, of course.

The PREMIER: Yes, gross revenue. And it is held that because the gross revenue is increasing year by year, therefore the finances ought to be very much better than they are, and that even if there be a surplus it ought to be bigger than it is. But it does not follow at all.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is very useful, all that revenue.

The PREMIER: I will show that the hon. member had an enormously increased revenue, but did not produce surpluses, that indeed he went back and produced large deficits. The critic who says that because the gross revenue is increasing year by year, the financial position of the State ought necessarily to improve, and that there ought to be a larger surplus, does not know the ABC of public finance.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, of course there will be increases in wages and coal bills and things like that.

The PREMIER: To merely take out a block of figures, such as the critic in another place did, and quote the revenue of four years ago, and compare it with that of last year, and say that there being so many more millions the finances ought to be so much better, is to write down that critic as not knowing what he talks about. That member in another place said the gross revenue had increased by £1,885,000 as compared

with my predecessor's last year of office. But included in the gross revenue is the disabilities grant of £565,000 which, of course, everybody knows does not benefit revenue to the extent of one penny.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Oh yes, it does.

The PREMIER: The grant from the Commonwealth, which is included in these gross figures, the critics have assumed to be general revenue. But it was not available for general revenue purposes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You used it for the first part of the year.

The PREMIER: But it was not included in the year's figures, not a penny of it. The hon. member knows where the money went.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, that is so.

The PREMIER: Well, is it fair criticism to include it in the gross revenue and say, "You have had all this money more than we had," and to deduce from that that we ought to have done better with the finances? That £565,000 of disabilities grant did not go into general revenue at all.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The £365,000 came out.

The PREMIER: The £365,000 went out and the other £200,000 went out by way of the reduction in the income tax, so that the whole of it went out. There was increased revenue from public utilities to the extent of £582,000 which accounts for about a million of it. The Leader of the Opposition knows and anyone elsewhere who sets himself up as a critic ought to know that increased revenue of itself brings increased expenditure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course.

The PREMIER: And very often the additional expenditure is greater than the increased revenue. An examination of the figures right down the years from 1911 shows that, while our revenue has grown from £3,000,000 to £9,000,000, we have been going to the bad financially. In other words the increase in expenditure has been greater than the increase in revenue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In wages, salaries, etc.

The PREMIER: And in many other directions. Under special Acts in the last three years there has been an increase of £521,000—in itself more than half a million.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the recoup is greater.

The PREMIER: I do not know that it is; there are such things as unremunerative services. In the past three years the police expenditure has increased by £35,000 over

which the Government had no control whatever. Lunacy has increased by £13,000 and we had no control there. Gaols have increased by £2,000, medical and health by £18,000, charities by £14,000, and education by £66,000, or a total of £151,000 under those six headings, over which increases the Government had no control. There have been increases to the public service, due to reclassification, amounting to £25,000. Consequently it proves nothing merely to quote increased receipts.

Mr. Mann: The Police Department have been administering the Traffic Act and that brought in £70,000 odd.

The PREMIER: Well, it goes out in other ways.

Mr. Mann: It is special work that the police have been doing.

The PREMIER: Take the year 1910-11, in which year there was a surplus, the total revenue was £3,850,000. In 1924, the last year of the hon. member's term of office, it had increased to £7,865,000. Thus in 13 years our gross revenue increased by £4,000,000 and, according to my critics now, the surplus should have kept on increasing with the increase in revenue. According to their logic, if we had a small surplus in 1911, we should have had a very large surplus in 1924. They argue that my gross revenue has increased and that therefore we should have a bigger surplus. In 13 years the gross revenue increased by £4,000,000, and yet in that period we went to the bad and built up an accumulated deficit of £6,000,000. Where is the value of criticism of that kind? By all the rules of their logic we should have had a huge surplus. If we take the hon. member's five years of office the gross revenue increased from £4,944,000 in the year he took office to £7,865,000 in the year he left office, an increase of £2,920,000 in the five years.

Mr. Richardson: A sign of prosperity.

The PREMIER: The hon. member enjoyed that large increase of revenue and, according to the argument of my critics, he should have been building up a surplus all that time. But what was the fact? While the total revenue increased by nearly £3,000,000, the operations during those five years resulted in a deficit of £2,721,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You know that I succeeded in reducing the deficit. Tell the facts!

The PREMIER: I am answering the class of critic that thinks he has contributed something important to the dis-

cussion when he merely quotes increases of revenue and says, "There you are; the finances ought to be better."

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The finances did improve during my term of office.

The PREMIER: While the revenue increased by nearly £3,000,000, the deficit increased by £2,721,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What was the deficit when I took office?

The PREMIER: Those are the facts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Be fair! What was the deficit when I took office?

The PREMIER: I do not say that the hon. member did not succeed in reducing the deficit in his last two years of office as compared with the previous years. I am merely arguing on the basis adopted by my critics, and showing how utterly worthless it is.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you think it is unfair to you, you need not be unfair to me.

The PREMIER: I am not unfair.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are.

The PREMIER: I am stating the facts. For a critic to point merely to an increase of revenue and argue that the Government should have done better is to betray total ignorance.

Mr. Latham: The Opposition are anxious that you should get on with the good work and build up a bigger surplus.

The PREMIER: Then I welcome the support of the Opposition. It was said, too, that the £200,000 of the disabilities grant had benefited the finances.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We are not responsible for that statement.

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact it was the hon. member's own statement. In a statement to the Press criticising the financial returns for the year, he said I had credited revenue with £200,000 from the disabilities grant as an offset to the reduced taxation, whilst I had suffered very little reduction of taxation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Will you produce that statement?

The PREMIER: Yes, it was in the newspaper. As a matter of fact by taking the £200,000 of Federal grant into revenue and reducing income taxation by 33-1/3rd per cent., I have lost money. I made a bad deal. By the 33-1/3 per cent. reduction I have given away more than I have taken into revenue. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), suggested at the time that perhaps

the reduction of 33-1/3 per cent. would be too great, and the year's operations have shown that it was too great.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There were some increases in taxation—land tax.

The PREMIER: But that has not benefited revenue, because it has been given away in the shape of reduced railway charges.

Mr. Richardson: All of it?

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

The PREMIER: All of it. By the 33-1/3 per cent. reduction in income tax I consider that I have given away probably £250,000, and at the same time I have been able to recoup that by only £200,000 from the Federal grant.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What was the total taxation collected last year?

The PREMIER: I have not the figures before me at the moment.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: About £250,000?

The PREMIER: No; about £55,000 less than my estimate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Put one-third on to that and you have £160,000.

The PREMIER: In any case, we actually lost by the reduction of income tax.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think so.

The PREMIER: I am sure we did. Of course, there is a natural increase in income taxation receipts each year. If it were not so, the State would be in a very sorry position.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you received £320,000 last year and you gave away a third, you would have got more by the £200,000.

The PREMIER: I have not the actual figures, but I certainly have lost by the 33-1/3 per cent. reduction. In other words, I have given away more than the £200,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You gave away only one-third.

The PREMIER: Yes. Last year I estimated the receipts from income tax at £600,000 and reduced that amount by one-third, making the estimated receipts £400,000. Instead of receiving £400,000 I got only £345,000, which amount was considerably less.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then you lost only one half of the amount you received.

The PREMIER: I lost £55,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, you are wrong.

The PREMIER: The hon. member keeps on saying I am wrong, but I know I am right.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am taking your own figures.

