

of the metropolitan area. However, I do not know that complaining about it will do any good.

The Premier: Except that it will serve as a guide when the next centenary comes around.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is to be hoped the Treasurer in making this money available will remember some of those outback places that a few of us represent in Parliament. In little places like Coolgardie and Southern Cross it would be very nice as a tribute to the prospectors, such as Paddy Hannan, who did so much for Western Australia, if a couple of hundred pounds could be allocated against the cost of the local centenary celebrations.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It surprised me to hear from the member for Gascoyne that very little of this money has been spent in the country districts. I was under the impression that assistance was being given to a lot of the celebrations in the country. I join in the general protest against the whole of this money having been spent in the metropolitan area.

Mr. TEESDALE: I do not know that preceding speakers have made out much of a case for their districts. Most of them have railway communication and boast of picture shows, but the children of the North-West will not know anything about the centenary.

The Premier: If they are at school, they will.

Mr. TEESDALE: The children of the North-West have a pretty bad time, particularly those of Roebourne.

The Premier: They will know that it is the centenary because it has been celebrated in all the schools.

Mr. TEESDALE: We have no newspaper up there, and I do not think more than three "West Australians" are taken in that town, the number being limited by the aerial service on account of the weight. So the people of Roebourne are not in touch with what is happening. I doubt whether the occasion has been marked by any significance short of an address at the school. If the event could be made memorable to the children by the distribution of £10 worth of toys and confectionery, it would be a good thing. Such places in the North-West have far more claim to consideration than have Coolgardie, Kalbarrie or Hannans. The people in those places

have ample pleasure provided for them, but it would be a novelty for the children of Roebourne to see a picture show or to have a celebration in connection with the centenary.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 1.35 a.m. (Thursday).

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 26th September, 1929.

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

### QUESTION—MINING, GEOLOGICAL REPORT.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Will he lay on the Table the recent geological report of Dr. Stilwell on the East Coolgardie Goldfield? 2, If not, what is the reason for withholding the report?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, The report is still in the hands of the Government Printer, and will be made available as soon as practicable.

### QUESTION—YUNA RAILWAY, EXTENSIONS.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the Railway Advisory Board been requested to report on any exten-

sions of the Yuna line? 2, If so, when will the board's inspection take place?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, An inspection has taken place, and a report was made in November, 1923.

### QUESTION (2)—M.S. "KANGAROO," INDUSTRIAL TROUBLE.

#### *Wyndham Meat Works Employees.*

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that a large number of men are stranded at Wyndham by reason of no ship being available to return to Perth? 2, Are those men drawing full pay; if not, what rate of pay? 3, Has this position been created through the hold-up of the motor ship "Kangaroo" at Fremantle? 4, If this be correct, will the Government wireless one of the Singapore steamers to call at Wyndham in order to return the stranded employees.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, No; they receive an allowance of 15s. per day. 3, Yes. 4, I have already done so, but the only steamer in close proximity had already commitments which prevented her from undertaking this work.

#### *Steps for Settlement.*

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: What steps are being taken to get the "Kangaroo" away from Fremantle?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Steps are being taken, but it would not be desirable to state at present what those steps are. There is every prospect of the trouble being settled, but it would be inadvisable to enter into details at this stage.

### BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

### BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by Hon. J. Nicholson and read a first time.

### BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2) £1,210,000.

#### *Standing Orders Suspension.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.43]: I move—

That in the event of a Supply Bill being transmitted to this House by the Legislative Assembly during the present sitting, so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to pass through all its stages at this sitting.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: There being an absolute majority of members present and no voice in the negative, I declare the motion carried.

Question thus passed.

### MOTION—UNEMPLOYMENT.

Debate resumed from the 11th September on the following motion by Hon. H. Seddon:—

That in view of the state of continued unemployment in Western Australia, this House is of the opinion that the Government should indicate what means have been adopted to remedy the evil, and what measures are proposed to minimise its future recurrence."

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.49]: I listened with interest to the remarks of the mover, and I have since read his speech with a view to discovering just what it is that he expects the Government to do in pursuance of his motion. He first of all said that he was led to move the motion in view of statements made by myself in this Chamber and the Premier in another place when speaking on the Address-in-reply. The mover remarked that the statements made by me regarding foreign labour in Western Australia were somewhat conflicting when compared with statements made elsewhere. He said he accepted my correction. If any member has an idea that I was suggesting that a great proportion of the alien workers in this State had come from the Eastern States, I wish to make it clear that I had no intention of conveying any such impression, and I certainly did not make such a statement. But I did state, as I have done on several occasions, that during recent years approximately 50 per cent. of the aliens arriving in Australia have arrived in Western Australia. The mover covered a good deal of ground when dealing with the

subject. For instance, he referred to Federal and State finance, Great Britain's financial position, the foreign trade of the Commonwealth, the reduction of revenue in Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, by reason of falling prices for our principal primary products. He had something to say regarding statistics dealing with productivity in Western Australia as compared with productivity elsewhere, based, I believe, on remarks made by me earlier in the session when quoting certain figures from the International Labour Bureau.

