

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 27th August, 1930.

	PAGE
BILL: State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 1A.	72
Return: Public Works expenditure	72
Address-in-reply, fourth day	78

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

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Country Water Supplies and read a first time.

RETURN—PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURE.

Notice of motion by Hon. A. Lovekin read—

That a return be laid on the Table of the House showing—(1) The expenditure for public works for the year ended 30th June, 1930, from Loan Funds—(a) on material; (b) on wages paid to workers; (c) on salaries to officials in charge of works; (d) on administration.

The PRESIDENT: I understand that this motion is likely to create some discussion. Under Standing Order 15 formal business can only be taken before the adoption of the Address-in-reply. No business beyond what is of a formal character or unopposed may be entered upon before the Address-in-reply has been adopted. Will this motion involve much discussion?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is a formal motion asking for certain information. Motions of this character have always been treated as formal. The information sought here might easily have been afforded by way of an answer to a question. Unless the books of the country are in a chaotic state, this information ought to be forthcoming at once. I should like to know upon what ground the Leader of the House suggests that this is not a formal motion. We have never been subjected to this sort of thing before.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If there is any objection, withdraw the motion, and ask a question.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The return asked for will lead to a good deal of expense. It will be necessary to search and examine hundreds of vouchers in order to prepare a return of this nature.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Not if the books are properly kept. The vouchers would have been checked by the auditors each year.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: It is my desire that any information I give the House shall be as far as possible absolutely correct. In order to get correct information in answer to the points mentioned in the motion, many vouchers will have to be examined.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Auditor General has already examined them.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I repeat that, despite the interjection, the vouchers will have to be examined before the correct information can be obtained. If Mr. Lovekin can put up a case to support his request for an answer to these questions, I shall be prepared to supply the information.

The PRESIDENT: I think Mr. Lovekin will see that, irrespective of the merits of the motion, it is likely to create discussion, and that it will be opposed. Consequently under Standing Order 15 he may not proceed with the motion at this stage.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Give notice of a question now.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I give notice of a question along the lines indicated in the motion, the question to be asked at the next sitting of the House.

The PRESIDENT: This motion will be left on the Notice Paper until after the Address-in-reply is concluded. The hon. member can then proceed with it. The matter was previously presented in the form of a question, but the Minister did not answer it, and suggested that it should be presented in the form of a motion.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Do I understand, Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: I understand the hon. member is rising to a point of order.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I only want to clear the atmosphere and know where we are. I understand from you that this matter was brought up before in the form of a question.

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: And that the Minister suggested it should come forward in the form of a motion.

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is now before the House in the form of a motion and yet the Minister objects to it.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: I have not objected to it.

The PRESIDENT: Under Standing Order 15 no business beyond what is of formal character or unopposed shall be entered upon before the Address-in-reply has been adopted. The Address-in-reply has not been adopted. As soon as it is adopted, Mr. Lovekin's motion can be dealt with. Until then it cannot be dealt with under the Standing Order I have quoted.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I should be glad if the consideration of the motion could be postponed, in any event, because I am at a great disadvantage to-day. I have a cold in my head which has gone to my ears, and my hearing is not very good. I would point out that Standing Order 15 says, "Except as provided by the Standing Orders or by the Leader of the House." In Standing Order 103 there is an exception which says that "motions shall have precedence each day according to the order in which they appear on the Notice Paper, and if called on and are not disposed of prior to the adjournment of the Council shall be placed on the Notice Paper for the next sitting." That seems to be an exception to Standing Order No. 15. This motion appears on the Notice Paper, perfectly in order, and the Notice Paper is signed by you, Mr. President. I submit that I would be in order in proceeding with the motion notwithstanding Standing Order No. 15, but I prefer in the circumstances that its consideration should be postponed. I desire to discuss the Address-in-reply to some extent, and I want this information. The Government have already had a month in which to prepare the information. I gave notice of the question a month ago.

The PRESIDENT: I rule that the motion cannot be discussed at this stage. I think the hon. member will agree with me that I am following the invariable practice of this House in regard to the interpretation of Standing Order No. 15, irrespective of Standing Order 103 quoted by him.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I desire to make a short personal explanation. I am at all times ready to give the House the fullest information. This return, however, will cost a great deal of money and the Government desire that Mr. Lovekin should put up a case for it. If he can justify the expense that will be involved, we shall be only too pleased to give the required answers and supply the information.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There cannot be any excuse unless the books are in a chaotic condition.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