The PREMIER: You are not. The actual figures show that I have lost. The average increase of income tax over a period of five years was £50,000 and the increase for the year 1924-5 over the preceding year was £87,000. In making up my estimate I allowed an increase of only £34,000, when I might well have allowed an increase on the basis of £50,000. Taking everything into consideration I have lost by the transaction. That is the financial position and I hope that critics will cease their attempts to show that the surplus has been produced by other than the usual methods or that it is merely a newspaper surplus. The hon. member referred to the operations of the railways, and by quoting figures sought to show that last year's results compared unfavourably with those of his last year of office, the surplus being reduced from £142,000 to £32,000. But really last year's results were better than those of 1923-24. Interest on capital last year was £100,000 more than it was three years ago.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you have more railways, you know.

The PREMIER: Yes, and more railways very often mean greater losses.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not necessarily.

The PREMIER: It is recognised that new railways, especially in agricultural districts, do not pay straight away, but show losses. They are a distinct burden for a few years; that is, until development takes place. In that respect, therefore, the present Government suffered a disadvantage rather than a benefit from the increased mileage of railways. Besides the increase of £100,000 in interest on capital, there was the loss of £45,000 due to reduction of railway rates.

The Minister for Railways: And that loss is increasing.

The PREMIER: It increases with increased business, because the rates remain the same. Therefore, as business increases, so does the loss increase. At the lowest it amounts to a reduction of £45,000 annually for the past three years. Working expenses have, of course, increased. The cost of staff has risen because of enhanced salaries due to arbitration awards. Additional staff has to be provided to cope with extra traffic.

The increase in salaries last year, as compared with the salaries of three years ago, amounted to no less than £366,000. We have taken over 289 miles of line which are non-paying propositions in the early stage. We have done a considerable amount of regrading. From working expenses we have contributed £150,000 in three years towards the work of regrading, a record amount from that item for any period of three years in the history of the working railways. There is also relaying, on which we have spent £80,000. This, too, is work that might well have been done years ago. The system, of course, will now get the advantage of it. I need not go into the figures of expenditure upon rolling stock, which is expenditure from Loan; but the hon. member had ordered ten locomotives, which came to hand soon after we took office and which cost rather more than £100,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That amount was not taken out of revenue.

The PREMIER: No. I say this is all expenditure from Loan.

Mr. Davy: Is the regrading expenditure from Loan?

The PREMIER: The more money we spend on rolling stock and matters of that kind, the more our interest bill goes up. The expenditure affects us to that extent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you save money by it. It is a good investment.

The PREMIER: Quite a number of trucks have been built, and a good deal of rolling stock construction is in hand now. After all, I do not suppose Governments are responsible very much for the financial results of the railway system, which is managed by a Commissioner and staff, and which depends upon influences largely beyond the control of any Government. The Commissioner and his staff, I have no doubt, did their best in our years of office just as they did during the years the hon. member was in power. I know that the Governments do not run the railways and are not largely responsible for the financial results from them. I will now turn to the groups, though I shall say little on the subject, as the Minister for Lands next week will make a full statement of the position obtaining on the groups. It is, however, a fact that a fairly considerable number of holdings have been found unsuitable; and therefore, as has been indicated, reclassification is necessary and will result in a reduction of the

number of blocks by more than 500. The Leader of the Opposition said that in this State no greater trouble had ever been taken in the selection of land than had been taken in selecting the group areas. I can only say that if great trouble was taken, those who took that trouble were, in some respects, not very good judges of land. Whilst the Opposition Leader says that the condemnation of the blocks should not be accepted without proof—a statement with which I agree—he also says it was rather late to discover that these 500 blocks were of no use.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It has taken a long time to discover.

The PREMIER: But the hon. member's first statement answers his second statement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, it does not.

The PREMIER: It does, because the circumstance that the blocks should not be condemned without proof accounts for any delay which it may be thought has occurred. One cannot get the proof in a year or two. To get the proof has taken some years. A first year's failure in the pastures after the expenditure of heavy sums in clearing would not justify the abandonment of a block. We might well believe that the failure was due to circumstances which could be overcome. So it was the duty of those concerned to persevere for another year, and perhaps for yet another year, to see if the difficulties could not be removed and the blocks made profitable. It is only after, in most cases, three years' experience, in some cases two years' experience—

The Minister for Lands: In some cases five years'.

The PREMIER: It was only after the lapse of such periods the Government decided that no good purpose would be served by continuing to persevere and that further perseverance would only entail further losses upon the State. That is the explanation why what hon. members might consider delay has taken place. It has been asked why this was not discovered before, why the loss that has been incurred could not have been avoided by an earlier regrouping or reclassification. But, as I say, we are not justified in resorting to regrouping or reclassification until all reasonable efforts have been made to ascertain whether the land is suitable or not. However, the Minister for Lands will cover that matter by a statement which he will make next week. The Opposition Leader com-

mented on the number of unemployed we have at present. I do not know that the number is any greater than it has been at this season for many years past. I interjected that the number of unemployed was to a considerable extent due to the number of men who had left the groups; and I think that can be substantiated. Whilst there have been 4,320 men sent to the groups, 2,272 have left—52 per cent., more than half. The men who leave the groups must of necessity drift to the labour market, as they have no money; and since the groups were established, 2,272 men have left them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We never had 4,000 blocks settled. Men left blocks, and other men came on them.

The PREMIER: Most of those men were sent to the groups and have left.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But not half.

The PREMIER: Yes. Surely it must be realised that the throwing of 2,200 men on the labour market in the course of a few years is bound to have an effect on employment. That factor, with another factor, is responsible, I venture to say, for the unemployed difficulty which we have been experiencing.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We never brought in 4,000 people.

The PREMIER: Whatever number we brought in, we put a number of people on the blocks, and 2,000 of them left the blocks and necessarily went on the labour market. Thus they were bound to create a difficulty with regard to employment. The difficulty has undoubtedly been increased in the way I have indicated.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If the 2,000 blocks are not occupied, of course the men are on the labour market.

The PREMIER: Apart from the blocks not occupied, there have been some blocks which have had half a dozen settlers on them. One settler went on and stayed a few months and left, and another came on and stayed a few months and left, and so forth. All those who left have gone on the labour market, and the total number who have left is 2,200. That number, together with the number of aliens who are coming to the State, are responsible for the unemployed difficulty. If we bring in a number of people with the intention that they shall not be a drag upon the labour market at all, but that they shall become settlers, and if we find that they do not become settlers but get upon the labour

market, there is the explanation of the difficulty.

Mr. Sampson: A large number of men are growing up unskilled workers. I think that is largely the explanation of the trouble.

The PREMIER: But the normal and average expansion of trade and development of the State should provide for them. However, we have in addition this number of men whom we did not expect to come on the labour market, and so the position has become worse. Probably there would be more unskilled men than before without any accretion from the blocks.

Mr. Sampson: Even our own young men are adding to the unemployed, because they are unskilled workers.

The Minister for Mines: Any number of skilled workers cannot get work.

Mr. Sampson: There is scarcely a tradesman out of work in Australia, I believe; at all events, in this State.

Mr. Clydesdale: I applied for two tradesmen last week and got 46 applicants.

Mr. Sampson: What trade?

Mr. Clydesdale: Painting.

The PREMIER: The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) should start a few more newspapers.

Mr. Sampson: If you can find a few printers, I can find plenty of jobs for them.

The PREMIER: I admit that the hon. member is doing his best to see that there are no printers unemployed.

Mr. Sampson: There is a great shortage, Mr. Premier.

The PREMIER: In addition there has been an excess of arrivals over departures of foreigners in the past 12 months, to the number of just on 2,000. All those men find work somewhere; they are not amongst the unemployed, not one of them. They drift away somewhere and find work. If we have in one year 2,000 foreigners arriving, and add to that 2,000 from the groups, making 4,000 in all, drifting on to the labour market, there is bound to be trouble.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How can there be 2,000 from the groups?

The PREMIER: Does not the hon. member realise that there can be that number? One block can be responsible for half a dozen.

