

have done without this taxation, we would have been only too pleased. But the position is very serious. We have thousands of men who have been unemployed for the better part of the last three years; if not totally unemployed, they have been employed only intermittently, and in most cases on relief work, which does not provide sufficient for their requirements. Those people are in a very bad condition, right down to bedrock, and as the result of their purchasing power having been so low during that period, many of the tradespeople are in almost a similar condition. We are hopeful that as the result of the policy of this Government in endeavouring to provide full-time work for a much larger number of men, the increase in the purchasing power of those people will be reflected right through trade and industry, and in that way additional employment will be found for other men. But it cannot be done if we have not the money to carry out that policy. Therefore I say that while the introduction of a taxation measure of this kind might be all that some members have described it—unpopular, repugnant, obnoxious and so on—nevertheless it is absolutely necessary; else the Government would not have brought it down. I hope the time is not far distant when things will be so improved in this State that we shall be able to come forward and say there is no longer any necessity for taxation of this kind and therefore this measure can lapse.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th August, 1933.

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

QUESTION—STATE SAW MILLS, ELECTRIC CURRENT.

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Minister for Railways: What is the price paid by the State Saw Mills to the Perth City Council for electric current?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Power: Up to 200 units, 2d. per unit; from 200 units and up to 2,500 units, 1½d. per unit; if beyond 2,500 units, then over 200 units upwards, 1d. per unit. Light: Up to 500 units, 3d. per unit; over 500 units, 2½d. per unit.

QUESTION—LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

Method of Appointment.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier: In view of the statement made by the Chief Justice (Sir John Northmore) through the medium of the "West Australian" issued on the 19th August, 1933, explaining fully the appointment of the present Lieut.-Governor, does he still consider that the documents, relating to the appointment of the present Lieut.-Governor, should remain confidential?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: Certainly. Matters of this kind are stipulated to be confidential, and they are regarded and treated as such.

QUESTION—LICENSES REDUCTION BOARD, COST.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Treasurer: 1, What is the total cost per annum of the Licenses Reduction Board including all costs, such as salaries, allowances, or wages, travelling expenses, incidental and miscellaneous expenses, payable to all the staff and members of the Board? 2, How much of the total is a liability upon Consolidated Revenue? 3, What amount of money—if any—still remains in the Compensation Fund created under the Licensing Act, 1922-23?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Treasurer) replied: 1, For 1932-33, £2,785. 2, For 1932-33, £1,554. 3, Nil.

QUESTION — MINING, WILUNA ARSENIC WORKS.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is Leggo, the owner of the arsenic works at Wiluna, insured under the Workers' Compensation Act with any approved company? 2, If not, has Leggo complied with the Act by lodging the necessary bond with the Treasury, in order that he may carry his own risks under the Workers' Compensation Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Up to date no insurance company has been approved under the Workers' Compensation Act, and consequently the department is unable to supply the information desired. 2, No bond has been lodged with the Treasury for the purpose referred to.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, RELAYING TELEGRAMS.

Mr. CLOTHIER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it possible to utilise the railway system to relay telegrams to the branches of the Government departments in various country towns. 2, If so, would this minimise the expenditure on trunk line calls; in which case, will he give the matter consideration?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Railway telegraphs and telephones are for the business and convenience of the railways only and could not be loaded with other Government business. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

Employment Conditions.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Employment: 1, Is it a condition precedent to employment by the Forests Department that workers are compelled to join the A.W.U. and to pay 25s. for a ticket? 2, Does this apply to temporary as well as permanent workers? 3, As the charge, if levied, minimises the good effect of extra pay received, will he issue instructions that the impost is not to operate until at least three months' full time work has been enjoyed? 4, When is the promised three months' full time work to the unemployed be given?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: 1, In all Government relief works the policy of the Government is preference to unionists. Provision is made whereby men who are not members of a union are employed subject to joining a union within a reasonable time after being employed. 2, Yes. 3, No. 4, The principle of a period of full time work as requested from the previous Government and refused and as promised by the present Government is being given effect to.

QUESTION—OIL LEASES.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What oil leases are held in Western Australia. 2, What are their areas? 3, What do the lessees contribute to Government revenue? 4, Are the leases being used in the best interests of the State? 5, Is it considered by the Department that the leases are being worked to a satisfactory extent?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1 and 2, List of all licenses in force and areas is hereunder. 3, £5 per annum. 4 and 5, Licenses have been operating as satisfactorily as could be expected under existing economic conditions.

OIL LICENSES.

No.	Licensor.	Area. sq. miles.
146 H	Freney Kimberley Oil Co. (1932), N.L.	63,000
155 H	LeMesurier, C. J. R. ...	2,560
158 H	Westralian Kimberley Oil Co., Ltd.	23,500
186 H	Freney Kimberley Oil Co. (1932), N.L.	31,400
191 H	Do. do. do.	10,000
196 H	Nicholson, E. J. H. & Car- cary, W.A.	10,000
215 H	Do. do. do.	5,000

OIL LICENSES—continued.

No.	License.	Area. sq. miles.
221 H	Oriomo Oil, Ltd. ...	10,000
222 H	W.A. Financiers Propy. Ltd.	10,000
226 H	Do. do. do.	8,700
234 H	Lanc, R. D. ...	240
235 H	Hayes, E. ...	5,400
236 H	Dwyer, L. ...	7,250
237 H	James, A. F. ...	10,000
238 H	Oriomo Oil, Ltd. ...	10,000
241 H	{Wooramel Oil Syndicate, Ltd. ...}	500
242 H	{Oil Search, Limited ...}	4,500
249 H	Wooramel Dome, Ltd. ...	(all water)
251 H	Haydn, A. ...	10,000
	Miller, H. ...	

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Mining Act Amendment.
 - 2, Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

RETURN—PUBLIC HOSPITAL.

*Hospital Fund Revenue, Accommodation,
etc.*

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [4.36]: I formally move—

That a return be laid on the Table of the House showing:—1, The amount of revenue received from the operation of the Hospital Fund (Contribution) Act, 1930, for the financial years ended June, 1931-32-33. 2, The total amount received up to and including the 30th June, 1933. 3, The nature and extent of the increase (if any) of the accommodation for patients in the Perth Hospital during the above period. 4, The number of out-patients attended to at the Perth Hospital prior to the operation of the Act. 5, The number of out-patients attended to at the Perth Hospital since the Act became operative.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [4.37]: I have with me the return asked for by the member for Perth, but it is not quite as complete as he desires with reference to the number of out patients dealt with at the Perth Hospital prior to the operation of the Hospital Fund (Contribution) Act. I have the figures for the three years prior to the introduction of the entertainments tax, and for the three years subsequent to that period, which, I trust, will be satisfactory. I have no objection to the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—ABORIGINES, TREATMENT.

To Inquire by Royal Commission.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [4.39]: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into allegations of maltreatment of aborigines generally (including that recently instanced through the columns of the Press), the Aborigines Act, and the administration of the Aborigines Department generally.

I hope members will not misunderstand the object I have in view. My motion is not intended as an attack on the Aborigines Department or upon its administrator. While I have included the administration of the department under the headings noted for investigation, that has not been done for the purpose of making any particular attack on the department or the officer charged with the administration of the Aborigines Act. My object is to assist rather than to hinder the department as it is operating to-day. I was actuated in my desire to move for a Royal Commission of inquiry by the fact that recently some serious allegations have been made in the Press regarding the maladministration of matters affecting the aborigines of Australia generally. Those allegations received great prominence in the British Press. The allegations cast a very serious reflection upon the treatment of aborigines generally in Australia, and, in particular, upon police officials, honorary protectors, paid officials who act as protectors, many decent employers, and perhaps the majority of the residents of the North and North-Western portion of Western Australia. Having the honour to represent the Kimberley electorate, one of the districts inferentially referred to in the Press reports, I deem it my duty to provide an opportunity by which the allegations can be proved or disproved. I desire to be fair to the Minister controlling the Aborigines Department and to point out that he has already replied, through the Press, to the allegations that were made. From that standpoint, I suggest that his statement may be regarded by some people as partisan, just as it will be argued that the statements he referred to were also partisan. I do not think the whole matter will be cleared up by partisan statements made by parties on the one side in reply to partisan statements made by other contending parties in the discussion. From that point

of view alone members should be satisfied that an investigation is necessary. I therefore propose to ask the House to agree to the establishment of a tribunal that will be able to prove or disprove the statements that have been given prominence in the Press. In the first place, I desire an inquiry into the allegations against the administration of the department, in the hope that information valuable to the aborigines, to the department and to the public will be secured. Then again, as the Minister has replied to the statements that have appeared in the Press, it may be argued that that is not sufficient to satisfy the public who have read the statements that have been published. I propose to draw the attention of members to some recent Press reports to show what allegations have been made, and the publicity that has been accorded them. If the House will bear with me for a few moments, I will endeavour to show that the statements I have made are supported by the reports published in the Press. The subject received prominence as a result of the British Commonwealth League Conference that was held in London early in June. At that gathering, certain letters were read from people in Australia, and those people may be regarded as responsible individuals. I have a Press cutting conveying the intimation that at the British Commonwealth League Conference, a letter was read by Miss Ruby Rich of Sydney dealing with a communication from Mrs. W. W. Bennett, the wife of a Western Australian missionary. The conference was urged to combat the practice of placing half-caste and full-blooded female aborigines at the disposal of the police, many of whom, it was declared, were upright men but many were corrupt. The inference to be drawn from the communication placed before the conference was that police who had any dealings with the aborigines and half-castes were not all they might be. Generalities such as that statement deserve some investigation. If there had been one or two instances that could be proved, it would be all right, but, in my opinion, statements have not been made that would lead the public to believe that every police official who has anything to do with the aborigines deals with them in the same manner. The next cutting refers to the reply from Mrs. Bennett, alleged to have been written to the "Daily News," and quoting a copy of the letter she had written to the League. That letter contained some glaring

charges which certainly throw discredit on most of those who have anything to do with the administration of the Aborigines Department. It reads—

Comments in overseas newspapers have created wide interest in Australia's treatment of her aboriginal population. Some of these charges are:—

Aboriginal girls are bespoken in their infancy—sometimes before their birth—by the older men, who take them for their wives when they reach the age of ten. The older men usually have other wives already. Thus the property status causes women and children to suffer the evils of infant betrothal, child marriage and polygamy.

Polygamy causes most of the fights and vendettas of an otherwise singularly peaceful and unresentful people. Polygamy is encouraged by white settlers and protected by the administration.

These strong statements are taken from a paper read by Mrs. M. M. Bennett, at present at Mt. Margaret Mission Station, before the British Commonwealth League in London last week.

There are several other statements equally strong and some stronger. One of them reads—

An examination of the circumstances of aboriginal mothers in touch with civilisation discloses that their condition has become much worse, and it concerns us much more nearly than the condition of wild aborigines, because the terrible plight of the civilized aborigines is the logical conclusion of our own dealings with them. With aboriginal mothers are included half-caste mothers, who in Australia are deemed to be aborigines.

Two outstanding facts confront us: (1) slow starvation of natives through our depriving them of all land to live on and arising from dispossession and starvation; (2) wholesale prostitution of women. Originally "property" they have now become "merchandise."

Another statement written by the Rev. George Love, Superintendent of the Fort George Mission, was as follows—

Prostitution is the greatest evil that civilisation has brought to the aborigines. The aboriginal has quickly learned to appreciate flour and tobacco. Too often the only way in which he can procure these luxuries—perhaps they have become necessities—is by the prostitution of his woman. Having travelled across Australia from south to north and from north to north-east, I came to the matured opinion that nearly every black woman in bush or on cattle station camp is at the disposal of any passer-by for the price of a stick of tobacco.

I think members will agree that some action should be taken to provide an opportunity for those statements to be proved or dis-

proved. Under the heading "Pathetic Letter," the following appeared—

A letter from an educated half-caste man from the North-West division last year stated: "Our poor womenfolk don't get any protection up this way. We went through twelve stations. On every place you see about half a dozen half-caste kiddies running with dark mothers. It is a disgrace to the station, and half-caste women are living with white men on the outcamps."

I do not know that that is in accordance with fact and it should, at least, be investigated. I cannot say from my own knowledge that I ever saw half a dozen half-caste children on each station, whether cattle or sheep station. I certainly travel through the country once a year and I admit that in one or two instances I have seen probably one half-caste child. I volunteer the opinion that those expressions are very much exaggerated. Dr. Basedow had a contribution to the following effect—

Dr. Basedow protests against "ubiquitous concubinage, which is forced upon aboriginal girls by all classes of white men in the back blocks"—that is the greater part of Australia.