Hon. A. Lovekin: All the hon. member's statements bore on unemployment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not saying they did not. The mover quoted the remarks of the president of the Arbitration Court as to the lack of certain statistics, which the hon. member suggested would be of value in dealing with the unemployment question, particularly from the aspect of industrial arbitration. He also mentioned the fact that a large number of men are coming to Western Australia from the Eastern States. In that regard he said we should be pleased to have such large numbers of men coming to Western Australia, particularly young men who possibly, on account of their experience in the East, and in view of their calibre, would prove valuable here with respect to our position from a developmental point of view. The hon. member also dealt with what he described as the disturbance which is taking place in Federal Parliamentary circles. He seemed particularly keen to impress upon hon. members that he wished to dissociate his motion from politics. In other words, he wanted it to be understood that he did not desire any of his remarks to be regarded from the viewpoint of political propaganda.

Hon. H. Seddon: That is right.

The HONORARY MINISTER: During the past few days we have heard in this Chamber quite a number of suggestions that the legislation being introduced here, for instance, is nothing more or less than window-dressing for political purposes. I venture to say that if one reads the hon. member's speech on this motion, only one inference is to be drawn—that the motion is political propaganda of the worst possible kind.

Hon. H. Seddon: Do you mean the whole lot of it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, the whole lot.

Hon. H. Seddon: All right.

The HONORARY MINISTER: For instance, although the hon. member desired to dissociate his motion from anything savouring of political propaganda, he apparently could not refrain from associating the Government and the political party to which I and other members of the Ministry belong with quite a number of things which, at any rate to my way of thinking, could only be adduced with the object of discrediting the efforts of the present Government, and of those associated with the Government, to alleviate the position created by the unemployment now existing here.

Hon. H. Seddon: That is fair enough.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not propose to cover the whole of the ground which the hon. member traversed.

Hon. E. H. Harris: No, you want to answer him.

The HONORARY MINISTER: However, I do think that the hon. member, although he asked so many questions dealing with so many subjects, answered those questions himself. Any one reading the mover's speech will realise that although asking questions he was also supplying answers. These answers, or at all events some of them, have been furnished by myself from time to time. May I here remark that one statement made by the hon. member was to the effect that members of the Government were now to be found even quoting statements that had previously been made by members of this Chamber when issuing warnings to the Government regarding the position facing us at present, and the position we are likely to be faced with in the near future. That may be so. Probably it is correct. However, I would not like hon. members to think that the statements made from time to time by myself, or by the Premier, or by other members of the Ministry, have been made as the result of warnings uttered from time to time in this Chamber. The Government are fully aware of the position, and have been aware of it for some considerable time. We claim that we have taken all possible steps to deal with the situation as we find it, and, we believe, with fair success.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Without result.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member thinks that, I cannot help it.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: I mean that we have the unemployed still with us.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I consider that the Government have been very successful up to a point; but there is a point beyond which we as a Government cannot go. The hon. member interjecting must realise that there is a duty devolving at a time like this not only on the Government but on every person in the State to do what is possible to alleviate the position. Unfortunately it is found that in only too many cases private employers and especially private employers engaged in the primary industries, are not doing what they might in order to improve the position: rather have they made it worse. In some instances, arising out of circumstances beyond the control of the employers, there may have been no option. Similarly, circumstances beyond the control of the Government sometimes make it impossible for them to do more than they are doing for the time being. The mover suggested that it was up to some member of the Ministry to give detailed information regarding the steps taken by the Government to deal with the unemployment difficulty, in the same way as I gave a detailed statement here on that subject during last session. There is absolutely no need, or there should be no need, for any member of the Government to come forward with a statement similar to that made last session. I consider that the Government have proved by their attitude and by their actions that they leave no stone unturned to deal with the unemployment problem, or any similar problem which may arise, although I admit, as I said before, that there are times when it is not possible for the Government to do quite as much as they would like to do. The hon. member quoted statistics showing the number of men who a few months ago were in the employ of the Government. He compared that number of Government employees with the total number of wage earners in Western Australia. I believe he found the percentage to be about 19.5 of the total number of wage earners in Western Australia. Some hon. members seem to think that percentage particularly high; I believe various hon. members interjected views to that effect.