HON. G. A. KEMPTON (Central [4.44]: Before I speak to the Address-in-reply may I congratulate you, Sir, on the honour that has been conferred upon you by His Majesty the King. I also desire to express sorrow that we have lost the late Mr. Brown, and that Mr. Stephenson is no longer amongst us. Both gentlemen were respected and liked in the House, because of their genial nature and their ability. I would also like to congratulate Sir Charles Nathan, Mr. Macfarlane and Mr. Allsop on their election to this Chamber. I hope their stay in the House will be pleasant, as I know it will be profitable to the State. In addition, I would extend similar felicitations to the other hon. members who were returned at the last general election. I hope that Mr. Cornell and the Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Bernard Parker, will soon be restored to health. At a time of stress such as the present, when money is particularly hard to obtain, I regard it as the duty of Parliamentarians to forego part of their salaries. I do not make that statement because I believe members are overpaid. They always have large calls upon their purses and many of them have to travel many thousands of miles in carrying out their duties, more particularly those who live in the North Province. I know personally that all Parliamentary members representing my province, including the Assembly constituencies embraced in it, have assisted considerably in connection with unemployment, and I have no doubt that other hon. members have been equally thoughtful. At the same time, I think it only right that a

lead should be given by members of Parliament and, in common with Mr. Holmes, I would not like to see the salaries of civil servants reduced without members of Parliament themselves first leading the way. I noticed in this morning's "West Australian" that Mr. Paxton, the Chairman of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Australia, said that he thought salaries should be reduced. In fact, he thought that salaries should be abolished altogether for members of Parliament, and he believed that all the State Parliaments should be abolished as well. Mr. Paxton comes from Sydney, and no doubt he would be perfectly satisfied if there were no Parliamentary Government in Western Australia.

Hon. H. Stewart: He did not suggest reducing the tariff or eliminating bonuses.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: No. He would not do that. From his standpoint, it would be a good thing if there were no governing authority in this part of Australia. Why is it that so many people in positions such as that held by Mr. Paxton are so inclined to push down the salaries of the other fellow and leave themselves alone? As a matter of fact, if Parliamentary salaries were to be abolished altogether, it would mean we would have purely conservative governments in Australia, and that would certainly not be for the good of Australia.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Surely you do not mean that!

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I do not think it would be a good thing. Dealing with the question of unemployment, the people in the Victoria and Murchison districts have been particularly generous in the assistance rendered to those out of work. They have collected large sums of money, and in Geraldton over £1,000 has been raised from the people of the town alone. A great many of the unemployed gather in Geraldton because it is a seaport town and the centre of a huge district. It would be well if the Government assisted those people more than they do at the present time. Under existing conditions the position is made extremely difficult for the unemployed in the outback districts. They have to come to Perth, which tends towards centralisation. It also means that when seasonal work starts again in the northern districts, fares have to be paid to enable men to return to those districts. It

would be better if the unemployed were kept in the districts and placed on clearing work in connection with blocks that are to be thrown open. They could also be given contracts to erect fencing and so forth. If that policy were adopted, a new settler, when he took over his block, would be able to commence his farming operations immediately, instead of having to devote two or three years to the work of clearing prior to commencing production. The State would gradually get back the money paid out on account of the clearing work instead of losing that money altogether. It would mean also that the unemployed themselves would be far more contented with their lot. I hope something of that description will be done, because we have many unemployed in the districts I have referred to. The position is particularly bad in Geraldton because of the influx of the unemployed from the other parts of northern districts. Having listened to the statement made by the Premier regarding the financial stringency and realising how members of this Chamber view the starting of new public works and the completion of those already in hand, it seems foolish, perhaps, to talk of new railways or public works. I realise there are big areas in particular districts outback where men are at work, where land has been cleared and huge areas are under crop, and unless some facilities are provided for the settlers there, it will be impossible for them to bring their wheat to the railway sidings at a profit. When speaking the other day the Premier said—

Our big harvest will afford much employment and will return to the State a substantial cheque. A good harvest will mean more to Western Australia than to other States, because our primary production per head of population is so much larger than theirs.

In the Speech delivered to Parliament by His Excellency there was the following passage:—

The work of the session will be devoted largely to finance, and to legislation affecting finance. It is regarded as of the utmost importance to increase the national income by production. To this end, Parliament will be asked to consider a Bill to authorise the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank to raise money for the bank's requirements, in order to secure funds for development. Other necessary steps will be taken to adjust the difficulties which have arisen by reason of the sudden termination of the supply of loan funds.