Those statements are most serious. Dr. Basedow naturally would be regarded by those who read the statement as a person of authority. Having the title of "doctor" he would not be regarded as an irresponsible person seeking publicity. He made a very condemnatory statement against the white men and he referred to our North-West as being the greater portion of Australia. By inference, of course, he condemns the whole issue. He went on to say—

The chief protector in Western Australia admits that he has not power to protect native women, and that the means at his disposal are inadequate. There is only too much evidence that starvation and years of dispossession are taking their toll.

If that is the opinion of the Chief Protector of Aborigines, investigation by Royal Commission would help him in his ambition to do something more than he has been able to do so far. Another statement emanated from a lady in the South-West. I cannot even guess the name of the writer, but probably some members representing South-Western districts may have an idea and probably, when speaking to the motion, will be able to give some information as to the authenticity of the statement. She wrote—

One poor hungry black for three days scarcely had a bite. A baby died on our verandah.

Many are sick and have broken out in sores through hunger.

We hear of the half-dozen or so good reserves of Western Australia but are not told that, except two reserves in the central desert, they are all bunched in the Kimberley division, the extreme north-west corner of this million-miles State, and are consequently useful only for the tribes who already inhabit them.

We are not told that in the immense stretch of country from Broome to Albany, covering parallels of latitude from 18 to 35, there is not one reserve of any extent except the small Government settlement on barren, sandy heath at Moore River.

Another account from the South-West was as follows:—

A South-West resident recently pointed out—bitterest irony—that as a result of increased cultivation of land and destruction of kangaroos by white men for their skins, and the recent machine-gun campaign against emus—

I fancy the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie must have been responsible for that.

—many aborigines now are unable to obtain their native food, and their only resource is the utterly inadequate Government dole of, in Western Australia—10 pounds of flour and but eight pounds of baking powder is put in it—one and a half pounds of sugar, four ounces of tea per week; half rations for children over three; nothing for children under three.

I do not know that the administrator or the Minister would be pleased at the manner in which those people referred to the efforts to do the best that is possible for the aboriginal race as the "inadequate Government dole."

These starvation rations are given to prevent natives from killing the squatter's sheep, which have displaced the native game of the country.

The remedy for starvation and prostitution of Australian natives is to set apart in every division, adequate territories where natives can live in communities of their own, unmolested by whites, and can learn to grow their own food.

Further, it is a particular responsibility of the women to require that the present iniquitous practice of placing native and half-caste girls and women at the disposal of police officers, should be made to cease at once.

Some police officers are upright men, but many are corrupt. I know a missionary who reports every white man who keeps a native woman in his camp. The police always provide an alibi for white offenders—but there are native women with half-caste babies. The police provide an alibi because they so often need one themselves.

That is a glaring charge to make against the police officers of this State. The writer ac-

cuses many of the police officers of being corrupt.

Mr. Marshall: He seems to accuse all of them.

Mr. Sampson: Not all of them.

Mr. COVERLEY: He says that when there has been an inquiry or court case the police have readily found an alibi for the white offender, and he goes further and says that this has been done because they needed an alibi for themselves. Surely it should not be necessary for me to say anything further to secure the support of members so that the statements may be proved or disproved. Mrs. Bennett went further by saying—

I know of aboriginal mothers who were hunted by the police to take their children from them to a remote Government settlement. These women suffered an agony of fear, and the effects may still be seen in their children; I would refer particularly to one of my pupils, a nerry boy with a look of shock. Another child is nerry, lacking concentration, yet another is stunted and timid.

Aboriginal mothers are inarticulate and so endure untold sufferings of serfdom because we have deprived them of land to live on and refused them education, with all other rights that are founded on education—medical services, wages, when they earn them, and political standing by which they might obtain other rights due to them.

The people who have made the charges have quite a lot in view. They claim that they have not received from Parliament the consideration and support to which they are justly entitled. I have a statement by the Reverend John Jones, Chairman of the Australian Board of Missions, who quoted the Melbourne "Herald" of the 1st April regarding the establishment of native courts, which he strongly endorsed, conditionally on the Papuan system being followed. He added—

Despite the efforts of missions and State Governments, disintegration, corruption and disease continued among the natives.

Most murders of whites by blacks were due to the whites' appropriation of lubras. Special attention should be given to white men's prostitution of native women and girls. The black-fellow who had a native wife, or was betrothed to a girl, knew she was merchandise that could be bartered for a stick of tobacco.

Mr. Jones averred the truth of the Australian messages to the London "Daily Herald," alleging the kidnapping of native women by Japanese. This long-standing custom was increasing because of the spread of Japanese influence in the areas concerned. Aboriginal women were almost invariably the innocent cause of murders.

Here is an interesting statement made by the Reverend Mr. Jones—

A well-known station owner had told him that he was compelled to discharge an excellent stockman because the stockman seduced every native girl he encountered. Many aboriginal women and girls were virtually slaves; black men claimed them, and the whites used and abused them, evidence of which was the increasing number of half-castes whose mothers were black and the fathers were whites or Asiatics.

Mr. MacKay also has something to say after his recent aerial trip in the North-West, as will be seen from the following cutting—

The London "Daily Herald," with a streamer headline, publishes another sensational report concerning the treatment of natives in Australia.

The "Daily Herald" quotes Mr. Donald McKay, of the Mackay Aerial Expedition, as stating that "atrocities worse than German" are perpetrated against the aborigines, who are shot down and their wells poisoned.

Mr. MacKay went on to say—

They are inoffensive men as a rule, and, in most instances the trouble was the fault of the white man. I hope that, for the present, white men will not settle the country. We have large aboriginal reserves there, and let us keep them."

I have quoted enough to show that varying charges have been laid against the employers of aborigines, and residents who have lived in the North-West portion of Australia.

Mr. Marshall: And the police and also the department.

Mr. COVERLEY: Everyone concerned. I should now like to read an extract from what Mr. L. W. LeQuesne (treasurer) had to say—

A wave of horror had apparently swept through England at the report that the Commonwealth proposed to offer a bonus to white men marrying half-caste women with the object of gradually breeding out the offspring of marriages of pure white with aboriginals. Yet there was something in that suggestion, he went on. For what are you going to do with them if you don't do that? Send them back to the blacks. It is not their fault that they are what they are. It is the work of the beautiful white race. Our treatment of the natives has been a scandal to Australia.

He goes on to say what should be done, and adds—

It is because of their contact with white civilisation that they have deteriorated. Is it

not our duty to do what we can to help those who are seeking to undo some of the wrong which has been done to these people? I feel sometimes that I could swear when I think of what needs doing and how we are just scratching the surface.

These are some of the varied opinions as to the manner in which the aboriginal races are being treated. Mrs. Jones declared—

That with the notably courageous exception of the Melbourne "Herald" few Australian papers would publish criticism of the administration of the aborigines.

It will be noticed that she included the Press. Every person or society in authority has come within the scope of these allegations. I have here a cutting from an article written by Mr. R. L. Spencer of Kojonup. He is said to be one of the oldest settlers in the South-West—

A grandson of Sir Richard Spencer, who was the first Government Resident at Albany, in 1834, he was born at Balgarrup, on the Perth-Albany road. He has spent most of his life in the Kojonup district, and can claim to have a thorough knowledge of the district and the families of natives still existing. He says that the country running south of Kojonup and embracing the Tone River, Ryan's Brook and Boyup Brook, used to be the home of a very numerous tribe of natives, and, although its members have become scattered and greatly reduced, even now the remnants find their way back to the original territory. At present there are between 40 and 60 natives, including half-castes, in the vicinity of Ryan's Brook.

Referring particularly to one camp of 18 natives at Ryan's Brook, Mr. Spencer states that the women and children are half-starved, and dressed in rags. The male adults do not attempt to look after them, and through their conduct have been refused Government rations. Owing to their circumstances, the natives have become definitely predatory, stealing from the farm houses and killing sheep for food.

Mr. Piesse: Mr. Spencer's statement was, I think, denied by the department.

Mr. COVERLEY: The Minister has already replied to some of the statements made by Mr. Spencer, but references have appeared in the British Press and throughout Australia. There are many readers who would not take into serious consideration the replies of the Minister controlling the department, or of the administrator. I have another statement which I will read for the benefit of those who may not have taken much notice of these statements. This is headed, "Killing of Blacks," "Clergyman's Charges," "They Boast of Atrocities"—

"In the North of Australia they do not regard the killing of aborigines as murder. In the

North they boast of atrocities against the blacks, whom they regard as animals. In the North public opinion is as callous as it can be." These remarks were made by the chairman of the Australian Board of Missions (the Rev. J. S. Needham) in an address to-day to the Junior Clerical Society.

"It is a good thing to have public opinion in the South aroused by stories of atrocities against the blacks," he added, "because public opinion in the North is too dreadfully callous." Mr. Needham said that there were many well-authenticated accounts of ill-treatment of aborigines which amounted to cold-blooded murder.

As a representative of the North, I am not prepared to allow these charges to be broadcast through the Press without making an attempt to provide means whereby the allegations can be proved or disproved. The Rev. Mr. Needham went on to say—

People told him the most astounding stories of murder, but when an investigation was made it was found impossible to substantiate the charges.

Even in to-day's "West Australian" I find a letter addressed to the editor over the signature of "G.M.," Broome, as follows:—

One of the most acute and embarrassing problems in the North-West to-day is the rapidly increasing half-caste population. Year by year their numbers are steadily growing, and yet no action has been taken, or very little, to endeavour to discover a solution to this menace. In Broome the half-caste population has reached serious dimensions and yet nobody except, perhaps, for a few thoughtful persons, seems to be particularly perturbed about it.

These people are subjected to no restraint whatever, and many on completing their usually sketchy education loaf around town, and become anything but desirable citizens. It is impossible for a town the size of Broome to find employment for the whole of its half-caste population, even if they were all willing to work.

There are instances in Broome where half-caste women are living with, and having children by, indentured Asiatics, and when these men return to their own country their progeny will be left as burdens upon the State.

One cannot expect very high moral standards from these women, considering the environment in which they are usually reared. They are unmoral rather than immoral. These promiscuous relations with indentured seamen are only to be expected when half-castes are allowed to live near, and in cases actually in, the Asiatic quarter of the town. If aborigines are not allowed to live in this quarter, and as half-castes come under the same Act, this appears to be a breach of the law, but up to date no attempt has been made to prohibit them taking up abode in the Asiatic quarter.

There are about six or seven hundred indentured seamen employed in the pearling industry, and it is hypocrisy and in defiance of

natural laws to expect these men to lead celibate lives when ashore at "lay-up" time. It is through expecting the impossible that we have such a number of children of doubtful parentage and indefinite colour in this town.

The House will realise that people like the Rev. Mr. Jones, the Rev. Mr. Needham, Mrs. Bennett, Mr. Spencer and others are not irresponsible, but are persons who are looked upon as authorities to be taken seriously in this matter. The majority of the writers of these articles have been well known in Western Australia. Mr. Needham was for over 30 years in the Church of England ministry. Most of his early service was in this State. He was Rector of Subiaco from 1901 to 1903, Priest in charge at Malcolm until 1905 at Kanowna in 1906, Rector of St. Barnabas, Leederville, until 1911, and so on. These people have some standing and authority.

Mr. Sampson: Do you regard the charges as having been justified in any way?