But what do hon. members expect the Government to do? Do they expect the Government to find work for every man who comes into this State, no matter where he comes from or what his qualifications may be? Do members of this Chamber expect the Government to provide work for every man requiring work, for every man who may be in private employment and who may lose it at any minute? What would be the position if the Government were to undertake to employ every unemployed man in the State? I venture to say that within a week or a fortnight there would be a fresh number of unemployed, men put off from private employment; and of course there is a limit beyond which no Government can possibly go. Dealing with that same question, and particularly with manual work, by far the greater proportion of the work provided by the Government is of a developmental character. It is work which perhaps is not immediately reproductive but will eventually prove to be reproductive so far as the State is concerned. To those hon. members who think that the number employed by the Government is too large, I would say that employment is provided in those directions mostly needed to develop the country in a right and proper way and as quickly as the finances will allow. The question of the actual number employed is neither here nor there. There have been times when the Government have not been able to put in hand all the work that they had available. There have been various reasons for that. With regard to the Main Roads Board, it was not possible for that body last year to put in hand all the work they would have liked to undertake. This year, as we know, there is an increased programme which will make up the leeway to some extent. There is a possibility of a greater number of men being employed on road work within the next few months. But let it be understood that these men will not be employed directly by the Government or for Government departments. The money is made available by the Government, and whether the work is carried out by a Government department or by private contractors does not affect the position. All that concerns us is that the work is provided. I think I am right in stating that in his opening remarks the hon. member said unemployment in this State had been gradually increasing for the past 12 months, and he also declared that owing

to the tactics indulged in by the Government in getting men away to the country there had been no demonstrations. The hon. member may think that way if he likes, but I am afraid the figures are against him. The present Government have always said that there is a certain amount of work to be had in the country and they have advised the unemployed accordingly. As Minister in charge of the Labour Bureau, I have had occasion to tell these men that they had as good an opportunity of securing work through the branches of the Labour Bureau in the country as they had in the city where they would be only swelling the numbers of the unemployed.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: They will not work in the country.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am sick and tired of answering interjections of that kind.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: You do not like the truth.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member will call at the Labour Bureau, I will introduce him to men who will be perfectly willing to work in the country provided of course that the conditions are as they should be.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: If the Honorary Minister comes with me to the country, I will show him that there are hundreds who will not work there.

The HONORARY MINISTER: When we are dealing with hundreds of men I suppose we are likely to find a small percentage of the class referred to by the hon. member. They, however, cannot be taken as being typical of the lot. If he has had the bad luck to meet a few of that kind, it seems reasonable that they are prepared to remain in the country. From reports received during the last few weeks, I know that there are many men in different centres throughout the State who are looking for work and who are not able to get it except under conditions and at wages they are not prepared to accept. I may say that I do not blame them. There is a big difference between asking men to work at the ruling rate of wages and under normal conditions, and asking them to work for a lower rate, and under conditions that are not fair to them, simply because they are unemployed.

Hon. H. Seddon: And you say that is being done?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I say there are cases where men have been offered

work in such circumstances, work such as clearing and fencing at rates that they could not possibly accept because they were too low. The reply has been given on more than one occasion—I am speaking with personal knowledge now—that there are any number of men in the country districts who are quite prepared to do that work at the lower rates. It is then that we find that those men are alien workers about whom we have heard such a lot in recent months. From my own experience within the last fortnight I know of one offer that was made to do certain work in the country which no Britisher would look at at the same figure.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: What sort of work was it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Clearing.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen interjected.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member knows the Agricultural Bank will not permit foreign labourer to be employed if British labourer is available.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Did I say otherwise?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Again quite recently, in connection with property in which I have an interest, an offer was made to do clearing work at 7s. per acre less than I was prepared to pay. Britishers were employed on this work and they made a good job of it. This applies also to many districts in the State. On the other hand the alien worker often demands the same rate as the Britisher, that is when he has been here for some time and is not hard up against it. Perhaps, too, it is the result of experience and a knowledge of the conditions in the particular district and, like all good trades unionists, the foreigner does not believe in cutting the rate. But there are many who are prepared to do the work at a lower rate than the Britisher.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: All I can say is that I have never met them.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member comes from a district where there are men who are prepared to do that class of work. The work that the Labour Bureau has available is principally Government work in different parts of the State. At the same time, a certain amount of private work is provided through the