I agree that there is a lot of land alongside existing railways that is undeveloped. Still the fact remains that in the outer parts of the State in such places as Balla, Dartmoor, and in the country north of Yuna and east of Binnu and from East Yuna to Mullewa, there is a huge tract of country held up because of the lack of transport facilities. The question arises how we can arrange at the present time for some cheap means of transport for them. Unless something is done it will be impossible for the settlers there to carry on. In the Balla and Dartmoor districts, it is expected that this year 50,000 bags of wheat will be brought to the sidings, and it will not be profitable to the settlers if they have to pay the present rate for cartage over long distances and bad roads. In some cases the wheat will have to be carted 30 miles or more. Last year the Collier Government sent a survey party to inspect the areas I have referred to, and the party found a tract of country comprising nearly 500,000 acres, much of which was first-class. If it was worth while for the Government to send out the survey party to classify and mark out the blocks, it should be worth while for the present Government to send out the Railway Advisory Board to report on the land and see whether anything can be done to provide a railway for the settlers.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How far are they from the railway now?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: From 30 to 40 miles. I have received an interesting letter from one of the settlers at Dartmoor, who says—

During your recent visit to Geraldton reference was made to the large area of agricultural land in Balla and Dartmoor and to the big tract of wheat land north of Dartmoor and the rabbit-proof fence. Farming operations have been carried on successfully in Balla and Dartmoor for the last four years, and it is anticipated those areas will this year produce 50,000 bags of wheat, which will be delivered either to Binnu on the Northampton line, or Yuna, the head of the Upper Chapman line. There is no question as to the quality of this land or as to the sufficiency of rainfall for successful wheat production. Settlers in the district are convinced the land north of Dartmoor, which has recently been surveyed and classified, is equally suitable for wheat growing. Surveyed and classified land in Balla and Dartmoor comprises something over 106,000 acres; land north of Dartmoor 319,000 acres; making a total area of 425,000 acres. The classification of the area north of Dartmoor is a remarkably good one, a large portion being

described as first-class land, and practically no sandplain is shown on the classification. Most of the Balla and Dartmoor blocks have been taken up and development work is being carried on, but the land on the new classification has not yet been opened for selection. Balla and Dartmoor settlers are labouring under the great disadvantage of having to cart their wheat for distances ranging from 20 to 30 miles over indifferent roads. It is feared these settlers will not be able to carry on unless railway facilities are provided. Railway extension north from Yuna to the rabbit-proof fence would involve a distance of 33 miles over country that presents no engineering difficulties. It would not only serve the whole of the Balla and Dartmoor areas, but would open up a good deal of land north of the fence in the new classification. . . . You were good enough when up here to view classification maps, displayed in the municipal council chambers, of the newly-classified area north of Dartmoor, and it is felt up here that this large area of land is worthy of an early inspection by members of the Government. . . . I may mention the late Government promised a visit to the area would be made by the Railway Advisory Board at an early date, and seeing so much has been done in the way of survey work, classification, provision for water supply, etc., there was every reason to believe that railway extension to serve the area was contemplated.

I know it is practically useless to ask for the construction of a new railway line even if the length were 33 miles only, but we know that there are in Western Australia certain railway lines that are really not used. They represent a source of expense for the State. Why not take up some of those lines and build railways to such places as Balla, Dartmoor and the other centres I have referred to?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What line would you take up?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I do not suggest any particular line, but we know there are such lines in Western Australia, and it would be possible to do as I suggest and thus find more work for the unemployed. It would mean that there would then be greater production, and if, as the Premier says, it is necessary to get Australia out of her troubles by bringing about increased production, it is due to the Government to give facilities where they are so badly needed.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would it not be better to deal with the land adjacent to existing railways?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Why don't they deal with it?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Ask them.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: The Government have opened up the blocks to which I have referred and men have taken them up and have big areas under crop. Having done so much development work, it is a fair thing that the Government should now assist them in some way. These remarks apply to railways, but there is an undertaking that has already been started and as a matter of fact has been carried on for a number of years which is not completed. I refer to the Geraldton harbour works. The development that has taken place in the Victoria and Murchison districts during the last few years has been nothing short of wonderful. Three years ago when speaking on this subject of the Geraldton harbour works I mentioned that two berths were promised for the previous year. Now we are promised one berth for the coming year. Wheat is placed in ships at Geraldton, and when they are partly loaded, they are sent to Fremantle to top-up. That means extra expense so far as freight is concerned, and that expense falls on the shoulders of the primary producer. The original scheme provided that the harbour should be dredged to a depth of 30 feet. That was afterwards reduced to 25 feet. It will be recognised that it is a short-sighted policy to reduce the depth. The engineer in charge of the works declares that many of the wheat ships can load there at 25 feet, but Mr. Bogle, chairman of the Geraldton Chamber of Commerce, gave me some figures the other day which show that it is impossible for any of the ships that were there last year to fully load. He says—

Allowing for a 2ft. 6in. clearance under vessels when fully loaded, not one ship that came to Geraldton this season to load wheat could have fully loaded at harbour depth of 25ft. At 1ft. 6in. clearance, two vessels could have fully loaded as per list attached of draft of vessels when fully loaded.