Mr. Lindsay: Immigrants have been coming out to fill the vacancies.

The PREMIER: Not lately, because we require the blocks for those who have had

to be removed. Until those people have been placed we cannot bring in others.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have been going on with some sort of a migration policy during the last three years.

The PREMIER: I know we have, but for some months past migrants have not been coming because we have been faced with the difficulty I have just referred to—finding blocks for those who have to be removed. Many came to the State of their own volition, whilst a number were nominated by their friends.

Mr. Mann: Don't you anticipate that there will always be a percentage of foreigners coming to the State?

The PREMIER: I do, of course. But the question is that they are coming here in such increasing numbers as to create difficulties in the labour markets of Australia. That will be rather a serious matter.

Mr. Mann: It will not if they are being employed as agricultural labourers, or are taking up land for themselves.

The PREMIER: Of course not, if they are taking up land for themselves. But where can they get land for themselves? There are thousands of our own people looking for land without being able to get it.

Mr. Mann: Around the Upper Swan you will find a number of foreigners working.

The PREMIER: Those are men who have been in the country for a number of years. Many of them, having been in the State for years, have acquired land. Even so, I think the number must be limited. A great proportion of the foreign element coming to the State consists of labourers, who will get on to the labour market.

Mr. Mann: Has the Premier ever taken a trip from here to Balcatta, and noticed the work that is being done on the land by the foreigners?

The PREMIER: Yes, that is all right: I am not complaining about that.

Mr. Davy: They are taking the place of Chinamen, in many cases.

The PREMIER: Yes, and I believe they make jolly good settlers in a few years.

Mr. Mann: They are controlling the vegetable industry to-day.

The PREMIER: I am not saying anything against them. Some of them make excellent citizens. But I do think we can well do without a number of those who are the peculiar friends of the member for Perth (Mr. Mann). I do not like to name

the nationality, though I can say they are the fish-and-chips crowd. I do not consider them to be any acquisition to the State. There is room here for men who will go out into the country and acquire land, and in that way help to develop the agricultural industry, but the gentleman who gets possession of a few feet of frontage to a greasy kitchen off the street is not of much use to us. I believe the member for Perth has about 200 of these people on his roll, and they are all naturalised, too. I think we should make representations to the Federal Government to check the arrivals of these people.

Mr. Mann: Yes, that would be all right.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition had something to say, of course, with regard to the state of the rolls, and he was rather severe upon that provision which allows the elector to keep his name on the roll during his absence from an electorate—known as the nomadic voter. I think the hon. member said that it was a rotten provision.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So it is.

The PREMIER: One would imagine that the whole result of the elections had turned upon the votes of these nomads. Let me say this, that of a total enrolment of 209,000, only 291 took advantage of the provisions afforded the nomadic voter. And those 291 were scattered all over the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Will the Premier agree that one man has the right to live in one electorate and vote in another?

The PREMIER: Let us take the West Perth resident, of whom we heard so much during the elections. I do not know his name—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He was only one.

The PREMIER: But he figured in every speech the hon. member made. If his name had only been disclosed, he would have been as well known in this State as—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, what was his name?

The PREMIER: I do not know. All I know of him is that he lived in West Perth, passed through Northam on his way to Kellerberrin, and attempted to get on the Northam roll.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He did get on.

The PREMIER: He lived in West Perth.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: His wife is there.

The PREMIER: His home is there and that is where he ought to have been enrolled. The hon. member said this individual took advantage of the rotten nomadic provisions, and that those provisions were inserted in the Act to allow him to remain on the West Perth roll, and to get on another roll.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He got on the Northam roll.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said that it was because of the nomadic provision that this West Perth resident got on the train and left it at Northam. I believe that the train was held up for a quarter of an hour to enable him to enrol, and then he continued his journey to Kellerberrin.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I know that sort of thing takes place.

The PREMIER: No man has a right to be on the roll except in a proper manner and according to the laws of the land, but I am not going to assert that it is not an easy matter for the hon. member, or anyone else, to give instances of persons being improperly enrolled in every electorate of the State. We know of names having remained on a roll after the persons concerned have left the district, or have been disqualified from remaining on the roll. That has always occurred, not only here but throughout Australia. We also know of impersonations having taken place. One would think, to hear the hon. member talk, that 10,000 or 20,000 electors had taken advantage of the nomadic provisions, whereas the number was merely 291.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you say that because there were 291 it is all right?

The PREMIER: I am not saying that it is all right.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then what are you going to do about it?

The PREMIER: There were many more than 291 at past elections who were disfranchised because of the absence of the nomadic provision.

Mr. Davy: The provision has been in the Act for many years.

The PREMIER: Then advantage was not taken of it. Many left their residences and were struck off. Take the famous West Perth resident: he was on the roll for West Perth.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: Well, let us assume that he was. He got work at Kellerberrin and

while he was absent from Perth his name was struck off the roll and an election was approaching.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are getting mixed up.

The PREMIER: No; he was not long enough in the other place to get on the roll—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He was on the Avon roll and was transferred to Northam.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that 30 or 40 were similarly disfranchised. It was assumed that these men who follow migratory occupations are labour supporters and that there would be no harm in their being disfranchised. If they cannot get on the roll, it does not matter. That is the assumption. It would appear that we should not have selected every district for road work, but concentrated on roads in those districts where there was no Labour candidate. That, it is contended, is all that should have been done. In some districts, because an election was taking place and men were working on the roads, a noise was made about it. But nothing was said about the men employed on roads in districts where there were no Labour candidates. In the Murray-Wellington electorate there were several hundred men on road construction for many months prior to Christmas. Should we have stopped work there and shifted the men somewhere else, where they might have had the opportunity to vote for their choice?

Mr. Latham: Why did you pay the fares of a number of men over the Midland railway?

The PREMIER: That is not true. That statement was made at the time and specifically denied by responsible Ministers. It was repeated the other day in the Press that men were sent over the Midland railway to work at Mullewa. The statement was absolutely untrue.

Mr. Sampson: It was a mere coincidence that they should have arrived on the last day that would entitle them to enrolment.

The PREMIER: Because there was no train via Wongan Hills to get them there in time, it was stated that their fares were paid on the Midland line. There was absolutely no truth in that. The men were sent over the Midland line to work in Midland districts. Did hon. members expect these men to be sent via Wongan Hills, then via Mullewa, to employment half way along the Midland line? Is that what was desired?

Mr. Latham: What about the men working at Walkaway?

The PREMIER: Because men were sent to districts along the upper end of the Midland railway, it is said they should have been sent first to Northam, then along to Mullewa, then to Geraldton and back over portion of the Midland railway. Those men who were sent up to work in the Midland district were very properly sent over the Midland railway. How else could they have been sent?

Mr. Sampson: There is an unfortunate coincidence in connection with the date of their arrival.

The PREMIER: I do not know about that. The same thing was said about all the men who were engaged in the Murray-Wellington electorate, although they had been working there for several months.

The Minister for Railways: Some for three years.

The PREMIER: Yes. We find, however, that the member for the district complained about the presence of these men. It was said that the condition of the Bunbury road was such that many farmers were making more money by standing by with horses pulling motor cars out of the mud than they were making from their own land.

Mr. Sampson: That has always been an industry there.

The PREMIER: The hon. member representing the district complained just as much as other members did, and said the work should be stopped. The only thing expected of us was to stop the whole programme of road construction for three months, and allow the men to stand idle. Had we done that we would have been accused of raising an army of unemployed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No one would have suggested that.

The PREMIER: More work was done in the Irwin electorate than in any other. Quite a number of men were employed in the Toodyay and Moora electorates, in neither of which Labour had any contest.

Mr. Mann: The men thought they were in the Northam electorate.