bureau, but not to the same extent as previously.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Because men in the country appear to be quite content to employ foreign labour in preference to Britishers and they know they cannot get foreign labour at the bureau.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: That may go down at the Trades Hall.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I will give you the other side of that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am basing my remarks on actual experience during the past few months, and if we take notice of the debates in this Chamber only within the last few days, we can arrive at the conclusion that there is a good deal of truth in what I have said. It is a long time since I have met so many members who are prepared to advocate the employment of foreigners instead of Britishers. I do not wish hon. members to misconstrue my remarks, but in view of the discussions that have taken place here it is necessary for me to draw attention to these facts.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: A few months ago some young fellows left me in the lurch because the football season was coming on.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have endeavoured to extend the operations of the Labour Bureau during the last 12 months so as to make it a little easier for men unemployed in country districts to get into touch with whatever work that might be offering. We have established additional branches throughout the country and a number of agencies. Even so, the number of unemployed has been considerably more than could be absorbed by the work that was offering. One is rather tempted to examine the position from the point of view of what is the main reason for this. How is it we cannot do as we used to do in the way of placing men in the country? I do wish hon. members would refrain from running down, as they have been doing, the value of work performed by Britishers.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: It is because they will not work.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I say they work just as well as anyone else.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: They are paid twice as much as they were getting 15 years ago and they do only half the amount of work.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is pleasing to get these interjections and I certainly would say it is easy for hon. members to make them in this Chamber. I am inclined to think they would be afraid to stand up to them if they met the type of man with whom I have come into contact looking for work and not being able to get it. If Mr. Glasheen has any work to offer, I am prepared to say that I will supply, with an hour's notice, just as many men as he can find work for, and I will guarantee that those men will give him every satisfaction provided, of course, wages and conditions are reasonable. Coming back to the question of foreigners in Western Australia, I wish to draw attention to the fact that in 1923 the United States of America put into operation what is known as the quota system. That prevented the entry into the States of Southern Europeans beyond a certain number and it became necessary for those people to find other places to which to migrate. It was then that they turned their faces to Australia.

Hon. H. Seddon: And other countries.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. Since that time they have been coming here in increasing numbers. For the 4½ years ended 30th June last, the number of aliens to arrive in Western Australia in excess of departures was no less than 7,713. If those figures are compared with any previous figures it will be found they are many times greater in respect of Western Australia than they have been at any time previously in the State's history. I repeat I have no objection to the foreigner who comes here of his own free will provided he is prepared to take things as he finds them and lives up to our standard. I am aware that in many cases these people make excellent settlers. On the other hand we have to recognise that there is a point beyond which no country can go in absorbing new arrivals. That point depends to a great extent upon the size of the community into which these people come. With a population of 400,000 such as we have, 7,713 of these new arrivals is more serious than it would be in any other State in the Commonwealth. All these men are actually in the State, and a great majority are in work. That is one of the principal causes why our own people are looking for work.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are they not creating work for others?

Hon. C. B. Williams: They are sending hundreds of thousands of pounds in cash out of the country.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In addition to this, there has been a large influx from the other States owing to the conditions there. That is another good reason why we have found it extremely difficult to place our unemployed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are they not coming into the country because there has been a Labour Government in power for the last few years?

Hon. J. R. Brown: No.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They are coming to the country because the United States have instituted the quota system and prevented the migration there of Southern Europeans in such numbers as formerly.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why should they be coming to this country?

The PRESIDENT: Ample opportunity will be afforded to members to reply to the Minister's statements.

Hon. J. R. Brown: They cannot do so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They are also coming here, because this is the one State in the Commonwealth in which so much development work is being done in the agricultural and pastoral areas, and in the mining and timber industries. Because they have apparently been received with open arms over a long period, they cannot be blamed for thinking that every opportunity will be given to them to secure work of the kind they are fitted for.

Hon. H. Seddon: Did you notice in the Press that the Secretary of the Jugo-Slav Association said 40 per cent. of his people were out of work?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I did not see the statement and do not know whether it is right or wrong. I do not say all these people are in employment. Just as with our own citizens there will be times in the year when probably all are at work, and other times when a fair percentage will be looking for it.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The same authority said that there were 7,000 Jugo-Slavs here.