Mr. COVERLEY: It is not my intention to pass judgment on the comments which other people have made. If I could do that I would not be asking the House to hold an investigation. It is not my intention or object to criticise or attack the department. As representative of the northern portion of this State, I want to provide an opportunity whereby these statements may be proved or disproved, so that the police officials, the honorary protectors of aborigines, and the paid officials of the department, whose characters have been besmirched, may have an opportunity to clear their names. The statements have been given prominence in the British Press, and charges have been made in general terms. The replies to the statements have not satisfied readers in general. I think I have quoted enough to show how serious these allegations are, and I trust the House will assist me to provide the opportunity for an investigation that is embodied in my motion. As regards the second part of my motion, I wish to point out that it rests not only on my own experience but, as can be proved, on the experience of others. It is most important that there should be an investigation to assist the department in doing something for the health of the natives, especially in the northern portion of the State. When I refer to natives in connection with health, I have in mind particularly the bush natives, who hardly come into contact at all with the white population. There are two classes of natives—the semi-civilised, working on sta-

tions, who are usually cared for by their employers, the pastoralists, and the bush natives, who obtain supplies of meat apart from the stations and are not the responsibility of the pastoralists at all. Further, there are many thousands of natives existing by themselves along the coast and coming into contact with whites only on the rarest occasions. I have urged upon the department the need for continuous medical inspection of these natives, and in that matter I have been assisted by the road boards of Derby, Wyndham and Broome. Continuous inspection is necessary, because the natives are of nomadic habits and an inspector may miss one or two diseased natives on one occasion, and making another inspection in six weeks' time, he will probably discover some natives whom he missed during his first inspection. Again, certain diseases may not be prevalent at the time the first inspection is made, but may be found to have broken out again on the occasion of the second inspection—scurvy and loathsome diseases. The health of the natives in the North is badly catered for as regards hospital accommodation at both Wyndham and Broome. At Derby there is a nice hospital for them, and they receive every possible attention from the local doctor. Sympathetic consideration is also shown to them by the doctors at Broome and Wyndham, but the accommodation at those two ports is disgraceful. There was formerly a hospital at Broome, but because of some leprosy cases the institution was burnt down after the removal of the lepers, and at the moment there is no institution which caters for sick aborigines, who have to depend entirely on the generosity of the matron and the doctor. In my opinion the majority of the natives between the ports of Derby and Wyndham are reeking with disease. Information on this subject was supplied to me by a couple of beachcombers, who travelled along the coast in luggers for the purpose of collecting shell and dried fish and bêche-de-mer when the tide is out. The natives along the coast come to the foreshore to beg those people for food. Once a beachcomber volunteered to take charge of medicine and administer it to the natives if provided with it by the Aborigines Department. However, his request was not granted; there was the usual departmental reply as to stringency of finance. Recently a young man with a wife and family started a peanut farm on the coast between Derby and

Wyndham. Naturally, a man with a wife and family does not desire to have diseased natives hanging about the place, there being danger of infection through flies and so on. On his return trip to Broome he brought back five natives who were in a serious condition with a loathsome disease. He had to go to the expense of fitting them out with shirts and trousers and so forth in order to land them in civilisation. When he got them to Broome, the hospital authorities would have nothing to do with them. The doctor was rung up, and he came down and inspected them and did what was possible for them; but he had no hospital accommodation for them. After all the expense and trouble the young man had gone to, he had finally to call in the police and get them to take the natives over. Telegrams were sent to the Aborigines Department and the natives were fixed up.

Mr. Latham: Was the native accommodation at the hospital overtaxed?

Mr. COVERLEY: There is no native accommodation at the hospital. The peanut farmer, Mr. Haldane, assures me that he could at any time bring down between 25 and 30 natives in a critical condition with disease, provided the Government will supply the clothing necessary to land them in civilisation; Mr. Haldane cannot afford to keep on supplying natives with shirts, trousers and so forth. Moreover he wants no further trouble with the natives upon arrival at civilisation, as he had last time. Surely it is enough for a humane man to fit out the natives and bring them down to civilisation without having to run all over the place for police assistance after landing them. On one occasion when I happened to be in Derby, a station employee arrived there with a leprosy case. There were no instructions to receive the case at the lazarette or at the hospital. The institutions would not take charge of the leper. Eventually it cost the road board about £4 in urgent wires to the departments in Perth before anyone could be found to accept responsibility. In the end the road board had to guarantee the wages of a man to look after the leper until such time as finality might be reached between the Aborigines Department and the Health Department. The experience is that when a case is referred to the Aborigines Department, that department refers it to the Health Department, and so responsibility is shifted backwards and forwards. That has been the ex-

perience of the Broome and Derby road boards for many years past. At this day those road boards do not know which department is responsible in leprosy cases. Recently there was an inspection of natives by the local doctors, who of course could only make hurried visits within the radius of their own districts.

Mr. Latham: But the doctor would have relief while he was out inspecting.

Mr. COVERLEY: Yes. I do not complain about that. The people of the town were not neglected in any way. There the Leader of the Opposition is quite right. The local doctor was relieved, but still he could inspect only within the radius of his own particular district. That is one of the reasons why I say that continued medical inspection is needed. It does not suffice that a medical practitioner should make a tour of inspection unless there is another inspection after, say, six months. The loathsome diseases to be found among the natives call for frequent medical inspection. Surely that is a matter which a royal Commission might inquire into and make recommendations upon. Now I wish to quote a report which appeared in a recent issue of the Perth "Sunday Times" under the headings "A Revolting Case—Transport of Diseased Native—Moved from 'Koolinda' by chained prisoner—Action necessary by Authorities." The report reads—

A revolting incident which happened on the State vessel, "Koolinda," on the last trip down from the North-West, will not be readily forgotten by the passengers who witnessed it.

At Wyndham a diseased native was taken on board for Port Hedland, where he was to be treated in the lock hospital, but died before the vessel reached Derby. The captain ordered that the corpse be taken ashore at the latter port, and the local police were advised.

It is stated that an offer to lower the deceased in a sling to the jetty was not accepted, but the method employed was as crude as it was callous. As it was a matter for the local police, it is stated the ship's officers were powerless to intervene.

The corpse, merely covered by a native's "blucey," was carried from the ship's hospital between a native in chains, who was to be released at Port Hedland, and a "boy" from the local police station, to the head of the gangway on the promenade deck before the eyes of the passengers, including several women. With one of the carriers handicapped with the chain attached to his legs, the procession down the gangway was laborious, and according to eye witnesses, the corpse was bumped several times before the jetty was reached.

But the most unedifying spectacle of all was when the chained native stumbled, and in doing so exposed the corpse from beneath its covering. That witnesses of the incident suffered the sensation of nausea is understandable under the circumstances.

Not only does the matter require the attention of the Aborigines Department, but it also serves to illustrate the necessity for other means of transport for diseased natives. It is understood that transport of such cases is refused by other North-West boats in the interests of the passengers, and therefore the State-owned vessels have to do the job.

Arrangements should be made to transport by lugger native sufferers from a particularly loathsome disease. Obviously the matter of health is of paramount importance.

With the statements in that article I agree. On more than one occasion I have seen natives being transferred from Wyndham to the Port Hedland hospital for the reason that there was no accommodation for them at the Wyndham hospital. Natives with stained trousers have come up the gangway, and in doing so have handled the gangway; and then other people coming up have had to handle the gangway in the same manner. That sort of thing would not be tolerated for twenty minutes in a civilised area, but it is permitted in the North because the population is small and scattered and has not the numbers required to insist upon the Government doing away with such a practice. The present system appears to me ridiculous. The cost of building and running hospitals at Wyndham and Broome would be recouped to the Government time and again if the present system were abolished. Over a number of years a great many diseased natives have been transported from the lock hospitals, and all that money could have been saved to the State by even temporary hospital accommodation at Wyndham and Broome. I do not think it will be contended for one moment that leprosy does not exist among the natives in the northern portion of this State. In 1929 a Dr. Cook was appointed to make a tour of the North for the purpose of inspecting the natives. He is an expert on the diseases in question. His report has not been made public, but I believe it states that in his opinion 40 per cent. of the tribal natives would on examination prove to be leprosy. That is an astounding statement. I asked a question in the House regarding Dr. Cook's report, and was given to understand that it was a confidential report to the Commonwealth Government, and so was not

available. I am told that report was a very striking one. We know that up to last year there had not been any further inspection, and, therefore in all probability the disease will continue, and the position become even worse than it has been. Then there is the transporting of lepers from Western Australia to Darwin and the Commonwealth leper island. That was a wrong move for the State Government to agree to. The present methods of transportation are costly and callous, and, the patients could be much better catered for, since we have on our coast many islands that could be used for the purpose. It is true that local authorities along the North-West coast were dissatisfied when we had a local leper enclosure, but that institution was neither one thing nor the other, just a tin shed at the native hospital at Derby.

Mr. Latham: There was another farther south.

Mr. COVERLEY: Yes, at Cossack. The natives were shifted from Derby to Cossack, after which some arrangements were made between the State and Commonwealth Governments as the result of which the whole of the natives were transported to Darwin. Recently there has been some controversy over that transport of lepers. I asked a question in the House, and the Minister replied to the effect that it was inconvenient to lay the papers on the Table, but that he would allow me to peruse them at the department. I must plead guilty to the charge of neglect, in that I have not been to the department to read those papers. However, I had an object in asking the question. A little while ago there was a long article in the Press on the transport of those lepers, and a reply from the Minister for Health. The article stated that on the 2nd August a visit was made to the lugger "W.S. Roland," which was hired by the Aborigines Department for the conveyance of lepers to Darwin. The writer went on to criticise and condemn the methods employed by the department, and the lugger they had engaged for transporting the lepers. There have been replies by Mr. Ward, of the Harbour and Lights Department, and many others of standing, but in spite of all that has been said by the officials I can affirm that 95 per cent. of the protest made in the "West Australian" was true, because I happened to be there, and saw the whole episode. Naturally, the Minister would prefer to believe the re-

ports of his officials, but I say Ministers are not always well advised, that some mistakes may be made in the reports given. I ask members to visualise a 13-ton lugger which, when employing an indentured crew, provided for six hands in the hold. Think of 12 leprous aborigines on that lugger, patients who are not supposed to go on deck, but have to remain in the hold throughout the voyage. Those 12 patients are enclosed in a space of about 10 feet square, and included in that space are two sanitary conveniences and all the cooking utensils. There those patients have to exist until they arrive at Darwin. No Government should stand for such treatment of sick people, be they black, white or brindle. The "West Australian," in this morning's issue, published the statement of the captain of the lugger, as follows:—

Mr. Henry Scott, the skipper of the lugger "W. S. Rolland" commented to-day on the controversy which arose from the publication in "The West Australian" of August 9 of a letter condemning the conditions under which aboriginal lepers were taken in the lugger from Beagle Bay to Darwin.

Mr. Scott said that the vessel was unseaworthy and overcrowded. An inquiry of sorts had been held at Broome, but the harbour master and the secretary of the Harbour Board had not boarded the vessel personally to see the conditions of accommodation. The dinghy was leaking badly. At least 12 lepers were on board, but the boat had accommodation for only eight persons, and the roof was only four feet from the floor, so that the lepers had to sit or lie, being unable to stand up except in the square of the hatch, which had to be kept open for ventilation, but through which the water poured during the whole of the voyage. The boat left Broome on July 28, and arrived at Darwin on August 23. All this time the lepers slept in wet blankets and clothes.

Mr. Scott says the "W. S. Rolland" was the most unseaworthy boat he had ever sailed in and the worst equipped with stores and tools. After leaving Broome the boat was anchored off Cape Lovuque, but the anchor chain snapped and the second anchor was not in order. The boat then put back to Beagle Bay, running up into the mangroves to prevent the boat from heeling over. Had the boat heeled over the limited amount of drinking water would have been spilt and the lepers would have been forced to lie in bilge water. When the weather freshened water came over and poured into the open hatch and through the decking, which was patched with pieces of kerosene tin. After leaving Beagle Bay the wind freshened and a sail was partly reefed, but the rotten foresail blew away, so the boat battled on under the mainsail and jib, the dinghy being placed on deck on the lee side to protect the lepers in the hold from the water.

At Broome Mr. Scott continued, orders were sent ashore for stores as the ship's tool chest did not contain a hammer or a saw. The stores were obtained after great delay and trouble. On August 5 the water supply was greatly depleted, only one kerosene tin remaining of the eight supplied. That evening the inquiry was held, but it was very perfunctory. Five eight-gallon drums of water were supplied, with a hammer and saw and one tin of kerosene, but he was unable to obtain a new dinghy. The next day in Carnot Bay the main rigging was carried away, but repairs were soon effected. The next night the captain found out that the box of the pump was worn out, and had he not insisted on getting spare parts at Broome the boat would probably have foundered.

When off Troughton Island, said Mr. Scott, the lugger went aground on an uncharted rock, being refloated three hours later. The rest of the trip was uneventful. When off the leprosyarium at Darwin one member of the crew rowed the dinghy and two bailed while getting the lepers ashore. The "W. S. Rolland" was so rotten that once when sailing with the lee under water a piece of bulwark stanchion timber four by four just above the covering board was carried away.

Mr. Scott says he had made the trip from Broome to Darwin in five days with a well-found boat, but owing to the bad conditions of the "W. S. Rolland" and the necessity for hugging the shore, this trip took 18 days.