The PREMIER: They were very foolish. That is the sort of cock and bull story that was told all along the line. It was said that the men got out at Baker's Hill and thought they were in Northam.

Mr. Lindsay: They received a terrible shock when they found they were in Toodyay.

Mr. Sampson: They lost interest in Toodyay when they discovered that.

The Minister for Railways: They stayed, and did some work there anyhow.

The PREMIER: The hon. member gave no evidence and put forward no facts. All that he says is "They say that men were sent over the Midland line." They say the men were sent out without tools and without any plant. They say this and that. They say that orders were given for sandalwood in the Menzies district. Who are these mythical "theys"? They must be some indefinable and unspecified people. They said all kinds of things at election time; they say everything.

Mr. Sampson: I saw them out on the road from Mullewa.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member suggest that all the men should have been gathered together in one spot and placed where Labour had no candidates for Parliament? No programme of work can be carried on like that. It involves hundreds of thousands of pounds and over 2,000 men. Is that body of men to be concentrated where there is to be no political contest?

Mr. Mann: Do you know—

The PREMIER: I do know that if that body of men had been concentrated on the metropolitan tramways we could have defeated the hon. member. They could have been put on to relaying work.

Mr. Mann: Does the Premier know that the Honorary Minister controlling the Labour Bureau stated that he engaged 1,100 men in one day?

The PREMIER: I do not know that he said that.

The Minister for Mines: And I have to say that he did not say it.

Mr. Mann: The Minister did not contradict it.

The PREMIER: If it was said, it was not correct, because not more than 500 men were employed for months after Christmas on road work. I do not believe the Honorary Minister did say so, but I believe the Press said it.

The Minister for Mines: The Press said that I spoke of 25 per cent. of the men, but it was somebody else who did so.

The PREMIER: The Press said those things over and over again. All that the man who writes the "They Say" column in the "Sunday Times" needs is a vivid imagination. They say all these things. "They" represents the man in the street. All kinds of things were said about the hon. member and

about me, and about every other candidate at the elections. They were most active in saying these things, and they said all kinds of things. Not one of us had a shred of character left because of what they said. What they say boils down to what Smith told Brown, what Brown told Jones, and what he told Robinson, and so it goes on. It is like an old woman's tale told over the back yard fence, a tale that is passed along to other neighbours up the street. No one knows where it originates. A number of mythical people is classified under the heading of "they say."

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you say that only 500 men were engaged in road construction during the election period?

The PREMIER: There have been about 2,000 men on the roads during the past few years. The number has varied from 1,700 to 2,300 for some time past.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At the previous elections men were not put on the roads in all that haste.

The PREMIER: At the previous election the programme had not been arranged and the full year's grant was not in use. The Mitchell Government had only spent about £16,000, and the organisation was not complete.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We had men out on the South-West roads.

The PREMIER: There was no rush about the matter. Every citizen in this country is entitled to a vote.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A month before he gets it.

The PREMIER: He is entitled to be enrolled if he is in the district for the qualifying period. I do not know of any irregularity at the last election other than those isolated cases which always occur. If one knew all the facts about every election, one would find that in every electorate some people were enrolled without fulfilling the qualifying period. They take the risk. They do not belong to any party, but to all parties.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course they take no risk.

The PREMIER: In conclusion I hope that members will keep an open mind with regard to the proposed arrangement between the State and the Federal authorities on the question of finance.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We must do so until we hear more about it.

The PREMIER: There is a tendency in some quarters for men to make up their minds without a full knowledge of the facts, to act on some newspaper statement, and to get preconceived ideas. If they make up their minds on these things there may be difficulty about inducing them to alter their opinion later. They may believe they have to be consistent in the matter. I hope members will not be influenced by the speeches that may be made elsewhere, or by statements that may be made, but will keep an entirely open mind until the question comes before them for consideration.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Certain statements have been made. Like all negotiations with the Commonwealth, we get only a part at a time.

The PREMIER: It is impossible to avoid that. I have said very little myself, merely that the Government have accepted it. Every member on this side of the House will be able to express his opinion freely, and to vote according to his judgment. I hope every member will adopt that attitude, and that none will commit himself until the agreement has been laid upon the Table.

Mr. Stubbs: When will it be here?

The PREMIER: It should be here this week. The final print should be before us then. It will have to go before Cabinet and be signed. As soon as it is available, it will be presented to the House, and full and ample opportunity will be provided for members to study it before it comes up for discussion. It will be the most important matter that this Parliament has been called upon to deal with for many years. It will require our very fullest and deepest consideration apart from prejudice and bias. We must be careful to see that we do not tie up the State in anything that will hamper its future development, and must, therefore, examine the document from every possible angle. I hope members will do that and enable us to secure the free, fair and impartial judgment of this House and of another place before the matter is finally dealt with.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No one is able to venture an opinion because the figures have not yet been supplied.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. FERGUSON (Moore) [7.31]: I had hoped, before making my maiden attempt at a speech in this Chamber, to have the privilege of hearing the senior member for

the Midland country, the member for Irwin (Mr. Maley), make his contribution to the debate. Then I might have been in the position of merely endorsing what he had to say regarding the difficulties and disabilities under which we in the Midland country labour. I have been told that the member for Irwin has already made his contribution to the debate by way of interjection last night when the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) was speaking.

Mr. Richardson: Why do you not wait until he is here to say that?

Mr. FERGUSON: I am not in the habit of saying things behind anyone's back.

Mr. Richardson: You are doing so now.

Mr. FERGUSON: However, I have had the privilege of listening to the Premier, and it has been a great treat. Certainly it is worth three months' hard electioneering to have the privilege of sitting here this evening and listening to the Premier. Since the election, and since I have been more or less in the precincts of the Chamber, I have heard a good deal in condemnation of the present Government; but I am not so obsessed with party bias, at least not yet, that I cannot afford to give credit where credit is due. I am bound to say that as regards the carrying-on of the work of this State, the present Government have done fairly well under somewhat difficult circumstances.

Mr. Mann: You kill them with faint praise.

Mr. FERGUSON: In my opinion, the Minister for Lands is to be congratulated on the manner in which he has tackled his job. I hope the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) will not object to my saying in the Minister's absence that he has tackled the difficulties and problems connected with group settlement, particularly problems which were not of his own making but were bequeathed to him by other Ministers and other Ministries—

Mr. Sampson: There are troubles in connection with every big scheme.

Mr. Teesdale: I hope you are not referring to Mr. Angwin when you say "other Ministers."

Mr. FERGUSON: I say that the manner in which the present Minister for Lands has tackled the problems and difficulties associated with group settlement should excite the admiration of every member of the House. A similar remark applies to the Minister for Works, who has done good service in his department; and I think we

should give him credit for it. I had a long association with the local governing bodies of this country, and this has brought me a little in contact with the Minister for Works and his department. I am in a position to state that there is a consensus of opinion among the local governing bodies in the back country that since the inception of responsible government there never has been a Minister for Works so sympathetic and so well disposed towards them as the present occupant of the office. I have heard the present Minister for Works described as "a little Mussolini." If to display boundless energy and enthusiasm on behalf of the State is to be a Mussolini, the Minister for Works may well be proud of the title. Certainly he has shown a most sympathetic feeling towards the bodies that are carrying on the work of local government in the back blocks, and they fully recognise it. I regret that the Minister's state of health does not allow him to take his seat in this Chamber at present, and I wish to express the hope that before long his health will be perfectly restored. In my opinion, it is the duty of those who are interested in the welfare of the State to recognise good work performed by Ministers, and I am indeed pleased to be able to pay my tribute to the good work which those individual Ministers have done. These remarks apply also to the Honorary Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department. Possibly it is because he is a new Minister and I am a new member, but he has always been prepared to listen to any reasonable proposition put up to him, and I wish to thank him for the encouragement he has given me. The same remarks apply to the Honorary Minister in charge of State Hotels and the Aborigines Department. That Minister is, I believe, doing specially good work in the interests of the unfortunate race which is fast dying out in Western Australia. I wish to congratulate the Government on their decision to proceed with the construction of the Bjandjand Northwards railway. Notwithstanding what the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) has said about other railways—and I consider the railways mentioned by him should be constructed—there is, in my opinion, no line the construction of which has been authorised by Parliament, that will give such quick and good returns as the Bjandjand Northwards railway. For these reasons, it should be proceeded with immediately. Having made an inspection of