The HONORARY MINISTER: These factors provide a good reason why it is difficult for us to absorb our own people as quickly as we would like. No matter what our position may be, as to the amount of work that is required to be done, we are in a position to absorb only a limited number

of men and of newcomers. The hon. member endeavoured to make a point by comparing the present position, in regard to the influx of people from the other States, with the position some years ago when they came here on account of the gold rush. The two periods cannot be compared.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The same type of man is not coming here as came then.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Seddon suggested that they were of the same type and that we should be glad to see them and make them welcome. I agree they should be made welcome, and I am pleased to see them here. Those people, however, who have the opportunity to provide work for them should be prepared to give preference to their own people above the aliens who have been here only for a year or two. I would make another distinction between the past and the present. When people came here attracted by the lure of gold they were provided with a fair amount of capital.

Hon. H. Seddon: Some of them had money.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And some came without any.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Quite so. Many came here with very little, but the majority had sufficient to tide them over a few weeks or months. There is a different outlook on the part of those who follow the mining industry compared with those who follow some other kind of industry. Some of the men who came here were the finest the world has ever seen.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: They came from all callings. It was the most cosmopolitan crowd in the world. Many of them came from farms and stations.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not doubt the hon. member. They were attracted by the lure of gold and had an outlook different from that held by most other people. They were also possessed of sufficient capital to permit them to stand a siege for a while.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They had plenty of courage and self-reliance.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have plenty of men now possessed of the same characteristics, but apparently they are not given much opportunity to get work. In the old days Western Australia was in a different position. There was very little agricultural work going on, so that most of the new arrivals got into the mining industry. The mining people endeavoured to

look after them so that none should fall by the way from lack of finance. Nowhere would it be possible to find a better race of men than those who opened up the gold-fields in the early days. With regard to the question of Government sentiment in the matter, I would say that from time to time we have given railway passes to members of the unemployed, who desired to go into the country either to definite work or in the hope of finding it. Last year we adopted the same method, but this year the number of passes issued has been less by several hundreds than was the case then. This disproves Mr. Seddon's statement with regard to the tactics of the Government in sending these people out of town.

Hon. H. Seddon: I was speaking of their leaders.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If Mr. Seddon can prove his statement, well and good. I do not know who their leaders are. There are one or two sections amongst the unemployed. Possibly some of the men look upon themselves as leaders, but they are only leaders of those sections.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: How do you mean to connect that with the falling off in the number of men going to the country?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The number of men in the metropolitan area who have had the opportunity to get country work has been much smaller than usual. The work has not been offering. Returns from the country show a very different position from what occurred last year.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Owing to the bad season.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I dare say the poor season in one or two districts had an effect upon the position, and in some districts may have had a big effect. I think the bad seasons in the other States had a greater effect. As a result of those conditions the banking and financial institutions have not made available sufficient money for the developmental work that is required to be done in this State. In many cases men who were operating on large overdrafts were compelled to reduce them and sometimes the overdrafts were stopped altogether.

Hon. H. Seddon: One of the restrictions of finance.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Is it fair to blame those people because they cannot find employment for people who want it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not blame people who are in that position.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Unfortunately most of them are in that position.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot agree with the hon. member. That is one of the reasons why Western Australia has been so much affected by the position in the other States. If there is one State in the Commonwealth where it is necessary for us to have finance made available, it is here. We have a big work to do to develop our agricultural and pastoral areas, and unless money is made available, our settlers cannot go ahead as quickly as they would like to do.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: You may say the position is partly due to oversea finance.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Many factors are responsible for the present position. The Government have no control over those factors. The finances of the private individual have an important bearing on the position. Some men would no doubt have been employing three or four people on developmental work, but for the restrictions placed upon them by the banking institutions. Mr. Seddon raised a question regarding statistics and asked what the Government intended to do. He wanted to know if we had taken any notice of the Premier's conference.

Hon. H. Seddon: Of the President of the Arbitration Court.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He quoted the President of the Arbitration Court and Mr. Somerville.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is not the tariff one of the contributing factors?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It has a lot to do with the matter at times. The question has not been overlooked. It has been the subject of a number of conferences between the Government Statistician, the Minister for Works, the Arbitration Court, the Employers' Federation and trades unions. There are two difficulties with regard to these particular statistics. First of all our secondary industries are in a small way. Any statistics that were available would not be valuable as they should be when used for the purpose desired. It would be better for all concerned if we could have additional statistics to work upon. Consequently it was decided a little while ago that as a conference of statisticians was to be held in Canberra, the Government Statisticians should deal with this matter with a



view to having uniform action taken if possible throughout the Commonwealth. This is not a matter that affects Western Australia only; it affects the whole of the Commonwealth. The Government Statistician has pointed out some of the difficulties involved in getting reliable figures of the description sought by the hon. member. Notwithstanding those difficulties, it is the desire that the whole of the statisticians of the Commonwealth shall go into the matter with the object of ascertaining if it is possible to do something in the direction suggested. Incidentally, our own Statisticians' Department is in a similar position to that in which every other such department throughout Australia finds itself. Insufficient money is available to enable the departments to work with the object of getting the results desired. I admit there is room for improvement in that direction. The hon. member also referred to what he termed the stability committee.