The Minister stated that an inquiry was held which is all the greater reason why the investigation I ask for should be agreed to, so that we may have a chance to prove which of the statements is correct. Parliament should not permit such charges to go unchallenged. I thank members for the patient hearing they have given me, and I will conclude with a reference to what Mr. Neville himself has said. In a reply he was making to some of the serious allegations, he finished up by saying—

It would probably be found, according to one opinion, that while much more might have been done in this State for the aborigines, the blame is due to public neglect, through Parliament, more than to any other cause.

If Mr. Neville is as sincere in his desire to have something done for the aborigines as I am to have the names of residents of the North cleared from stigma, he will agree to this proposed investigation. The reputations of decent police, decent officials and decent residents of the North have been assailed, and the least we can do is to provide opportunity to have the matter cleared up once for all. I trust the House will agree to the motion, for it will give some standing to the result of the inquiry, whatever it may be.

MR. WISE (Gascoyne) [5.43]: I second the motion. The very serious allegations quoted by the hon. member call for some review, and we should be lacking in our duty to neglect any further the position as presented to us, and if we did neglect it we should be deserving of serious censure. There can be no doubt that in the newspapers of the Empire definite statements have been made derogatory to the people of this State and to the administration by successive Governments of the aborigines question. The Aborigines Act, under which we are working, dates from 1905. While I would not for a moment say anything disparaging of the facts so ably put up by the hon. member, I would say there are more far-reaching matters to be inquired into than even those serious affairs raised by him, not only in respect to the Act as it applies to the aborigines to-day, or in the administration of the Act, but as it applies, or does not apply, to the very serious half-caste problem, and before dealing at length with that subject I should like to say that the motion will afford an opportunity to probe this matter to the bottom. I can see no other way of very serious consideration being given to the deliberations of the people investigating. On many occasions anthropological students, members of all sorts of societies, venture into the wilds of this country. Most of the wilds they venture into are, as a rule, within easy reach of the railway. These people go out from Broome with all sorts of card index systems and all kinds of paraphernalia, and at times they take X-ray pictures of the natives' features, the cast of the cranium, and get all data of the aborigines' genealogical tree. Anyone who knows the native will readily understand that he will give any information desired, if you let him know what you want, and for the price of a stick of tobacco. After deliberating in the wilds for sometime, these people retire from the tropics to look over the data they have collected, and perhaps after looking into the subjects for a year or so, make certain announcements and show that they are quite satisfied they have solved the native problem. I venture to say their deliberations, even though they be quite justified from their point of view, will not get them very far in a practical way. It has been said in connection with the Aborigines Act which is in operation that the penalties provided are for the whites and the pro-

tection of the natives. The bold statement is made that the only penalties the Act provides for are to be inflicted on them, but the other side of the question is raised by many people who state the case for the natives, religious bodies and others, that the Act does not afford sufficient protection to the aborigines, and that the white people use the Act as a means of covering up their misdemeanours and the crimes towards the natives. There we have two opposite points of view. One aspect that the suggested investigation might well take is the application of the Aborigines Act on an equitable basis to suit both parties. If the motion be carried, it will be possible to deal with one very serious matter which calls for investigation, and that is in the direction of provision being made in the Act for recognising tribal customs. We have to-day the spectacle of magistrates in this State at times travelling thousands of miles by aeroplane to go into matters which are purely the outcome of tribal customs. These magistrates deliberate in cases of murder committed by natives who, perhaps, were detailed in their infancy to carry them out, a tribal custom decided for them by their ancestors, and in the carrying out of which they commit what the white man calls murder. These natives are duly tried and at times imprisoned for lengthy periods. That, too, is a matter worthy of consideration if the motion be carried. The setting aside of further native reserves is another matter which has been puzzling the minds of different sections of the community for a long time. A leading article in a recent issue of the Australian Board of Missions magazine contained this statement—

The Federal Government is leading the way in keeping native reserves free from prospectors and hunters. It is to be wished that Western Australia would follow. The Western Australian report in regard to a particular reserve says, "The time may not be far distant when, instead of holding the area as a reserve for the aborigines, we shall have rigidly to exclude them from it or from so much of it as may be declared a goldfields area." An aboriginal reserve should not be set apart for the blacks; it should be kept inviolate for them.

That is the recommendation of the Australian Board of Missions. The other side of the case is that it is a crime to-day in some North-West towns for bush natives to enter within a certain radius of the town. Outside of Wyndham, for example, it is

a crime for a bush native to come within a mile of the town, and there are cases on record where natives, on being found guilty of this crime, have had to serve a lengthy period in chains working on the roads, or a term in chains at Broome gaol. Whether it is right that that should be so, I am not prepared to say, but surely it is a matter for absolute investigation in common with the other two or three points that I have already made. All denominations are loud in their condemnation of the treatment of natives on Government areas, and on reserves particularly. No mention, however, is made of the treatment of natives in the areas controlled by the religious bodies. The Anglican Synod discussed this phase at their gathering within the last week or so, and on this subject the Reverend F. G. O'Halloran said—

Indigent natives were compelled to remain in settlements, although they did not get enough to eat, and were not sufficiently clothed. He had received a letter from a mother with seven children in one of the settlements who stated that her family never saw meat from one week to another.

That statement was made only several days ago. The reverend gentleman went on to say—

The Chief Protector had said that the condition of these people was deplorable. He wanted a medical man to go around as an inspector of these poor, wretched creatures, and they should endeavour to see that one was appointed.

Before leaving the subject of the missions, I should like to quote a statement made in the Press of North Australia recently by an authoritative correspondent of a Sydney newspaper—

The pioneers of necessity shot natives in dozens, but mission stations bid fair to kill them in hundreds by their systems, in fact, may render them extinct within our time.

There we have two opposite viewpoints, those of the people who are against the missions, and the missions themselves. I have had the privilege of visiting every aborigines' mission in Australia except three, and I venture to say that the missions, from their point of view, are doing good work. They have made a serious study of the aborigines question for a period of years, and perhaps there is no justification for the statement that the mission stations do kill the aborigines, and it is hardly fair that

those statements should be broadcast in the Australian Press and in the Press overseas. The question of the protection of native women from vice is a matter which takes up quite a lot of space in the existing Aborigines Act, and if we are to believe any or all of the statements that have been read by the member for Kimberley, we must admit that there is some basis for the unkind remarks that have been made. The statement which appeared in one of the papers circulating in the North-West last year was to this effect—

A white woman would be safer at any hour of the day or night in the coloured quarter of Broome than would a native girl if allowed out of the convent after dark.

I admit that is a very serious statement. The employment of natives is the next point I wish to raise, as being one which necessitates probing, and one upon which there are very many divergent views. Some stations, in the Kimberleys in particular, have found employment for 100 natives or more and do even now employ them in large numbers. It is a community system of employment because the native has with him his mother, his grandmother, his aunts and uncles, many of them indigent, and these become hangers-on who have to be fed and looked after, and in many cases the stations that are in the unenviable position of having to procure black labour find that, if there are 50 doing useful work, a hundred or more have to be fed. It is probable that it would be very unwise to discourage the employment of natives in far distant areas where they exist in large numbers, but the question of wages is always cropping up. I should like to refer to the case of a visiting scientist to the North-West, one of the fraternity to whom I referred a little while back, who visit the natives and take photos of their molars and upset the whole of the routine of the station because of the presents they make to the natives of tobacco and money. It is a crime for an individual on a station in outback Western Australia, or Australia generally, to give a native anything in the form of goods or money. Money is a curse to the native but there are places where the employment of natives is contingent upon their being paid certain wages, and we find where the line of demarcation exists, which is perhaps about Broome, that the question of wages is a serious problem. The provisions

of the existing Act in respect to payments reduce the question of wages to prostitution in every sense of the word. Dr. Cook, who was referred to by the member for Kimberley as having travelled extensively in the Far North some time ago, mentioned that the pastoralists were opposed to his plan for the native welfare. A little later on I intend to give the House some enlightening facts and figures on what was propounded by Dr. Cook in the direction of turning the aborigines white. That is the object he aims at. On the question of wages he says—

We certainly believe that where natives are compelled to seek "employment by a white man on such conditions as the latter may be prepared to offer," it is necessary that strict supervision should be enforced both by the Government and those who desire well for the aborigines.

It will be seen that this is a very contentious matter. To the people of the far North and others who are forced to employ natives by the hundred, the problem is vital. Down the coast as far as Wallal, which is 210 miles south of Broome, the question of wages has been debated bitterly. At that point they are on the border of the territory where wages are paid to native station hands and where they are not. It is quite true that the aborigine is capable of performing useful work; in some cases for a shilling or two, in others for food and clothing. To my mind, it is obvious that the non-existence of a system has led to much unpleasantness on this question. I have in mind instances where even the passing by a traveller of half a dozen tins of meat and 1s. 6d. in cash, has upset the whole routine of a station. It is hardly fair that those people should be penalised in the conduct of their business when such vital matters are indulged in by passers-by. The question of disease is so dreadful and appalling and was so amplified by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) that it is hardly necessary to labour it any further. It is within my knowledge that the position is as has been described. I have seen certain instances in which natives have been carried on to a boat so rotten with disease that they could not walk on to the vessel and had to be lowered out of the boat when they reached their destination at Port Hedland, almost in pieces. We would be extremely unwise to ignore the appalling future that looms ahead for the natives, and also for the prospective white people

who are to populate the country if we were to allow such conditions to continue. At present there is an endeavour, sincere or otherwise, on the part of the Federal Government, to do something with the North-West and can we imagine, if the problem of disease among the natives does not receive the attention it deserves, any attraction being held out to prospective settlers, in view of the presence of diseases that are so abhorrent to white folk? I can cite an instance that was disclosed last year in which a North-West resident had a coloured girl assisting in his home. His daughter was at school in Perth. On examination, the native girl was found to have contracted leprosy. Members can imagine the feelings of the parent of the child when he found that his daughter was debarred from further attending the school in the city. The use of native labour for domestic purposes in the homes of white people in the North-West represents a menace to the whole of the community there. We cannot go too far in probing that phase to the fullest extent. The member for Kimberley cited a case in which natives barely came into contact with white people and yet were found to be rotten with disease. Such natives represent a menace to the white children and the women, too, who accompany the settlers in their endeavour to carve out a home for themselves in what is certainly not very inviting country. Be that as it may, all the points I have enumerated fade into insignificance when we come to the vital and gravely important problem of the half-caste. The present Aborigines Act again comes into the picture because it is admitted that that legislation is not adequate to cope with the situation. We have within the southern areas of the State, natives roaming in their hundreds in the aggregate, and, certainly, in bands of dozens in particular districts. It is quite definite that from 60 to 70 per cent. of them are young females without home, without clothing, without control and with no education whatever. In recent months, and again in the "West Australian" this morning, references have appeared to the position in the southern districts. To-day's paper mentions a protest emanating from the people at Wagin with reference to the half-caste who is considered to be civilised and is permitted to go to school and has been described by teachers to be as clean as many of the white children who attend the school at Wagin. Therein

is a tremendous problem. I will quote from the "Australian Board of Missions Review" for this month, an article dealing with the condition of half-castes. At the outset I would point out that reference is made to the condition of the "half-caste in Western Australia." I draw attention to that point, because in almost every newspaper cutting the references to this matter—there have been a paragraph or two in almost every issue of the daily Press during the past two months, and there have been 150 references to the matter either by way of reports, comment or letters in recent months—have pointed to the seriousness of the problem in this particular State. In those circumstances, surely this is a question about which members should exercise their minds seriously. Irrespective of whether the comment on the native problem is published at home or abroad, the blame, according to the people who reviewed the position, lies at the door of Western Australia. It is appalling that we should incur such criticism. It is dreadful to think that the London "Morning Post" should appear with glaring headlines announcing that the people of Western Australia boasted of the native atrocities. According to the "Australian Board of Missions Review"—

The conditions of the half-caste in Western Australia seem to be deplorable. Why should these people become a race of outcasts? It is time that the Government treated the situation as urgent. The opening of a second settlement in Western Australia should no longer be delayed. The education of half-caste children is more essential even than the education of white children. The parents of the whites can provide some of the needs of their own children, but the half-castes are utterly dependent on outside assistance.