the country to be served, I venture the opinion that if the line is completed in time to shift the present harvest during the first year, there will be about three-quarters of a million bags of wheat transported over that railway. I do not think there is any other authorised railway for which so much can be said. I am naturally proud of being the Parliamentary representative of an electorate like Moore, which I consider to be the richest of all the country electorates in Western Australia. I can prove my statement by referring to some of the diversified interests that we have in the Moore electorate. They are more diversified than those of any other rural electorate in this State. Firstly, we have the market gardens at the southern end of the electorate, at Wanneroo, whose produce is sent to nearly all the capital cities of Australia and always commands the highest prices in those cities. The bulk of the vegetable supplies for the metropolitan area comes from the Moore electorate. On the other side of the river we have the viti-culturists of the Swan, and a little higher up the orchards. Further up still, there is mixed farming country along the Midland Railway, and then there is the wheat belt on the eastern side of the electorate. Therefore, I think I am safe in saying that no other rural electorate of this State is so wealthy as the Moore electorate. In addition, there is no other electorate that has had such scant favour from past Governments. It has always been highly difficult to induce Governments to spend money in the Moore electorate, the main reason being that the bulk of the electorate is traversed by a privately-owned railway line. While I am on this phase of the question, let me say that there is a consensus of opinion among the people in that country that no other Government has been so sympathetic towards them, or has so fully recognised their disabilities and disadvantages, as the present Government.

Member: You had a Premier for years.

Mr. FERGUSON: Yes, but that Premier though he was a very fine old chap, and though we all had the greatest respect for him, never saw the need for having very much done in his electorate in the way of public expenditure, the reason being purely and simply that he thought other electorates might say he was selfish. One thing everybody knew him to be utterly incapable

of, and that was selfishness. I am afraid the electorate suffered as a result.

Mr. Mann: He was not a parish pump politician.

Mr. FERGUSON: That may be. The electorate represented by the hon. member interjecting does not require a parish pump, as country electorates do. The hon. member has his water supply from a nice little tap at his back door. Now I desire to refer to some of the industries we have in the Moore electorate. As regards the viti-cultural industry on the Swan, there are two sections—the wine-making section and the dried fruits section. The wine-making section is at present labouring under considerable difficulties, and that the State Government are not doing much to help it. The dried fruits industry is in an even worse position. Seeing that the Government have invested considerable sums of public money in the industry by placing returned soldiers on the Swan lands, with the object of producing dried fruits, it is up to the State to do a little more than is being done for those growers. Unless something is done in the near future, they will be down and out. The dried fruits grower on the Swan is at present in a worse position than the wheat grower was in during the partial drought of 1914. I do not know exactly in what way the Government of the country can assist these people, but something should be done to ensure that they shall be enabled to get a living wage out of the work they are doing on their blocks. There is just one little incident I would like to mention as an illustration of lack of sympathy on the part of the Government for the dried fruit growers. It is in reference to the supply of dried fruits to Government institutions. On what I believe to be reliable authority I have been informed that some little time ago the Tender Board invited tenders for the supply of dried fruits to the State institutions, and that owing to what the board regarded as the high prices submitted to them for these dried fruits, they refused to accept any tender and recommended the institutions concerned to purchase dates. The Government of the country having invested a good deal of money in the dried fruits industry, and the people engaged in that industry not being in a position to make a living wage, it is pretty hard to have the position rubbed in by such an intimation

to Government institutions not to purchase locally-grown dried fruits but, instead, to purchase dates, which are stones to the extent of 50 per cent. and which are grown by black labour.

Mr. Sampson: And they are highly insani-
sanitary.

Mr. FERGUSON: I suggest to the Premier that he take steps to ensure that such an incident does not occur again. I hope he will see the necessity for giving encouragement to the growers of dried fruits at least to the extent of using their products in Government institutions, and thus giving a lead to the rest of the State. Reference has been made by the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) to the reduction of road board subsidies. Some few years ago there was no such thing as road board taxation, or local government taxation. The money spent by the road boards in those days was supplied out of Consolidated Revenue. Later on, the local governing bodies found themselves compelled to strike rates, and the State Government subsidised those rates to some extent. The subsidy has been gradually cut down, and this year only about 50 per cent. of it remains.

Mr. Sampson: A little less than 50 per cent.

Mr. FERGUSON: Yes, it may be a little less.

Hon. J. Cunningham: They are lucky to get it.

Mr. FERGUSON: I understood the Premier to say that the State was finding a considerable amount of money in connection with the construction of roads under the Commonwealth grant, and that the State could not be expected to maintain the subsidies. Two years ago an arrangement was entered into between the Commonwealth and the State under which roads were to be constructed on a pound for pound basis. Subsequently the State pointed out to the Commonwealth that that was not a fair division, because the State was compelled to pay administration expenses. In consequence of that the Commonwealth agreed to find £1 on condition that the State contributed 15s., and that basis was fixed. As soon as that basis was established, and as soon as the elections were over, the Government promptly reduced the subsidies to the road boards, thereby committing a breach of faith with the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Justice: Nonsense!

Mr. FERGUSON: The Commonwealth Government were led to believe that we were doing a certain amount of work in connection with the expenditure under the road grant, and it was in consequence of those representations that they agreed to contribute £1 to every 15s. contributed by the State. Surely it was a breach of faith to take the action I have indicated after entering into such an agreement!

Mr. Mann: Which Minister was responsible for that?

Mr. FERGUSON: I take it the Minister for Works was responsible, because it has been done since the elections. I am not responsible for all the sins of the Minister for Works. Although he has done very well in many respects, certain things have been authorised that warrant me in criticising him and members of the Government generally. Reference has been made to the Vermin Act Amendment Act passed by the last Parliament. That legislation has caused more comment and dissatisfaction in the rural districts than any other Act passed in recent years.

The Minister for Justice: They asked for it.

Mr. FERGUSON: It is very difficult for me to hear interjections; I have defective hearing in my left ear, and therefore cannot hear anything from the Government side of the House.

Mr. Lambert: You certainly will not hear anything intelligent on the other side.

Mr. FERGUSON: I hardly agree with that.

Mr. Sampson: At any rate, you are much to be envied!

Mr. FERGUSON: I believe there is a biblical injunction having reference to requests for bread and receiving stones. That is what we got in this instance.

The Minister for Justice: No, you asked for bread and you got bread.

Mr. FERGUSON: We got twice as much in taxation as we asked for.

Mr. Griffiths: Four times as much.

Mr. Angelo: You got dough instead of bread!