Hon. H. Seddon: As recommended in the report on unemployment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That was dealt with at the Premiers' Conference in May. I have before me a report of the proceedings and I notice that Mr. Bruce intimated that the Commonwealth Government had taken the necessary action to secure statistics and data in connection with employment. I think that was in connection with the Bureau of Economic Research; I am not sure of the exact title of the body. That point, however, has not been lost sight of. The Government are prepared to endeavour to improve upon the position as we find it to-day. I may be permitted to draw a comparison between Western Australia and the Eastern States. Recently I had the opportunity of visiting three of the States in connection with Government matters. I was not there in connection with the unemployment problem, but I took the opportunity to make a few inquiries and to observe the position for myself. I am sorry to say that the position in each of those three States, when I was there, was considerably worse than that which obtained in Western Australia. As a matter of fact, in some of the capital cities in the Eastern States the position is simply appalling.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And will get worse.

Hon. C. H. Wittenoom: That is due to the season.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: When I was there, it was mostly due to the timber strike and the railway strike.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If we were to go into the whole of the causes of unemployment, we would secure a list—

Hon. H. Seddon: As long as your arm.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. There are some causes of unemployment that it is impossible to deal with satisfactorily. In the particular States I refer to, the position has been appalling and certainly considerably worse than in Western Australia.

Hon. H. Seddon: Did I understand you to say that the Government had taken steps to form an industrial stability committee?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I said that the matter had not been overlooked, and that the Government were prepared to take whatever steps they could in the interests of the unemployed. I dare say the matter will be discussed shortly, but, as with other matters, it may perhaps take a little longer than we would like. One hon. member suggested that the introduction of aliens might be explained by the fact that there is a Labour Government in power in Western Australia. I do not know if that is so. The Collier Government is the only Labour Government in the Commonwealth and the position here, irrespective of the season and other considerations, is far better than in any of the other States where there are no Labour Governments. Although men are coming here from all the States in the East, not South Australia alone, I have the evidence of many of those men, who come to me on deputations from time to time, that in this State we are endeavouring to do something for them and that they have a better opportunity of securing work here than they had in the Eastern States.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Can you tell me approximately how many unemployed there are in the State at present?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, I have not the exact figures. I know that the number compares more than favourably at present with the position at the corresponding period of last year. The number of registrations in the metropolitan area are several hundred less than they were at this time last year. The outlook is considerably better now than it was at a corresponding period last year and I hope,

now that we have reached the end of September, there will be a larger volume of work available in the country areas. I trust that the work made available by private people and the Government will absorb a considerable proportion of the men who are prepared to work in the country areas. Those men who will take work only in the metropolitan area will have a poor chance indeed of securing much employment. There will be little available for men in the metropolitan area, and those who will not go into the country districts may possibly have to wait a long while. I also want to make it clear that if private employers put off their men at the present juncture, it will not be possible for the Government to provide work to absorb them in addition to those that are being catered for at present. I do not desire to delay the House much longer on this question. I have pointed out some of the reasons why we have unemployment with us at present. Mr. Seddon laid stress on the fact that, in his opinion, there has been a violation of economic laws throughout Australia, that we had to realise that fact, and that the position would be worse 12 months hence. The hon. member asked what the Government proposed to do 12 months hence when it was possible they would not have so much money available at their disposal.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Government will not be in power then!

The HONORARY MINISTER: When the time comes, the Government of the day, whoever they may be, will no doubt find some ways and means of dealing with the position. I claim that the present Government have done their best to meet the position in a fairly satisfactory manner up to date. We have done everything we could be expected to do as a Government, and if some people are not satisfied with what we have done, let them come forward with their suggestions and we will be pleased to consider them. In concluding his remarks Mr. Seddon said—

There is one thing that is needed, and it is that there must be evidence of a clear head, sure hand and definite purpose at the helm to direct the destinies of the State, and the utmost confidence must be shown in meeting difficulties as they arise.

I agree with the hon. member, and I submit the present Government comply with that requirement in every respect.