This publication is issued by the Anglican Church. In view of that statement, there seems to be something in the contention advanced by the journal. I will next draw attention to a communication from Mr. F. W. Gunning that appeared in the "West Australian." The letter read as follows—

On June 24 you published, under the heading "Shut out from School," a report of the exclusion of 14 aboriginal and half-caste children from the Wagin State school, and that the Chief Inspector of Schools had placed the matter before the Chief Protector of Aborigines, who is looking into it. May I suggest that the time has come for a thorough revision of the attitude of Governments and the people towards the aboriginal and half-caste subjects of the State. It is not merely in the matter of schools, but in many other depart-

ments of life that the policy of our Governments needs changing. There are many, I venture to say, who will await with interest the decision of what is to be done for such unfortunate children who are scattered throughout the country districts of the State.

It is an astounding fact that the half-caste population of the Northern Territory has trebled itself in the last 10 years. Although the situation at Wagin is serious, and, according to statements in the Press that I will deal with later on, that at Beverley is serious too, the position at Broome is positively alarming. An endeavour was made by the residents of Broome and those in control of the allocation of areas for certain purposes in that township—I refer to the local authorities—to keep the whites, blacks and the coloured races separate. Broome town is generally recognised as the coloured quarter. The Japanese and the Chinese have their respective areas and have their different streets. Then there are the Koorangers, the Malays, and, in addition, the mixture of all of them. On the other hand, the aborigines and the half castes, by virtue of their being domestics, have found their way into the homes of the white people themselves. The trouble is that they have been allowed, and encouraged to become landowners, with the result that the position to-day is serious. There is no line of demarcation in Broome to show where the white people begin and where the aborigines, as residents, end. Being owners of land in Broome, it has followed that certain of the coloured races have been permitted to build homes within the area formerly proclaimed for whites alone. Thus there is not only the growing menace of the half-caste, but there is the additional difficulty of the coloured person who represents a mixture of the Japanese, Malay, Chinese and other races. It is an appalling condition of affairs that should give food for thought to anyone who seriously considers the matter for a moment. Regarding the trouble at Wagin, many suggestions have been made, which leads me to another point as to the best way of dealing with the half-caste problem. Many people advocate vocational training as the best means, while others say that that would be a wrong principle to adopt. I have here an authoritative statement of a man who advocates their extinction, and I will quote his remarks shortly. The representatives of the Wagin Parents and Citizens' Association recently protested

to the Education Department against the practice of allowing aborigines and half-caste native scholars to mix with the white children and urged that either the coloured children should be provided with a room and a separate teacher, or that a school should be provided for their exclusive use. That opens up a big problem, respecting which either the present Government or some succeeding Government will be forced to declare a definite policy. There is not the slightest doubt that that position will be forced upon the Government sooner or later. I am sorry indeed for the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) that this matter should have developed into a domestic problem because it affects the children of so many of his electors. Miss Hooton, the honorary secretary of the W.A. Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations, had the following to say regarding the problem quite recently—

It was agreed that the coloured families are definitely increasing; that the exclusion of coloured children from our schools only shoves a responsibility; and that a scheme whereby natives of neighbouring areas such as Beverley, Brookton, and Pingelly could be segregated on a reserve sufficiently large to include a portion of arable land as well as rough country for hunting, would appear a likely solution of this problem. On such a reserve there would be sufficient children to form a school where special vocational training could be given. The average coloured child does well in most school subjects when first attending school; but the attempt to educate them alongside white children appears unsatisfactory in many ways. There is usually a strong bias against the colour, and these children are frequently left out of games, and are thus early made to feel outcasts. The result is a gradual loss of interest and the slackening of attendance, and, consequently, few attain any standard of education. This is most marked as regards the girls.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. WISE: I was endeavouring to show the different viewpoints of sections of the community interested in this very involved problem. I had instanced the viewpoint of the mission people, and of the people not interested in missions but who were of opinion that definite vocational training was advisable in the best interests of the half-caste. Following that point I would like to quote briefly from a statement by the Rev. C. S. Hardy who, on behalf of the Perth Board of Missions, said that he wanted to make a plea for the aborigines and half-

castes of Western Australia. I do not wish to labour that point, but I wish to impress upon members how every writer stresses that this State apparently is backward in its consideration for those unfortunate people. Mr. Hardy said—

Statistics proved the sadness of the position, and a report by the Chief Protector of Aborigines showed that there were 28,481 aborigines and half-castes in the State at June 30, 1932. Full bloods were dying out, and half-castes were increasing. The Act controlling the aborigines was passed in 1905, since when half-castes had increased tremendously, and it did not provide for many who were regarded as half-castes and who were really without the law.

That is a point I made quite early in my speech.

These people had souls and churchmen had a responsibility towards them. The future of the half-caste child was pitiful. He believed that the present Government would amend the old Act, but the Church should endeavour to create strong public opinion on the matter.

A sub-leader in the "West Australian" of the 27th June also referred to this point. Dealing with the training and education of half-castes, the leader writer said—

Education of the black and the half-caste is, however, a responsibility which no decent citizen would wish to evade; but it is questionable whether in the case of the pure aboriginal any good purpose is served by endeavouring to inculcate in them the ideas and ideals of white civilisation.

That is one side of the question. It indicates that the church people and religious bodies have in mind that the salvation of the half-caste lies along religious lines, perhaps along educational lines, in training them to be useful citizens. The other side of the picture is presented in a most alarming way by a contributor to the "West Australian" as recently as the 22nd July. This contributor is not at all in accord with furthering the interests of the half-caste and aboriginal in the direction of perpetuating them. The writer, in a very outspoken article, makes it plain that in his opinion, as we are responsible for his appearance, so we should be responsible for his disappearance. In the opening paragraph, the writer said—

The half-caste is not a pretty person to have sitting round the family hearth, and no white parent can view unmoved the prospect of a piebald progeny. But the trouble is that he does not view the progeny at all, for parentage when it comes to a mixing of colours does not even peep into the picture.

The next few words are most illuminating—

The scrupulous care which millions of white and so-called white people are exercising at the present moment to prevent the appearance of their legitimate all-white off-spring is lacking in the case of the mixed union. Our black and yellow sisters are still old-fashioned enough to think that mating pre-supposes children, and their eyes would open very much wider, indeed, if a clinic for the prevention of the appearance of piebald babies were to be set up in their midst.

The writer elaborated that point particularly.

In their abysmal ignorance they would regard such an institution as an unwarrantable interference with the laws of nature; which laws of nature (again in their abysmal ignorance) constitute their code of morality.

But moralising aside, we have to face the fact that the half-caste is here, that he is increasing in numbers, and that it is no more possible to prevent his appearance than it is to arrest the earth in its course. A White Australia policy will not suffice to stop him, but, unfortunately, it suffices to stop quite a number of people from giving the matter their attention, with the result that they consider the matter a closed subject.

That, unfortunately, is the viewpoint of many citizens—that so long as we can ignore the subject we are getting along very well with it. That, I claim, is entirely a wrong viewpoint to present, not only to our own people, but to the people who are so vitally interested in the welfare of this race that we are breeding in our midst. The writer proceeded to say—

Why not let the lead come from this State of Western Australia? Instead of striking a blow for the principle of a White Australia by shutting half-caste children out of our white schools, and letting it stand at that, why not make it the excuse for laying down the foundation of a new system in regard to our fellow-Australians of mixed blood based on the knowledge that science can supply?

This writer is advocating the ultimate extinction, by scientific means, of the half-caste.

No one wants the half-caste, though it is a slur on the Christianity and the culture of the white man that he gets more consideration from his black parents' pagan people. But, on the ground alone that he is a nuisance to us, we should hurry on his disappearance. Science has pointed a way. The union of half-caste with half-caste, urged by many, is decidedly not the way. Half-caste with half-caste unions should be actively discouraged, since they will certainly propagate a progeny who will embarrass us economically and otherwise, and as well have their lives rendered miserable by taunts about tar-brushes.

Mr. Hawke: Who was the writer?

Mr. WISE: He wrote under the name of "Physicus," using the privilege of anonymity, but he apparently wrote authoritatively. There we have the case presented in a lengthy article by one who has given the subject considerable thought.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: He goes further than that; he recommends breeding out.

Mr. WISE: Yes, he recommends the breeding out process entirely. He advocates the use of science to bring about the ultimate extinction of the half-caste. In connection with the arresting of the half-caste in his progress and multiplication, I would say that the infliction of a fine, even up to £100, to a man who insists on cohabiting with natives is not the means to overcome the problem. It does not matter what legislation is provided in that connection. There are many instances in this State where it would be illogical, and I should say unkind, as well as unjust, to inflict a fine upon a man who was living or cohabiting with an aboriginal. I would like to mention, for the information of those who do not understand the position, that within this State are many men, who, imbued with the spirit of the pioneers, for which our nation is famous, who have done their wonderful pioneering work and have served the State in that sphere in a wonderful way; men who live in isolation, live from their point of view true to their black mates and have half-castes as children. I should like to raise the question whether the Federal policy of mustering, as is happening in the Northern Territory, the half-caste offspring of many of those pioneers, segregating them, placing them on mission stations or on stations far removed from their parents, is the right one. I would say it was a debatable point whether that was just to either party. Inclusion in the Act of any fine would merit just consideration and a lot of consideration before any conclusion could be reached that would stop the problem from that end. One suggestion made recently to the Minister by Mrs. Vallance, of the Women's Service Guild, indicates the serious position arising from the use of half-castes as domestics. A writer in the Press suggested that solution of the problem would come by training those people in domestic duties, but Mrs. Vallance was very outspoken in her opinion on the subject, and gave the following statement as proof:—

At the Carrollup mission station last year—

I believe that station has gone out of existence since—

—quoting from the official report, of 80 girls who went into domestic service during the year, 30 were returned to the mission in a pregnant condition.

That is an aspect which also calls for serious deliberation.

Mr. Stubbs: Did you say Carrollup?

Mr. WISE: Yes.

Mr. Stubbs: That station has been closed down for 10 years.

Mr. Latham: The hon. member means Moore River.

Mr. WISE: That, I know, has been the experience of the northern mission stations. The greatest difficulty is experienced, and no matter what trouble is taken to educate half-castes and apparently fit them to go into the white man's life, it ends in tragedy. We have amongst half-caste servants in the north quite domesticated people—girls who can sew and cook and vie with their white sisters in those directions. The missions are now chary about allowing half-caste girls to enter the service of the whites in any way. It usually ends in tragedy. Problem after problem presents itself, no matter what aspect of the situation is reviewed. I wish to refer to an aspect of the situation raised by Dr. Cook, of Darwin, who is an authority on native diseases, particularly leprosy, and is also a scientist. He is heartily in accord with the Federal policy of mating half-castes with white men, which, in turn, is entirely opposed to the views of the previous authority I have quoted. In the "Daily News" of the 20th July last, the following appears:—

The Commonwealth Government is alarmed at the growth of the half-caste population, and has adopted as its definite policy the encouragement of marriages of white men and half-caste women with the view of raising the standard of mixed blood to that of the whites.

Several of the States work on an exactly opposite principle, and do everything in their power to prevent the marriage of half-castes to any but other half-castes or blacks.

Pointing out that this must inevitably tend to pull down the standard of the half-castes to that of the blacks, the Commonwealth Government intends to take advantage of the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne this week to make an effort to persuade all interested States to come into line on the uniform policy of giving the half-castes a chance.

Mr. Stubbs: Is that an authentic article?

Mr. WISE: Yes. It continues—

The Commonwealth policy does not contemplate the inter-marriage of white women and half-caste men, and there is little or no tendency in this direction.

Within the compound of Darwin eligible half-castes can be surveyed for the approval of any white man who is sufficiently interested to approach them on the subject of matrimony. He views them and makes his selection. It is a sort of slave market. He approvingly eyes one of them, and may be permitted to take her to the pictures or some other entertainment to see if they have anything else in common with each other. If he is impressed by the woman, he is permitted to marry her. One member interjected that this was the only reasonable solution. I would ask, is it the only reasonable solution? Opinions are so diametrically opposed on the point that the whole subject is debatable. One can imagine the mentality of a white man who would desire to mate with a half-caste woman. In all probability her mentality would be better than his.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: A little while ago you were talking about the pioneers of the outback mating with the blacks.