Mr. FERGUSON: As there are as many sheep in the South-West as in the pastoral areas, surely it is only fair and equitable that the money for paying the bonuses for the destruction of dingoes, foxes, and hawks should be contributed on a fifty-fifty basis

by the two industries. On the other hand, we find the farmers in the agricultural areas have to pay four times as much as the pastoralists. In my opinion this money should be taken from Consolidated Revenue and the State should receive some assistance from the Commonwealth because the destruction of vermin is a national concern. The depredations of dingoes, foxes, and hawks cause an economic loss to the whole of the people of the Commonwealth, and it is not right that one section only should pay for the destruction of those pests. At present everyone owning 160 or more acres of land is called upon to pay the vermin tax. There are many people who own holdings of that extent who are called upon to pay the tax but have no more interest in the destruction of the pests than have men who own corner blocks in Hay-street or St. George's-terrace. There are men who own blocks in the Swan district for vineyard purposes, and others who have small areas in the South-West and elsewhere, who have never seen a dingo, fox, or hawk in their lives, and are therefore no more interested in their destruction than are shopkeepers in Perth. Why should such people be called upon to pay the vermin tax? It passes my comprehension. I know of two instances of men owning 160 acres and 140 acres respectively in the Swan district. The man owning the block comprising 140 acres has 100 sheep, whereas the man owning the 160-acre block has his land mostly under vines but also has some 30 sheep. The man who has 140 acres is exempt, but the man who has the greater area has to pay the tax! There should be some differentiation in respect of the bonus paid in the North and that paid in the agricultural areas. Prior to the 1st July last the bonus payable in the northern areas was something like 5s., but now a uniform bonus of £2 applies throughout the State. Under those conditions the dingo trapper in the North will make a small fortune.

The Minister for Justice: And good luck to him!

Mr. FERGUSON: I say good luck to him, too, for I realise that we must get rid of the vermin. On the other hand, the existing legislation debar local authorities in the agricultural areas from contributing anything towards the bonus paid by the central board for the destruction of the pests.

Hon. H. Millington: That is not so.

Mr. Lindsay: Then you have only just recently altered the position.

Mr. FERGUSON: I have it directly from the officials of the Agricultural Department that the local boards will not be allowed to use their funds for subsidising the bonus paid by the central board.

Hon. H. Millington: The Act does not prevent the boards from subsidising the bonus.

Mr. FERGUSON: Do I understand that the Act does not prevent local boards from contributing funds so as to subsidise the bonus paid by the central board?

Hon. H. Millington: It does not.

Mr. FERGUSON: Then it is peculiar that we have been notified by the Agricultural Department that we cannot use our funds in that direction. With all due respect to the Minister, I say he is wrong. The legislation should be amended so as to enable local governing authorities to supplement the bonus paid by the central board. For some time past the road board with which I am associated has been paying a bonus of £5 per scalp. Even at that price it has been difficult to get trappers and others to devote the time necessary to the destruction of the pests I have mentioned. At the same time the efforts of the board have succeeded to a certain extent and the pest has been reduced very considerably. Now that we have been prohibited by the dictum of the Agricultural Department from paying the bonus, we will not be able to pay more than £2 per scalp as from the 1st July. That means that no trapper will devote his time and energy in an endeavour to cope with the pest. The reward to him will not be adequate. All road boards in the agricultural areas are desirous of having the power to utilise their funds to supplement the bonus paid by the central board.

Hon. H. Millington: They will be able to do it.

Mr. FERGUSON: At present they are debarred from doing so. If they are not prohibited by the Act, they have been debarred in consequence of the notification from the Agricultural Department. I wish now to refer to the Midland areas. I do not mean the small tract of country on either side of the Midland railway, but to the whole area extending from Midland Junction to Geraldton and from Goomalling to Mullewa. Naturally we are proud of that area because it furnishes the State with the biggest farmer in the world, and also the highest average of any district in the State. It has done that for many years past. Although the member

for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) may feel inclined to contradict my statement, statistics supplied by the Government confirm it.

Mr. Griffiths: The Midland area has the highest average.

Mr. Lindsay: But does not produce the largest quantity of wheat.

Mr. FERGUSON: That is due to the presence of a privately-owned railway line that has made it difficult for the country to be developed along right lines. The Midland area comprises some of the most fertile land in Western Australia. That is demonstrated at the Royal Agricultural Society's show year by year, giving evidence of the stock produced in the area. Moreover, another sign of the progress of the Midland areas has been the capture of that coveted prize, the Governor's Cup, on numerous occasions. From the standpoint of fat lamb raising, there is hardly any other district in the State that can approach the Midland areas. People resident in that part of the State are keen on achieving two things. The first is the purchase by the State of the Midland railway and the second is the construction of a railway from Jurien Bay on the coast eastwards. Dealing with the Midland railway first, I affirm that the development and progress of the whole of the Midland area has been retarded and has been carried out on absolutely wrong lines. This has been due to the country being served by a privately-owned railway. In other parts of the State, served by State railways, by far the biggest percentage of the farms comprise areas of between 1,000 and 1,500 acres, whereas in the Midland areas men with long purses have been able to pick the eyes out of the country by the purchase of huge areas. That is not in the best interests of Western Australia as a whole, for the towns established along the Midland Railway, or for the Midland Railway Company either. Those at the head of the company have been far too short-sighted, and have not been able to see that such a policy is not in their own interests. Had that land been served by a State railway, such conditions would never have obtained. The reply furnished by the Premier to my question yesterday will be very disheartening to the people in the Midland district. We had hoped that the time was coming when we would be relieved of the additional tax due to the country being served by a private railway. The Midland

people are of the opinion that they are treated by the State Government in a somewhat similar manner to that which Western Australia claims is meted out to her by the Commonwealth. Not too much sympathy has been shown towards the settlers in the Midland areas, and therefore development has been held up in consequence. I will give one instance to indicate the hardships under which they are suffering. I have studied the railway freight charges on the State railways and have compared them with those levied on the Midland line. I find that the freight on a 6-ton truck of power kerosene, carried over a distance of 120 miles on a Government railway is £3 12s. 2d. per truck less than is charged over a similar distance for a similar truck conveyed partly over the Midland line and partly over the State railways. Under such conditions it is not to be expected that the primary producer in the Midland areas can compete with his fellow producers in other parts of the State. That is one of the handicaps they have to put up with, and there are many more of them as well. We have experienced great difficulty in inducing, not only the present Government but former Governments as well, to see the wisdom of spending a fair share of the revenue of the State in the Midland areas. Governments seem to be of the opinion that there is a possibility that any assistance rendered in that direction may help a foreign company. It has to be remembered that the Midland Railway Company commenced operations in this State and spent money in its development at a time when it was impossible for the State to build a railway through the Midland areas. It is up to the State Government to give the company a fair deal. I am not quite sure that they are getting it. No one will accuse me of being a great friend of the Midland Railway Company, because I have probably criticised them more than anyone else, but there are times when one feels that something should be done to relieve them of their property by means of the State acquiring it. The people there have been endeavouring for many years to get the State Government to purchase the line. So far we have never been able to find a Government able to work up sufficient enthusiasm to purchase it. Years ago, when the present Leader of the Opposition was Premier, we tried to get him to do something in the matter, but without avail.

Mr. Sampson: You mean his efforts were not successful.

Mr. FERGUSON: Since the Leader of the Opposition is not here just now, I might be accused of saying something behind his back. However, as his offside is here, I may remark that the Leader of the Opposition was reported to have said there was not an acre of good land north of Perth, at all events not worth troubling about.

Mr. Sampson: He must have been misrepresented. No such statement was made.

Mr. FERGUSON: Well, twelve times yesterday the Leader of the Opposition quoted things that he had been told. Possibly I was told this by the same man. If the Leader of the Opposition never said it, at all events his efforts on behalf of these Midland districts proved what he thought of the land.

Mr. Sampson: You are not justified in saying that.

Mr. FERGUSON: When the present Government came into office we had hopes that they were going to do something with the Midland railway proposition, for the Premier took up the matter with more enthusiasm than his predecessors had shown.

Mr. Richardson: He negotiated, just as the Leader of the Opposition did, but without success.

The Minister for Railways: This Government offered the price that the previous Government could have got the line for, but the offer was refused.

Mr. Richardson: The longer it remains, the higher the price will be.