Hon. H. Seddon: Have you covered the whole field of the Government's activities in connection with this matter?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member knows I have not. I would speak until late this evening if I were to do that.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.41]: Mr. Seddon is to be congratulated upon bringing forward this matter. Although it may not lead to anything definite, it may effect some good and result in relief being afforded the unfortunate unemployed.

The Honorary Minister: It will not have the slightest effect.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am sorry to hear the Honorary Minister, as the representative of the Government, make such a statement in connection with a motion presented to this House and debated by hon. members. Surely some good can come from a discussion of such a motion and the application of the collective brains of hon. members in an endeavour to assist the Government.

The Honorary Minister: From that point of view, it may do good.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Minister took up the stand that no matter what may be said in this House, the Government will not take the slightest notice. That is certainly a wrong attitude to adopt. Every member is seized of the seriousness of the position and is anxious to assist in every way. All desire to present ideas that may assist in relieving the present position. I suggest that one way by which assistance can be rendered is through the Agricultural Bank. It would be necessary for the Government to be more liberal and to make more money available through that institution. They should let the trustees know that the Government desire them to be more liberal with their clients. To-day the trustees are rather conservative.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do you seriously suggest that the Agricultural Bank assistance is not liberal?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I know of hundreds of instances in which loans available could be doubled or trebled with positive safety. That is what I refer to.

The Honorary Minister: And we would deny others assistance?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not think the Honorary Minister quite heard what I

said. The Minister said that he knew of fencing work being offered to men at rates that would not enable them to make a living. I can quite appreciate that fact. The Minister, however, is looking at the position from one angle only. Are the men available for the work competent to undertake it and make a living? In the majority of cases they are not. That is where the trouble comes in. The average man available to-day is not competent and does not do the work properly, hence his failure.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: He has not learnt his trade.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No. It is thought that anyone can do fencing and clearing work. On the other hand, a man must have experience and know how to undertake it. To-day it is most difficult to get a man who can erect a fence properly at a reasonable cost. In fact, outside my own place I do not know where I could find a really capable man for the job.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I could tell you where to get plenty.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The hon. member is always a little wild in his remarks. Clearing is easy work, but is made very hard by inexperienced men. One can often see men labouring away in a gimlet forest with axes. As a matter of fact, those men should go into such a forest practically without an axe. Then we do not find 10 per cent. of the clearers who will go outside their camp to put their fires together in the late evening. If they were to follow that practice they would be much farther advanced next day. The Honorary Minister is hot and strong on the alien labour question. The reason why a lot of people prefer alien labour is that in a high percentage of cases the Britisher will take on a clearing contract, do part of it, then leave the place in debt and never return to finish the job. In consequence, the unfortunate farmer has to put on another crowd to complete the work; but it now being a sort of emergency job, it costs him an extra 10s. or 12s. per acre. I can say that up to date I have not employed a foreigner on my property. At the same time I have made a tremendous loss on some of the British workers I have had. That is where the difficulty comes in. I was rather amused at hearing the Honorary Minister speak in glowing terms of the department he controls. One of the statements he made was that the engagements for private employers had fallen off and that the Labour Bureau

to-day was mainly catering for Government employment. There are several reasons for that. It is not that the private employer will not go to the bureau. It is rather that the bureau does not exercise care or judgment with a view to sending out suitable men for the job offered, whereas the private employment broker, for the sake of future business, will see to it that he sends out only a suitable employee. And there is another side to it: When a prospective employer approaches the Labour Bureau he is asked what wages he offers. He names the sum, and straightway he is told, "Oh, that is no good. That is far too low."

Hon. E. H. Gray: He is a good officer who says that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: He is not a good officer at all; he is a very bad officer. Recently a prospective employer went to the Labour Bureau in search of a lad to work on a farm. When he was asked what wages he proposed to pay, he replied, "Oh, about £1 per week." Immediately he was met with, "That is no good; it must be nothing under 30s. per week." And this for a lad 15 or 16 years of age!

The Honorary Minister: I shall be glad if the hon. member will supply me with the particulars of that case.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I will do so very readily. I was the prospective employer who made the request. The officer turned round and said to me, "You must remember that it will cost so much per week for clothes." I was well aware of that. But I also knew that in the city or on the goldfields a lad starts off at 15s. per week and is given an annual increase of 2s. 6d. weekly; whereas in the country he is paid, say, £1 a week for a start and in pretty quick time will be granted an increase of 5s. per week. Moreover, in the country, in addition to his wages, he gets his keep. I know that on my place I cannot provide food at less than 24s. per head per week. And I am not taking into account milk and butter. So at the very least I have to pay a lad one way and another £2 14s. per week, as against the 15s. or 20s. per week that would be paid in the city or on the goldfields. It cannot be done. Some of my friends opposite are very ready to say the farmer will not pay this or pay that. The position is that to-day the farmer has to be very careful what he pays. All his costs are excessive, and he finds great difficulty in making ends meet. If some of my friends opposite were to see my balance sheet for the