Mr. WISE: Even in places south of Darwin, many unfortunates, human derelicts in many cases, have interested themselves in half-castes for one purpose alone. I would say in a case of that sort it was questionable whether it was advantageous to either side. The Chief Protector of Aborigines (Mr. Neville) submitted to the "Daily News" on 8th June last a very plainly-worded article dealing with this question. He went so far as to provide a photograph of a black child and a white child. The article is set up in bold type and headed, "It is good to mate half-castes with whites; Mr. Neville says aborigines are closely related to us." The article goes on to say—

It will come rather as a surprise to the average "White Australian" to learn that the Australian aboriginal is racially related to him.

Mr. A. O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines under the State Aborigines Department, said to-day:—

"The blacks will have to go white. It is exemplified in the quarter-castes, and by the gradual absorption of the native Australian black race by the white, I have noticed no throw-back in such cases hitherto.

"The decision made by the Commonwealth Government to adopt as a definite policy the encouragement of marriage of white men and

half-caste women with a view to raising the standard or mixed blood to that of the whites, is nothing new in this State. I have foreseen it for years, and sponsored it as the only natural outcome of the position."

I should say that sufficient time has not elapsed to prove whether there will be a throw-back or not. Anyone who has studied the Mendelian law, whether in relation to plant breeding or cattle breeding, will know that the risk of a throw-back exists over the first seven generations. It would, perhaps, still be a dangerous thing to advocate the breeding of a white-aboriginal population. Whether the Federal policy is right or wrong, the matter is a very dangerous one to handle. Before any policy is laid down, a definite investigation should be made. I should like to refer to the attendant dangers of disease. There was an appalling case in the North-West. A bright young girl was attending a leper patient. She contracted the dreadful disease, and subsequently died in isolation. In the case of all hereditary and adopted diseases associated with aborigines, the matter must be handled with the utmost delicacy. I have endeavoured in this somewhat brief resume on a very interesting but involved subject to put forward both sides. There is, no doubt, urgent necessity for immediate action so that the situation may be brought under control by means of a Government policy. Some means must be found for removing the dreadful spectacles that are to be seen in our midst.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [7.55]: I do not intend to cast a silent vote on this motion. I have listened with great interest to the fine case put up both by the mover and seconder of the motion. The white population of the southern portion of the State owes a duty to the natives. This inquiry is long overdue. Although I cannot claim to be an expert, never having been in the North, I have read so many stories and seen so much Press comment from time to time that I feel an inquiry is fully warranted, so that a full measure of justice may be meted out to the natives. I have looked through an advance copy of the annual report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines, dated 30th June, 1932, and find therein some very interesting figures. The native population of the State in the area termed "civilised" is nearly 19,000. The percentage of children under 12 years of age born of full-blooded

natives is 19 per cent., and in the case of children under 12 years of age born of half-castes the percentage is 46. That shows the serious nature of the problem we have to face. In his report the Chief Protector makes some remarkable and interesting statements. He says—

It is remarkable how the people themselves have borne their privations uncomplainingly. (He is referring to the native population). While there is partly due to their patience and law-abiding nature, it is unfortunately also the result of apathy born of a fatalistic outlook, the outcome of inability to improve their position. The enforced congregation of these people in communities in idleness is leading to many undesirable results. Unwise mating and sex relationships, incest, gambling and such-like evils are prevalent, and are leading to undesirable results, the effect of which will be more apparent as time goes on. In those respects, under the existing system, the department is powerless to exercise necessary control. It has, in the South-West, at all events, neither the necessary means nor facilities to do what is patiently urgently necessary if these people are to be turned into decent, self-respecting citizens, rather than a race of outcasts which they are rapidly becoming. That would not matter so much were they dying out, but they are not, and their inherent weaknesses and taints will inevitably affect the whites as miscegenation proceeds. Their mode of existence is undesirable, if only from the point of view of the health of the community, let alone the education and upbringing of their children.

Even in the uncivilised portions of the State, the natives are members of the great human family. They have the same human traits as the white people. One has only to refer to the time when the German aviators, Bertam and his companion, landed in the North-West. For a time the natives kept away from the aeroplane, because of their natural timidity, but later on they went to the assistance of the distressed men, just as white people would have gone to their aid. I hold that full inquiry should be made regarding the medical requirements of the natives. The statements made here to-night render it imperative that a Royal Commission should go into the whole subject of the natives, and submit recommendations for dealing with the problem. I was appalled by the statements of North-West members regarding the transfer of lepers on a certain boat. If 16 white lepers had been transported under similarly inhuman conditions, there would have been a great public outcry. I hope that later we shall receive from the Minister controlling the Aborigines Department an as-

insurance that similar conditions will not obtain in connection with any future transfer of natives. An occurrence of this kind in the Belgian Congo would have roused the civilised world. The conveyance of 16 sick people in a space measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet, and on a journey lasting about 16 days, is an inexcusable proceeding. As regards disease among the natives, I have heard that in one northern hospital a leper has been placed in the nigger section of the institution, that section being a tin shanty containing one bed.

Mr. Latham: That statement is not true.

Mr. CROSS: I hope it is not true. I am speaking from hearsay. What follows is worse—that because of that fact a diseased aboriginal had been placed in the white section of the hospital. Inquiries should be made into the truth of those statements. In any event, adequate hospital facilities should be provided. We owe a duty to the natives, and it is traditional on the part of the British race to be kind to the poor and to assist the down-trodden. I hope the motion will be carried, so that justice and fair play may be meted out to the native population.

MR. WELSH (Pilbara) [8.4]: I support the motion. The allegations which have been made are, in my opinion, mainly exaggerated and ill-founded; but they should be inquired into. As one who has lived in the North for a number of years, I consider the natives there are well treated and generally contented. Bush natives coming into the coastal areas cause trouble to the police, owing to the depredations committed among natives in the settled districts. Speaking generally, the police and the native protectors in the North are a fine body of men, and it is to be regretted that they are subjected to unjust criticism in the Press. As regards disease, at Port Hedland there is a lock hospital with a very efficient doctor and a fine staff. No case of disease is brought to that hospital without receiving attention. I know the doctor there would welcome inspection at any time. In conclusion, I have no personal knowledge of any case which would come within the allegations quoted by the mover.

On motion by the Minister for the North-West, debate adjourned.

MOTION—HEALTH ACT.

To disallow By-law.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [8.9]: 1 move—

That the new by-law No. 16a, made in Part VII. of the Model By-laws under the Health Act, 1911-1926, published in the "Government Gazette" on 3rd February, 1933, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 2nd and 23rd August, 1933, and adopted by the Municipalities of Collie, Geraldton, Northam, Boulder, and North Fremantle; and the Road Districts of Armadale-Kelmscott, Gosnells, South Perth, Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock, Murray, Westonia, Yilgarn, Harvey, Beverley, Rockingham, Wickpin, Bridgetown, Wyalkatchem, Dowerin, Wiluna; and the Moora Local Board of Health, be and are hereby disallowed.

My reason for submitting a former motion in this amended form is that I believe the object of the regulation to be impracticable. The Minister for Health deservedly has a reputation of protecting the health of the people; but I fear that the regulation here concerned will merely prove irritating to producers, without in any way benefitting the people at large. Further, in my opinion the regulation cannot be carried out.

Mr. Marshall: Why trouble about it if it cannot be carried out?

Mr. THORN: If it cannot be carried out, it should not be a regulation. I defy anyone to determine whether a cabbage has been sprayed a day, or a week, or a month ago. The Minister referred to the Queensland regulation in the previous debate. By that regulation, as soon as the leaves of a cabbage or lettuce, or any vegetable of that family, turn in, the producer is prohibited from spraying any longer. But the leaves of a cabbage do not turn in; they turn out. Therefore, the heart of a cabbage, or for that matter of a lettuce, is always protected from any infection by spray. Again, it cannot be considered a fair test to take a few of the outside leaves of a cabbage and analyse them to ascertain the amount of arsenic present. A cauliflower, I should say, would be subject to contamination by spraying; but the member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Ferguson) states that a cauliflower cannot very well be sprayed after coming into flower. As regards cabbages, I maintain that during the process of boiling, the bulk of the arsenate of lead would evaporate.

Mr. Doney: That could easily be determined by testing the cabbage before and after boiling.

Mr. THORN: Again, the housewife, who has most to do with the handling of vegetables, does not boil the outside leaves. The aspect uppermost in my mind is that producers are over-run with insect pests to-day. If we limit the spraying of vegetables, greater hardship and greater loss will result to the growers.

The Minister for Health: The other aspect is the safety of human life.

Mr. THORN: True, but has any human life ever been lost through spraying?

Member: One was lost in Victoria.

Mr. THORN: When this question was before the House previously, I said most of what I desire to say now. I trust the House will view the regulation from a practical standpoint. Hon. members need not be afraid of any poison, for spraying has been practised for seven years already. Suddenly an officer of the Health Department woke up in a fright lest someone should be poisoned. I appeal to the Minister to agree to the disallowance of the regulation, which can only irritate, and which cannot be practically enforced without an army of inspectors to see that cabbages are not sprayed. Hon. members generally are, I believe, seized of the need for disallowing the regulation.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

MOTION—DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Debate resumed from the 23rd August on the following motion by Mr. J. H. Smith—

That in the opinion of this House, the Government should give its urgent consideration to the position of the dairy farmers in the South-West in their relation with the Agricultural Bank, and more especially in the bank's relations to the group and soldier settlers.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [8.17]: I will support the motion. We discussed this subject on the Royal Commission's report on dairying in the South-West during the dying hours of last session, but I hope that greater interest will be aroused as the result of the present discussion, to the benefit both of the settlers and of the Government. The position, whether of the soldier settler or of the group settler, has not improved since the inquiry by the Royal Commission: as a fact the position has become worse. Both the soldier settler and the group settler in the

South West are facing the same difficulties; both are engaged in dairying as their main industry, and both have found that the side lines they produce are at present unprofitable. For instance, the fruitgrower and the potato grower have experienced very low prices, and the citrus fruitgrower during July and August has found his fruit almost unsaleable. I know many instances of good oranges having been sent to market during those two months and having brought from 1s. 6d. to 3s. per case, despite the fact that the fruit was really good. No orchardist could pay his way on such prices. The returned soldiers are interested in soft fruit. They also have found the prices very low, in addition to which they have to combat the fruit-fly pest. The Royal Commission in its report said the troubles of the settlers could be ascribed to the fall in the price of products, and the difficulties of marketing, to dry seasons, to inadequate drainage, to over-capitalisation of holdings and in some instances to having too much land and being unable to develop it. This last named difficulty specially affects the returned soldier. I wish first of all to speak of the position of the group settler and to deal mainly with those settlers near Perth on the Peel, Bateman and Doolette estates. The Royal Commissioners in their report said the position of those groups was most unsatisfactory, and they recommended that a board should be appointed to go into the question with the idea of considering areas, capitalisation and drainage, and endeavour to put the settlers on a sound footing. I introduced to the ex-Premier a deputation consisting of members of local authorities from Fremantle, Armadale, Serpentine, Jarrahdale, Rockingham and the Murray, all adjacent to and interested in the Peel Estate. I regret to say that nothing has been done as the result of that deputation, but I do hope the Minister in charge of group settlement will appoint the proposed board and have the position investigated. It would be helpful to the Minister and helpful to the settlers also. Moving about amongst the settlers, I find there is a feeling of despair. The settlers did certainly hope that something practicable would come out of the Royal Commission's report. When I supported the motion to appoint that Royal Commission I believed that good would result from it, but up to the present nothing whatever has resulted. We should endeavour to do something to create some

hope amongst the group settlers, for no man can work unless he has some prospect in view. The settlers on the groups to which I refer are engaged mostly in the production of whole milk. It has been said by some that those settlers do not work as they should. If any of those who criticise them in that direction would but visit the groups, he would soon alter his opinion. Some of those men have to rise at 3 a.m. and most of them by 4 a.m., and in many instances they are assisted by their wives. Trucks come out from the city to get the milk in the early morning, for it has to be delivered before breakfast, and in consequence the settlers have to be up at those very early hours.

The Minister for Lands: Many of them do not have their cows milked by 10 o'clock in the morning. The Managing Trustee of the Bank could tell you that.

Mr. McLARTY: I feel sure that such instances are few and far between.

The Minister for Lands: Of course.

Mr. McLARTY: I have no doubt that if anybody visited the groups and found a settler had not milked his cows by 10 a.m. that settler would get any amount of publicity. Again, no settler can carry on successfully without security of tenure. I have often been asked by the settlers if I thought they would be allowed to remain on the holdings, or whether they would have to get out; and the women on the groups have asked me the same question.