Mr. FERGUSON: If any of us wanted to set about buying a railway system, the first thing we should do would be to have a valuation made of the property. The Government of the State have not had a valuation of the Midland lands made since the late Mr. William Paterson, of the Agricultural Bank, inspected the property, and placed a valuation upon it. That was nearly 20 years ago. There has been no examination of the land since then, and nothing more than a cursory examination of the line.

Mr. Teesdale: Then there is nothing more to be said.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No proper valuation of the land has been made by the Lands Department.

Mr. FERGUSON: But land up there that was looked upon as useless 20 years ago is growing highly profitable crops to-day. We would like to induce the present Government

to put a little enthusiasm into this matter and make another effort to see if they cannot purchase the Midland railway.

Mr. Sampson: Now you are on right lines.

The Minister for Railways: You might show us how to raise some cash.

Mr. FERGUSON: I do not think much cash would be required. The Premier, when he returned from the Old Country, said it was useless to negotiate with the Midland Company, because every time the matter was mentioned the price was put up still higher. That has not always been so. I must say in fairness to the company that when they have put up the price, they have offered to sell more property within that price. On one occasion they increased the price from a million to £1,850,000, but in that increased price they offered their equity in the land sold but not paid for. The promissory notes due on that land were worth £300,000. In addition they offered several new engines and some new rolling stock. As the result of the progress of the State and the development on the land they had disposed of, the company's railway had been converted from a losing proposition into a payable one. Therefore they had a right to claim a little extra for it.

The Minister for Railways: But they had sold a lot of their land in the meantime.

Mr. FERGUSON: Yes, and every acre they sell makes their railway line more valuable.

The Minister for Railways: But not the residue of their landed property.

Mr. FERGUSON: Any company with a payable business to sell is likely to increase the price in accordance with the prospects. Will the Minister for Railways give an assurance that he will endeavour to take up this matter with the Midland Railway Company again and see if he can strike a bargain in the interests of the people of that country? At present thousands of settlers there are dissatisfied with their lot because they are not on the same basis as their fellow producers in other parts of the State. We pay a little more in taxation but we do not get a fair share of the loaves and fishes. If the Government were to take up the matter with the Midland Railway Company now, and make a valuation of the whole of the property, there would be a possibility of the complete concern being acquired by means of arbitration, which would be fair to both sides. I make that suggestion to the Minis-

ter for Railways in the hope that he may act upon it. The other thing about which the people of the Midland country are concerned is the construction of a railway from Jurien Bay eastward. Although my friend the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) thinks his railway should be constructed before all others, I consider that the Government should construct the railways that will do most good to the State by opening up new country, rather than go on with a railway authorised for many years, but which will not render as great a service to the State. A railway from Jurien Bay to the south-east would open up a very fertile tract of country at Dandarragan, a country very little known in Western Australia to-day, except in point of stock raising. Yet for viticulture and dairying it is far ahead of anything else in the State. There is room there for 50,000 acres of vines. As I say, that district is better suited for viticulture than is any other part of the State. There is no land in the Swan district or at Toodyay to be compared with the Dandarragan country for viticulture; and I, coming from the Swan, say that. I can refer members to the viticultural expert at the Department of Agriculture, who will endorse what I have said. Moreover, that area of country is not in my electorate, so I cannot be accused of grinding an axe.

Mr. Sampson: The finest vineyard in Australia is in the Swan district.

Mr. FERGUSON: And when the Dandarragan district is opened up the finest vineyard in Australia will be there. Also that railway would open up some very fine fertiliser deposits along that stretch.

Mr. Griffiths: Are they not of too low a value?

Mr. FERGUSON: No, they will be quite worth working when railway communication is provided, although the stuff will not pay if it has to be carted so great a distance. That railway could be continued through Moora to Bindi Bindi on the Piawaning-Miling line and on through Ballidu on the Wongan Hills line to the eastern spur of the Ejanding Northwards railway, and eventually out towards Bullfinch. The line would have a wonderful effect on the opening up of all that country. Jurien Bay, I am assured, could be made an excellent port. It is the natural port of all that country I have mentioned. Hundreds of thousands of bags of wheat are being grown in that country to-day, and there will be many thousands

more when the Ejanding-Northwards railway with its eastern spur is built. All the wheat grown from Winchester to Mogumber on the Midland line, from Piawaning to Miling on that line, and from Buntine to Wongan Hills on the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, and on the northern end of the proposed Ejanding-Northwards railway can be shipped far more economically at Jurien Bay than at either Geraldton or Fremantle.

Mr. Angelo: The member for Geraldton is not listening, nor is the member for Fremantle.

Mr. FERGUSON: I am sure those members would not stand in the way of the development of the State, even if it were to have some slight prejudicial effect on their own ports. The Minister for Agriculture on his return from a trip through the eastern districts recently referred to the light lands of the country in glowing terms. He said there were nine million acres of light land in close proximity to existing railways. I have suggested to the Minister that he should establish a light lands experimental farm in the Midlands districts, and I sincerely hope he will see his way to do so. For out of the nine million acres of light land two million acres are on the westward side of the Midland railway, and at present are scarcely being utilised at all. There is just this difference between the light lands west of the Midland railway and the rest of the light lands of this State: the land west of the line will not grow payable wheat crops. All the light lands on the eastern side are producing payable wheat crops, but that to the west is not capable of such a result. Still there may be other uses for that land, such as the growth of fodder crops and the carrying of sheep, and so it is up to the Government to prove whether that huge area of land, ideally situated in point of climate and rainfall, with an existing railway on one side and a natural port on the other, is not capable of giving a good return. It is a great pity that the whole of it should be lying idle at present, producing nothing but rabbits and dingoes. If the Government would spend £5,000 experimenting with 5,000 acres of that land, they could demonstrate whether or not a settler could make a living on it. It is a job for the State, not for the private individual. If the experiment proved a failure, probably many thousands of pounds would be saved to private individuals, while if it proved a success it would be a very fine

investment from the point of view of the State; because that two million acres now lying idle would promptly be taken up and made to produce wealth to help pay the taxation we have to contribute towards the carrying on of the State. I should like to refer to one or two other matters in which my electors are keenly interested. One is the accommodation provided at the Wongan Hills State hotel. It is the only State hotel in the Moore electorate, and it is conducted on ideal lines. The district served by the town of Wongan is one of the finest of our wheat districts, but the accommodation at the hotel is entirely inadequate for the requirements. I have been at that hotel seeking accommodation a number of times during the past 12 months. On each occasion I have found every room in the hotel occupied and the verandah space fully taken up by beds. If the license were held by a private individual the Licensing Board would compel him to supply reasonable accommodation to meet the requirements of the district and of the travelling public.

Mr. Sampson: It is time the Licensing Board visited the hotel and also the Bruce Rock hotel.

Mr. FERGUSON: I urge the Treasurer to endeavour to find sufficient funds so that the necessary additions to the accommodation of that hotel may be made.

Mr. Sampson: Why not let it to a private individual, and then you would get the proper accommodation?

Mr. Marshall: And have it like the hotel at Mullewa?

Mr. FERGUSON: The Wongan Hills hotel is well conducted, and no resident of the district would hear of a private hotel being started in opposition, provided the required additions were made. There is not sufficient business to warrant the erection of a private hotel to compete with the State hotel. The public buildings at Wongan Hills are the only ones in the town that do not meet requirements. The post office—which I know comes under the Federal Government—the railway station and the State hotel are inadequate for the requirements of the township. Many years ago the Government of which Sir Henry Lefroy was the Leader, spent a good deal of money in sinking an artesian bore in the Moora distret. It was somewhat of a failure, largely because it was not completed. I ask the Government to make an attempt to demonstrate whether the sub-artesian basin exists in that

locality. Moora is the principal town on the Midland railway and it is without a water supply. I believe it is the only town of its size and importance in the State that has not a water supply of any kind.