last 12 months they would realise how very little there is in farming. I have mentioned this instance to the Honorary Minister because it has happened to me and, I suppose, to many others. That is the reason why I do not go to the Labour Bureau, namely that they do not take the trouble to get a suitable person for the position. I secured a lad elsewhere and I am glad to say that lad is proving very satisfactory in his work, and that it will not be long before he is earning his 25s. per week. The average farmer, when he gets the service, is quite ready to pay for it. The trouble of unemployment is not new. We have it every year, and I suppose it will always be a difficult problem. I am sure that if there is anything members can do to help the Government to solve the unemployment problem, it will be done very readily. However, there are amongst the unemployed many good men who, nevertheless, are not fit for country work. I hope that some good may come out of this discussion.

On motion by Hon. W. T. Glasheen, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £1,210,000.**

##### *All Stages.*

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

##### *Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West [5.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill reaches us this afternoon because it is the intention, with the consent of members, to adjourn the House for a fortnight. Consequently, unless the Bill is passed to-day, there will be a period during which we shall have no Supply. Rather than be placed in that position, the Premier considered it advisable that the House should be asked to agree to the Bill to-day. It is the usual Bill at this time of the year and it asks for two months' Supply as follows:—Consolidated Revenue Fund, £95,000; General Loan Fund £250,000; Government Property Sales Fund £10,000, or a total of £1,210,000. The amounts required for Consolidated Revenue Fund and Sale of Government Property Trust Fund are in accordance with Estimates already submitted in another place. The General Loan Fund

Estimates will be submitted at an early date. The amount asked for on loan is less than that of last year, when it was £350,000. The Supply already granted has been:—Consolidated Revenue Fund £850,000; General Loan Fund £720,000; Sale of Government Property Trust Fund £30,000; total £1,600,000; Treasurer's Advance £300,000; Total £1,900,000. The Consolidated Revenue Fund figures do not include expenditure under Special Acts, which is not provided for under the Supply Bills. The total supply required for the four months, including Treasurer's Advance is £3,110,000. The amount granted for the same period of last year was £3,160,500. The expenditure against the first Supply has been £1,204,623. As compared with last year, expenditure for July and August under all heads has been—

—	Last Year.	This Year.
Consolidated Revenue Fund ...	£ 1,861,208	£ 1,879,838
General Loan Fund ...	378,436	331,145
Sale of Government Property Trust Fund ...	54,014	18,449
	£1,793,658	£1,729,432

The Revenue has been, last year £935,309, this year £963,945, or an increase of £28,636. The result of the two month's transactions on Revenue Account is thus slightly better than last year's, as under—There is practically no change in the transactions of the two years. Loan expenditure will be slightly less owing to the state of the money market, particularly in London. It is doubtful if the position there will improve for the next few months. In the meantime satisfactory arrangements have been made to carry on on the reduced basis. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

##### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Issue and application of £1,210,000:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I understood the Minister to say that no provision was be-

ing made to meet expenditure under Special Acts. Am I to understand that interest will be paid by increasing the overdraft in London or that the payment of interest is being held back for the time being?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am afraid I cannot answer the hon. member with any degree of reliability. I have no information on the subject, except that the Consolidated Revenue figures do not include expenditure under Special Acts, such expenditure not being provided for under Supply Bills.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### *Third Reading.*

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Companies Act Amendment.

2, Agricultural Products.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

## ADJOURNMENT—CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [6.5] In order to enable members to take part in the Centenary celebrations during the next fortnight, I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 15th October.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.6 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 26th September, 1929.

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

## QUESTION—VERMIN ACT, TAX REDUCTION.

Mr. LINDSAY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Does he intend to carry out the recommendation of the Advisory Board to reduce the rate of Vermin tax by 50 per cent.? 2, Does he intend to amend the Act this session to give Vermin Boards power to employ trappers and pay them out of the fund?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: Both the matters mentioned in Questions 1 and 2 are at the present time receiving consideration.

## QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Justice: 1, What amount of money has been made available to the Chief Electoral Officer for the compilation of the Electoral Rolls (a) in the metropolitan area; (b) in the country area; (c) in the mining area? 2, Does he consider sufficient assistance is employed correctly to complete the country rolls in time for the next general election?