The Minister for Lands: How did your forefathers make good despite their lack of security of tenure?

Mr. McLARTY: They were living in very different times. To-day we have to face new circumstances and take up a new attitude.

The Minister for Lands: Yet they all had to borrow money.

Mr. McLARTY: But not to the extent that the present-day settlers have borrowed money.

The Minister for Lands: No, it could not be done in those days.

Mr. McLARTY: That is so; times have changed. Those settlers to whom I refer are greatly worried, and any member who cared to visit the groups would quickly discover that he was moving amongst a lot of very much worried people. Again, those who think the settlers adopt a don't-care view would soon find their mistake. Many settlers who have been on the groups for years are disappearing. Some of them have

put in as long as 10 years on the groups, and have gone off with very little. The point I wish to make is that those who take the places of the older settlers soon get into exactly the same position. New settlers come along and have £30 or £40 to pay a deposit. They are able to take the places of the dispossessed settlers, but after a while they find themselves in the same position. I am sure the members for Nelson and Sussex can say the same in respect of their electorates. The Minister would find it exceedingly difficult in times like the present to replace the average settler with a better class of man. That should be taken into very serious consideration. I do not advocate that a useless settler should be carried by the Agricultural Bank and kept on his holding; the great majority of the settlers are not useless, but are triers. Dealing with the groups to which I refer, I recently asked the Minister if it was intended to go on with any drainage work. The Minister replied that the matter was under consideration. A great deal of the most useful land on these estates becomes flooded during the winter months, although it has not been so this season owing to the fact that we have not had the customary heavy rains. I feel sure that the Minister, as a practical farmer, realises that the high and dry land on the Peel Estate is anything but dairying country, and unless something is done to improve the drainage conditions there, quite a number of settlers will find it absolutely impossible to carry on. Hon. members know that a board was appointed in 1929 to revalue the whole of the group settlement blocks, and as a result, over four million sterling was written off. We must all agree that this is tremendous, but despite that writing-off, I should think that the average debt on the group holdings, on the Peel, Bateman and Doolette Estates would average between £1,400 and £1,500. While the tremendous sum I have named has been written off group settlement, hon. members should not forget that the groups have proved of some benefit to the State. They have been responsible for our keeping within the State hundreds of thousands of pounds which otherwise would have been sent away.

The Minister for Lands: At a cost. Can you call a scheme successful when that is the position?

Mr. McLARTY: I am just making that point as an offset against the losses. I am

not advocating that we should continue in this way. Again, group settlement has done some good in this respect also, that it has been responsible for the improvement of the dairy herds and pastures in the South-West. I doubt, however, whether the average dairy herd in the near groups would average 15 milking cows during the year. I also doubt whether the settlers would average 10 gallons daily. Assuming a settler did average that quantity, he would receive 10¼d., which would give him 8s. 6d. a day, and if he were separating another 10 gallons he would not get anything like 8s. 6d., because he would get only butter fat price. Out of that, apart from his interest obligations, the settler has to buy concentrates for his cows. It is necessary to keep up the standard of the milk, and in quite a number of cases to keep the stock alive. I know it will be said it should not be necessary for the farmers to buy concentrates, but it is actually necessary, and under the present conditions lack of drainage and small areas on which they have to work compel them to buy concentrates. Only recently there have been fairly heavy losses amongst dairy herds on the Peel Estate, and I believe those losses are partly due to there being insufficient feed to keep the stock in their right condition. On some of the swamp lands arrears of interest amount to just about as much as the principal, and through lack of drainage settlers are using less land each year. In my opinion this is a position which should be relieved immediately. One settler in giving evidence referred to the fact that only three of the 23 original settlers were left on one of the swamp areas, and to my knowledge there have been changes even since then. Very few of the original settlers remain on any of the swamp lands of the estate. They are now going in for market gardening, and the prices have been such that it has not been possible for them to meet their obligations. The report of the Commission certainly showed how acute the position was at that time. The report stated that out of 1,700 settlers, only 17 had paid the interest due. That was at the time the report was issued. That puts the position far more eloquently than I am able to do. Of course I realise the Minister's difficulties and in meeting the settlers I try to encourage them to stick to their task. I certainly do not encourage them to hold meetings and pass resolutions which would have nothing but an

embarrassing effect on the Government. Generally speaking, I think the settlers realise that they have an obligation to the Government, and it is their desire, if possible, to pay something towards their interest costs. Soldier settlers, as I have pointed out, are in a position very similar to that of the group settlers. They bought their places at a time of inflated prices, and the value of their products has fallen 50 per cent. since then. They, too, are naturally worried about their position. I understand that the Minister has agreed that those who are engaged in sheep farming, or some of them at any rate, shall receive certain interest concessions for five years.

The Minister for Lands: The last five years, not the future five years.

Mr. McLARTY: I mean that.

The Minister for Lands: Where the interest is in arrears now.

Mr. McLARTY: If it is possible to do this for one section, I fail to see how it can possibly be withheld from another. The returned soldier dairy farmer has had just as difficult a time as the wool man, and no doubt the Minister will find these settlers will be asking for a similar concession. I have had a number of returns sent to me by farmers, and all these make one realise how serious the position really is. They complain of the prices received as well as the marketing costs. The latest cost is for account sales. For what is sent in an extra 6d. is charged on every return. I hope the Minister for Agriculture will look into that position and ascertain why an extra 6d. is being charged. The man on the land to-day has sufficient taxes to meet without this additional impost. We tax the farmer's herd, his gun, his bull, his dog, and his cart, as well as his land, and if he has an income—and very few are troubled with that just now—we tax that as well. One said the other day that the only thing that had not been taxed was his old tom cat. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) was surprised that I should have suggested to the Minister for Agriculture that we had a sufficient number of butter factories to cope with the present supplies of cream. I have no wish to retard progress, and I hope the position will soon be such that the dairying industry will require still more butter factories. At the present time, however, half the factories which we have could easily cope with all the butter fat that is produced.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You mean you would wipe out all the proprietary companies?

Mr. McLARTY: I do not say that. My desire is to eliminate unnecessary expense. The more factories we have the greater will be the overhead expenses. As I said on the Address-in-reply, it would be easier for the Department of Agriculture to superintend the dairying industry if we had fewer factories doing the work.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Do not you believe that competition increases prices?

Mr. McLARTY: I do not think competition in this case would increase the prices. I do not want State factories.

Mr. Marshall: You are not backward in advocating the construction of railways.

Mr. McLARTY: I desire to refer to another phase of the industry, the whole milk side of it. I trust that the Whole Milk Board will be given full control over all milk.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It has been a failure up to date.

Mr. McLARTY: It has not. I am not advocating this with the idea of wild price fixing or hampering the industry.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not anticipating the legislation on the Noticed Paper?

Mr. McLARTY: No, I have no idea what it is going to be. I was going to point out that as the settlers are interested in the whole milk industry it will have a great effect upon them if we give the board control over whole milk generally. For instance, there are some who are buying ship's milk at a cheaper rate than that at which it is possible to get milk into the metropolitan area. I cannot understand why ship's milk should not be treated as whole milk in the metropolitan area. In my opinion the producers should have representation on the butter board. The member for Nelson referred to the position of small farmers in the South-West. There is no doubt that their position is precarious. I do not know what can be done for them until the Agricultural Bank can make advances to them. Their holdings will not keep them, and because they have land they are not permitted to get work. I do not intend to say much more and I am afraid I have not mentioned anything remarkably fresh. We must continue with the group settlement scheme because it is impossible to drop it. We have spent so much money and we have so many people on the groups that it is essential the scheme shall be carried on to

ultimate success. Speaking at a meeting at Fremantle recently, the Minister for Works dealt with the problem of group settlement. I was present when he said that we should endeavour to salvage something from the wreckage. I hope the Minister will agree to appoint the board that was recommended by the Royal Commission in order to investigate the position of the settlers. I feel sure the creation of the board would be of practical value to the Government and to the settlers.

MR. BROCKMAN (Sussex) [8.46]: I support the motion. In the course of my remarks I shall find it necessary to trace the history of group settlement almost from its inception. At the outset it involved a three-party agreement, in that three Governments were involved—the Imperial, the Federal, and the State Governments. A large amount of money has been borrowed in connection with the scheme, and has been spent. It will be necessary for me to show the amount of money that was spent during the regimes of various Governments, for it is due to that phase that the group settlement scheme is now in a deplorable position. During the first three years of the scheme, £1,400,000 was spent. That was a large amount, but it must be borne in mind that the scheme was unique. I do not suppose that in any other part of the world has any such huge scheme been embarked upon, involving the development of so large an area and the expenditure of so much money. In the circumstances, a fair proportion of losses might have been expected to result. During the next three years—in my remarks I do not desire to reflect upon any Government or upon any political party—there was a change of Government, which involved an altered policy in application to the scheme. It was during the second three-year period that the group settlement scheme became hopelessly over-capitalised.

Mr. Wansbrough: By paying for the construction of roads, houses and schools.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I know all about that. It was during that period, as I have mentioned, that the scheme became hopelessly over-capitalised. Money was lavishly spent and on some holdings settlers were allowed to earn up to £80 a month. That was largely the cause of the subsequent trouble. One effect of that policy was disclosed to the Royal Commissioners who investigated these matters last year. We found in one instance that a foreman had

recommended that £8 per acre should be paid for a certain quantity of clearing that had been done. When the payment was actually made, it was at the rate of £16 per acre. What is the use of a foreman, who is supposed to be a practical man, being over-ridden in that manner, and £16 an acre paid for work that he assessed at a value of £8 an acre? The fact remains that during that period many of the settlers earned large amounts of money, and some of them walked off their holdings and bought equities in other directions. Certainly they saved their money, but some of them returned to England on the proceeds of their labours. That was never intended when the scheme was embarked upon. The object was to settle the south-western part of the State, and I certainly do not hold with the actions of the settlers who adopted that course. Many of them, however, remained on their holdings. The money was of great advantage to them, but to-day it is all spent, and even the best of the settlers are in a deplorable condition. The manner in which they are being harassed for the payment of interest makes their position absolutely impossible. They have no part-time work and do not know what their future will be. I will deal with the evidence that was given to us by the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. McLarty, to indicate that he likewise considers it is impossible for the settlers to pay their interest charges on the basis of existing prices for butter fat. During the course of his evidence Mr. McLarty said—

I consider it is not possible for a man to pay his way on a capitalisation of £1,500 with butter fat at 1s. per pound.

To-day butter fat is 10½d. a pound, and it has been as low as 9¾d. a pound. If it is not possible for the settlers to pay interest with butter fat commanding a price of 1s. a pound, how can they be expected to pay interest when the price is 9¾d. a pound?

Mr. J. H. Smith: Those prices were for choice cream only.

Mr. BROCKMAN: Yes, the price for lower grades dropped down to 7½d. a pound. As a practical farmer, I say most emphatically that the men on the group settlements to-day are experiencing very hard times indeed. In fact, they are worse off than any other section of the community in Western Australia. If the Government

do not soon take steps to rectify the position, there will be very few left on their holdings. During last week-end I was in my electorate, and I was informed on good authority that the settlers were leaving their holdings at the rate of 12 per week. I presume the Minister is aware of that fact.

The Minister for Lands: They have been leaving their holdings at that rate for the last three years.

Mr. BROCKMAN: Possibly they have been.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Not so much in the past as they are now.

The Minister for Lands: Nonsense!

Mr. BROCKMAN: The part that appeals to me is that it is the good men who are leaving their holdings to-day.

The Minister for Lands: That has always been said.

Mr. BROCKMAN: Had the Government taken the advice of practical men—I am not saying this because I was one of the Royal Commissioners myself—and dealt with the settlers in the way the Royal Commission proposed, instead of harassing and starving them off their blocks, as is happening to-day, the position would have been much better.

The Minister for Lands: Why did not Sir James Mitchell deal with the settlers in the way you recommended?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I do not say that Sir James Mitchell did the right thing. I am sorry his Government did not carry out our recommendations. The Government certainly gave effect to many of our recommendations, particularly with regard to the reduction of interest charges, but in respect of the important question I am dealing with, no action was taken. I hope the present Minister for Lands in his wisdom will see fit to do something along the lines we suggested. In my opinion, the group settlement scheme from the very inception should have been placed under the control of a commissioner, and a definite policy established respecting that phase.

Mr. J. H. Smith: God help the settlers if that had been done!

Mr. BROCKMAN: I think the settlers would have been on their feet to-day.