Mr. Lindsay: Wyalcatchem has not one yet.

Mr. FERGUSON: Wyalcatchem is only a pup compared with Moora. Efforts have been made by the Public Works Department to locate water there, but so far a satisfactory scheme has not been provided. A proposition has been made that a well should be sunk in a certain place and that the residents should agree to pay 3s. 6d. in the pound to meet the cost. No resident of the town will undertake to do that, because all are quite satisfied that the well will not yield sufficient water. The Works Department officials, on the other hand, say there is sufficient water. The owner of the land on whose property the bore was sunk has endeavoured to get sufficient water in that locality for his own requirements, and has failed, and so it is not likely that the residents of the town would enter into a contract that would make them liable for a rate of 3s. 6d. to furnish a water supply at a spot where they are of opinion water is non-existent. On the occasion of the visit of the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. W. Hickey) to Moora we pointed out the necessity for making additions to the courthouse. I suggest to the Minister for Justice that he discuss the matter with the Honorary Minister with a view to having the additions made. The present courthouse is about big enough to swing a cat in, and all the business of the district is done there. Apart from the court business, there is all the electoral, savings bank and other work that clerks of courts have to do, and it has all to be done there. There is only one little room for the purpose, and it is always congested. I hope the Minister for Justice will see his way to increase the accommodation. During my election campaign I found that throughout my electorate and, indeed, in other parts of the State, there is a keen demand for a redistribution of seats. The present state of affairs is entirely unsatisfactory, and I hope that before long the Government will introduce a Bill to give effect to the wishes of the people.

Mr. Sampson: It is a scandalous position.

Mr. FERGUSON: In the Governor's Speech mention was made of a Bill to authorise State insurance. I am of opinion that there is no demand from the country for State insurance. The people

are satisfied that no good will accrue to them from the State's embarking on insurance business, and they are unanimously of opinion that insurance is a business that should be left to private enterprise.

The Minister for Mines: Not unanimously of opinion, by a long way. Do not say that.

Mr. Marshall: The last election proved your argument to be absolutely wrong.

Mr. FERGUSON: It proved nothing at all in the matter of State insurance. The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) raised the question of the influx of southern Europeans. The Premier, in his speech, stated that many of the southern Europeans who have come to the State would make good settlers. In his policy speech delivered at Boulder prior to the elections, he stated that the ultimate prosperity of Western Australia depended absolutely upon the uninterrupted progress of the primary industries. He did not say it depended on the uninterrupted progress of the motor industry, the printing industry, or the brickmaking industry; he said it depended absolutely upon the uninterrupted progress of the primary industries. The uninterrupted progress of the primary industries is dependent largely upon the ability of the people engaged in those industries to get the country they take up cleared and cultivated at reasonable cost, and with the utmost expedition, and that is work for which the southern Europeans are eminently suited. It is the class of work they are doing at present. I expect the member for East Perth would reply that Australians could do it if a reasonable rate were paid for the work. That is not so. The man who wants his land cleared is prepared to pay a reasonable price, but he wants to get the work done. The Australian does not want to do it. The Australian can do other jobs for which he is temperamentally more suited, and leave the clearing work to the southern Europeans. I have done my share of clearing, and at best it is hard, bullocking work. There are hundreds of thousands of acres in the Midland districts that need to be cleared.

Mr. Sleeman: At what price?

Mr. FERGUSON: The price does not enter into the question. The southern

Europeans will not do it any cheaper than would Australians, but they will do it.

Mr. Sleeman: The Australians would do it better.

Mr. FERGUSON: There are a good many hundreds of southern Europeans in the Midland districts, but not one of them is working at a lower rate than an Australian would receive for the work. They are shrewd enough to know what the Australian gets, and they will not undertake the work at a lower rate. The Australian would receive the preference if he would do the work, but he does not want it and I do not blame him. The member for Fremantle has done a little clearing in his time, and I know that he does not want to do any more of it. He prefers his present job.

Mr. Sleeman: I still say the Australian would do a better job.

Mr. FERGUSON: There are not enough Australians available to do it, and the southern Europeans are doing it, and doing it well. I do not say that Australians would not do it as well; but they are not available to do the clearing that is required at present.

Mr. Sleeman: There is not enough brass available to encourage them to do it.

Mr. FERGUSON: The southern Europeans do not hang about the metropolitan area after arrival, but get straight into the backblocks and undertake this class of work. They are not educated men, like Australians; they are suited for this work, and the hard toil and long hours they will put up with, whereas the Australian will not. I believe there is a good time in store for this State. We have the promise of a wonderful season. I have spent all my life in Western Australia, and I do not remember a season that promised so well throughout the State. From Wyndham to Albany the country is in for an excellent season. Of course, the harvest will depend upon the rain we get during the next six weeks or so, but please God we shall get it, and have a bountiful harvest. Some of the Eastern States are not experiencing such a good season. In South Australia and New South Wales the season is pretty bad owing to a shortage of rain. On this account I have a suggestion to make to the Government. Seeing that we are having such a bountiful season and that there is sufficient feed in this State to maintain millions more sheep

than we have depastured, it would be a favourable opportunity to get some of the starving stock from the Eastern States into our pastoral areas. It would be a good scheme for the State Government to take up with the Commonwealth Government by offering to transport stock over the trans-Australian and State railways at a cheap rate in order to make the transfer an economic proposition. The cost of transport at existing rates is fairly heavy, but it would be money well spent if the two Governments subsidised the cost.

Mr. Teesdale: Those States charged us £15 for chaff when we had a drought. They are nice people to do a good turn to.

Mr. FERGUSON: In conclusion let me say I have a genuine desire to assist in the development and progress of my native State, and if during my term as a member of Parliament I can do something to that end, my ambition will have been achieved.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.27 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 9th August, 1927.

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

QUESTION—DAIRYING, SOUTH-WEST AREAS.

Hon. A. BURVILL asked the Chief Secretary: What is the approximate area of South-West land, alienated and unalienated, suitable for dairying, starting from 50 miles east of Albany to 50 miles north of Bunbury?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The approximate area is 7,940,000 acres, but there is not sufficient information available to say how much of this area is suitable for dairying.

PAPERS—COLLIE POWER SCHEME.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing ordered: That all papers, reports, plans, estimates, etc., in connection with the proposed Collie Power Scheme be laid upon the Table of the House.

MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

To disallow regulations.

Debate resumed from 4th August on the following motion by Hon. G. Potter:—

That the regulations prescribing omnibus routes Nos. 7, 16, 20, 42, 48, 54, and 55, under "The Traffic Act, 1919-1926," published in the "Government Gazette" on the 22nd July, 1927, and laid upon the Table on the 2nd August, 1927, be and are hereby disallowed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: It is not surprising that there should be a motion for the disallowance of these regulations. Even if they had been prepared by King Solomon, we would look for such a result. Many diverse interests are concerned, and those who may suffer or who may imagine they suffer even the slightest inconvenience are naturally up in arms, and they soon find champions for their side. Where the safety of the public is concerned the interest is too general to win numerous advocates, and it is too often the case that, in the desire to consider the welfare of a section, the welfare of the mass is overlooked. The grounds on which the disallowance of the regulations is sought are the weakest that could be used to influence a responsible and deliberative assembly such as the Legislative Council. Because Mr. Potter and Mr. Gray, and others with a similar lack of experience in such matters, consider that the starting points and termini of motor vehicles are wrong, that is no reason why the judgment of experts on this question should be set aside. We are asked to obey the behests of Mr. Potter, Mr. Gray and Mr. Kitson, and ignore the experience and wisdom of those whose business it is to give close study to