Mr. J. H. Smith: There would have been no wiping-off of £4,000,000.

Mr. BROCKMAN: It is practical experience that is required. To-day the administration is far from what it should be.

Mr. Ferguson: Could you have a more practical man than the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank?

Mr. BROCKMAN: He is indeed a practical man, and a very good man, too; but it takes him all his time to look after the financial side. It is the field work that is at fault.

The Minister for Lands: Do you not know that the Agricultural Bank control group settlement absolutely to-day?

Mr. BROCKMAN: Yes, and the Managing Trustee of that bank is a very sympathetic man, but he has no control over the field work.

Mr. Doney: How do you know your commissioner would be a practical man?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I feel sure that if the Minister were to appoint a commissioner, he would see to it that a practical man, who knew his business, would be chosen.

Mr. Doney: Should you not assume the same thing regarding the man who is in charge now?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I would not be satisfied with one man; we suggested three commissioners.

Mr. Doney: Too much expense would be involved.

Mr. BROCKMAN: The Royal Commission recommended that three commissioners should be appointed. Had that recommendation been adopted, the group settlement position would be much better than it is to-day. In our report, we suggested that the group holdings were capitalised 100 per cent., but most people thought we were conservative in our estimate. With such a capitalisation and present-day prices for their commodities, the settlers have a very poor chance of success. If the scheme is a failure, it will be a reflection upon the State. I hope the Minister will take some action to relieve the position and enable settlers to carry on their farms profitably. The present method of selling stock is altogether wrong. The future of the group holdings is undoubtedly centred in the young stock that the settlers are raising. In the early stages, cows, which were on the rough side and of poor quality, were made available, and the bulls were imported from the Eastern States with a view to breeding up to standard. To-day the bank inspectors are picking out the best heifers and are selling them. Rather than that, the settlers should be permitted to retain the best of their stock. The future of the dairy

farmers is naturally largely affected by the increased value of the milking strain of their herds. To sell the best of the stock is entirely wrong. The inspectors take buyers out to the farms and, without consulting the settlers at all, state their requirements, and pick the best of the herds. They are sold straight-out, or submitted to auction, with the result that the stock do not realise a quarter of their value. In my opinion, we could very well do away with foremen on the group settlements to-day. After a man has been farming for 12 or 13 years, if he does not know enough to control his own holding, he should not be on the farm. The administrative costs are very high and the revenue derived from the groups does not pay the administrative costs. If the services of the foremen were dispensed with, and more agricultural inspectors appointed—there should be one or two more in my electorate—with the provision of veterinary services as well, the settlers would be far better catered for. Those men would be able to give good advice and valuable assistance in veterinary work. I am pleased that the Minister has reinstated one or two of them in my electorate, and I hope he will see his way clear to do more in that direction. The mortality and disease among stock are very high and the need for veterinary service is great.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith interjected.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I cannot see the need for all the supervision that exists to-day. The men have been on their holdings 12 or 13 years and should and do know enough to work their land.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: I thought you were complaining of the Managing Trustee.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I was not.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: You said that he was not able to attend to the field work.

Mr. BROCKMAN: He has field supervisors, and it was to them I referred. There has been much criticism of group settlement, but as the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) said, group settlement has proved a great benefit to the State. Let me read the opinion of Mr. Wigan, the Commonwealth grader of our butter—

Group settlements have made the development of dairying possible years ahead of ordinary methods and in country, the nature of which discouraged the unaided settler. This system of settlement has many advantages, and with sympathetic administration should develop dairying in Western Australia to one of its foremost and most profitable industries.

Years ago we imported an enormous quantity of butter, bacon, cheese and other dairy products, and group settlement has certainly resulted in our overtaking that market with local production. There is no need to-day to import those commodities from the Eastern States.

The Minister for Lands: Do not you know we are paying more for group settlement than if we got the whole of our butter from the Eastern States or elsewhere?

Mr. BROCKMAN: But the scheme is only in the initial stages and in time to come the State will benefit by the increased production and by the employment of labour in the manufacturing side of the industry.

Mr. Hawke: If every industry showed the same results, there would be a terrible squeal.

Mr. BROCKMAN: Another question on which I wish to touch is that of marketing. I am satisfied the farmer is not getting a fair remuneration for his labour. Particularly does that apply to the producer of butter fat. I congratulate the ex-Minister on introducing the Whole Milk Bill. I do not agree with the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith). I think that legislation has been most beneficial to the producer of whole milk. I only wish the Minister would introduce, for the benefit of dairymen, a marketing board on the lines of the Dried Fruits Board, which has proved such a success. The producer of butter fat is receiving 10½d. per lb., and the consumer in country districts is paying up to 1s. 7d. a lb. for butter. That does not seem right. In Western Australia we have co-operative factories and proprietary factories, and yet I consider that the farmers are not getting a fair return. I do not believe there is any such thing as co-operation in this State. At the end of every month representatives of the co-operative and proprietary factories meet and decide what they will pay the farmer for his product. I cannot see that there is true co-operation when that occurs.

Mr. Marshall: Do not you think there is too much co-operation between them?

Mr. BROCKMAN: There is certainly a lot of co-operation with which I do not agree. One thing the Royal Commission discovered; I do not know whether I ought to mention it. We took evidence from co-operative and proprietary concerns, and we found that the chairman of directors and secretary of a co-

operative concern were also the proprietors of a factory. I used to be keen on co-operation, but I am not a supporter of co-operation to-day. When such a thing can occur, co-operation in a true sense does not exist.

Mr. Ferguson: That is not a secret; it is common knowledge.

Mr. BROCKMAN: A new settlement scheme for unemployed was established at Nannup during the regime of the previous Government, and I venture to say that had group settlement been established on similar lines, the capitalisation of the group blocks would be very different. The men at Nannup have been established about two years and two months, and their holdings are almost as far advanced as are group settlements established for the last 13 years. The highest capitalisation on the Nannup holdings is £376 and the lowest £178 15s. The Nannup settlers certainly have not houses as good as those on group holdings, but they will come in time. The settlers are practical and able men. I am sorry to say that some of them appear to be getting over-capitalised. It is the same influence at work that led to the over-capitalisation of group holdings, namely, bad administration. I hope the Minister will soon pay a visit to Nannup and investigate the matter for himself. The methods now being adopted are unpractical and foreign to me as a dairy farmer.

The Minister for Lands: How much did you say the highest capitalisation was?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I said it was £376.

The Minister for Lands: What improvements have the settlers effected?

Mr. BROCKMAN: They have 50 acres of pasture.

The Minister for Lands: That is not enough.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I said that if group settlement had been established on the same basis—

The Minister for Lands: You now say the Nannup settlers are over-capitalised.

Mr. BROCKMAN: They should not be capitalised to the extent of £376. Had the expenditure been carefully watched, the capitalisation would not exceed £260 or £270. Let me refer to the manner in which I consider the Government have spent money foolishly. In the first instance the work at Nannup was done satisfactorily. The men were put on to grub, clear and mullensise up to 15 inches, and the work was satisfactory. They

sowed their seed and applied super, but the next instruction given was that they should clear the land up to 18 inches. The stumps that had already been mullenised to 15 inches had to be grubbed out. Any practical man knows that it is as hard and expensive to grub the stump as to grub the tree. That is where the capitalisation has been increased unnecessarily. Now they are being asked to fall every tree on 10 acres. The land has been top-dressed twice and laid in pasture, but their work is to be thrown away. That is where the capitalisation is being increased unwarrantably. I should not like to see this big land settlement scheme fail, because the time is coming when there will be a much larger stream of migration to this country than we have ever had. Let me quote an article dealing with a meeting of the Economic Advisory Council under the chairmanship of Viscount Astor, who said—

When the time comes for the Dominions to welcome migrants, it might be economically advantageous to Britain to supply them, but migration within the Empire has more important aspects than the purely economic ones. In the interests of the unity of the Empire and the security of the Dominions, additional population for the latter is of primary importance.

Maintenance of substantial immigration to Australia may in the long run prove vital to the avoidance of serious international issues. We believe that the growth of British population in the Dominions will become an important factor in maintaining world peace. When the present depression has passed, it will be again desirable for Britain substantially to support, financially, overseas settlement.

The committee recommends amending legislation permitting a variation of Britain's share of the cost. While the present fifty-fifty basis should generally be maintained, the Dominions should be permitted to include the cost of the land in their share.

It is clear that it will not be long before Britain will be seeking for another migration scheme, and that Western Australia will be one of the first parts of the Empire that will be looked to.

Mr. Sleeman: If this State did its job it would send some more of the migrants Home.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I hope everything possible will be done to make a success of the present migration scheme, so that when the time comes we shall get our share of whatever cash is available and of British subjects to develop our sparsely populated

lands. I should like the Minister to take an early opportunity to visit some of the group settlement areas, so that he can see the position in which the settlers find themselves and the extent to which they stand in need of assistance. I do not ask that monetary assistance should be given but feel that something must be done in the matter of the accrued interest. It is very disheartening to any man to go on farming these holdings under present conditions. The settlers see nothing ahead of them but the heaping up of the capitalisation year after year. When the Royal Commission made its report a year ago the capitalisation of the groups was £6,000,000 odd. To-day it is over £7,000,000, so that the amount is creeping up all the time. This must inevitably lead to a writing down of capital. The quicker that is done, the better will it be for the scheme. I want the Minister to view this matter from a broad standpoint, and clean it up once and for all. If things are allowed to drift on I am afraid all these holdings will come back into the hands of the State and will represent nothing less than State farms. We do not want more State trading concerns. Many of these farms are on the hands of the State already. In the case of group No. 20, in particular, only one or two settlers remain.

On motion by Mr. Withers, debate adjourned.

BILL — FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

RESOLUTION—SECESSION.

As to joint select committee—Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the resolution of the Assembly, as contained in Message No. 13, had appointed five members of the Council to act on the committee referred to therein, and had fixed Friday the 1st September, at 11 o'clock in the President's room as the time and place for the meeting of the committee.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [9.19]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.20 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 31st August, 1933.

				PAGE
BILL:	Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act			
	Amendment, 2R.	665

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [4.35]: It is a physical impossibility for me to deal with all the arguments used and points raised by members in the discussion of this Bill, but if any important aspects are omitted by me, I shall be prepared to explain them in Committee. Mr. Baxter, the first speaker, commenced with a desperate effort to prove that I was inconsistent, that this year I had said something quite different from what I said last year. Political inconsistency is not a very great crime to be accused of nowadays. We have had some remarkable proofs of it during the last three years and from men whose probity is never questioned. But I do not like to plead guilty of an offence when I believe I am innocent. Mr. Baxter, in his address, has gone the whole way in showing that, whatever sin I have committed in connection with financial emergency

taxation, the sin of inconsistency cannot be laid to my charge. Mr. Baxter has been honest enough to read lengthy extracts from the speech I made last year, and those extracts plainly prove that my objection to the Bill was that it taxed people below the bread-line—people earning £1. a week and over—and that the rate was a flat one instead of being on a graduated scale. Those objectionable features—objectionable to me if praiseworthy to others—have not been incorporated in the measure now before the House. The principles contained in this Bill are those I advocated last year. In addition, I then expressed the opinion that the Mitchell Government, at an early stage of their administration, should have amended the income tax legislation to give them more money.

Mr. Baxter also stated that it would be well for the House to remember that the present Government will receive a substantial amount from the emergency tax of last year in addition to the proceeds of any tax approved by Parliament under the present proposals. It is a pity the hon. member was not fortified by accurate information. The amount outstanding at the 30th June, 1933, was £9,250, and to this should be added, say, a further £10,000 representing the total amount receivable during the current financial year in respect to last year's tax, or about £20,000 in all. Other members have harped on the amount the Government would receive this year from the tax imposed last year, but not many, I am pleased to say, have ventured so far as has Mr. Baxter. It should be patent to any one who gives the matter serious thought that the carry-over from last year will repeat itself, and that a certain proportion of the tax levied under this Bill will not be received during the financial year. This, of course, applies largely to assessments under the Land and Income Tax Act. Mr. Baxter has failed to recognise that what has happened under the expired Act will happen under this legislation. Arguments of that character disappear into vapour as soon as they are touched.

The hon. member spoke of the pernicious principle of retrospection to which he said he has always been opposed. Well, if he has always been opposed to it, he has had a curious way of showing his opposition. The late Government made itself famous—I might even say notorious—for the drastic character of its retrospective legislation. I