I have the list of the vessels that came in last year and not one of them could have fully loaded at 25 feet. This shows clearly that it is a short-sighted policy to reduce the depth of the harbour. There is no need for me to give the names of the vessels, but they drew from 23 to 27 feet and therefore it is an absolute impossibility for them to load if the depth is to be reduced to 25 feet. I should like to give a few Geraldton port statistics to show how necessary it is to

carry on the harbour works to completion. These are the figures—

		Imports.	Exports.
		£	£
1924/25	37,756	394,038
1825/26	54,806	885,141
1926/7	114,396	899,252
1927/28	173,603	950,564
1928/29	92,962	1,340,897
1929/30 (to 31st Mar.)	202,416	1,352,617

The exports of wheat were as follows:—

		Bags.	Vessels.
1923/24	350,000	8
1924/25	613,000	12
1925/26	687,000	17
1926/27	806,000	16
1927/28	1,033,000	19
1928/29	1,511,000	29
1929/30	1,820,000	32

The increase in the seven years was over five times the quantity of wheat exported, and in respect of vessels the number loaded was four times the original figure.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You have not even started to grow wheat in that area.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: That is quite true. I should also like to mention that the quantity of wheat received from the Government line, Geraldton to Wubin and railed to Geraldton was 1,462,000 bags and to Perth 80,000, making a total of 1,542,000, whilst along the Midland line from Geraldton to Coorow 700,000 bags were carried, making a grand total of 2,242,000. The flour mill received ex-rail 44,000 bags, and by road 29,000 bags, a total of 73,000 bags. With the construction of superphosphate works in Geraldton it will mean that instead of a lot of the wheat coming to Perth, the trucks carrying the super will run out from Geraldton loaded, and will return with wheat, whereas at the present time the trucks are sent up from Perth with super and are returned empty with wheat from the Geraldton zone. It would be economically unsound for trucks to be sent back empty. Without taking into consideration the extra area that will be under crop, there will easily be another 400,000 bags of wheat sent to Geraldton. It is estimated that the number of vessels loading and unloading at Geraldton during the coming season will be 40 for wheat, 8 for rock and sulphur, 5 for oil, and 78 coastal, making a total of 131. This great development is sufficient justification for the harbour works being pushed on, and although,

with other members, I realise how difficult it is to get money with which to carry on the work, we must bear in mind that it is an unsound policy to continue to spend thousands of pounds on repairing the jetty. Had the work of harbour construction been carried out by contract instead of by day labour, I venture to say that by this time the work would have been completed. I should like to give the House a few more interesting figures to show how the northern areas have progressed. There is one small area of 36 miles at the northern end of the Midland line that was responsible for nearly one and half million bushels being placed on sidings as follows:—Three Springs, 101,000 bags; Prowaka, 10,000 bags; Carnamah, 169,000 bags; Winchester, 75,000 bags; Coorow, 141,000 bags. The furthest distance that wheat was carted was 17 miles. To show that that is not a favoured spot, I might add that in the Morawa Road Board district no fewer than 312,000 bags were placed on the sidings, or nearly a million bushels. I quote these figures to demonstrate that production must increase when railway facilities are provided, and that it is of the greatest importance also that the harbour works should be completed as early as possible. Before concluding my remarks I should like to say a few words about education. I admit the difficulty in which the present Government find themselves at the present time, and their inability to provide the facilities that the people in the backblocks are entitled to receive, facilities such as schools, hospitals and railways. But in respect to education so many of the out-back districts are finding it impossible to give their children a proper education, and it is often heartbreaking for parents to have to realise that some of their children are growing up almost uneducated. Just here I should like to congratulate heartily the ex-Minister for Education, Mr. Drew, for the splendid work he did in inaugurating the correspondence classes.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Be careful lest this is used against you at the next elections.

Hon. H. Stewart: The correspondence classes were in operation before Mr. Drew took office.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Is that so?

Hon. J. M. Drew: Yes.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: At any rate, I am satisfied that splendid work is being

done by means of these classes and the point I wish to make is this: Although there is a tendency to cut into votes such as that for Education—we realise that Education is not reproductive from the monetary point of view—I should like to express the hope that the correspondence classes will be carried on, even to a greater extent than at present. They are a wonderful help to the people in the distant country districts where very often the number of children is not sufficient to permit of the establishment of a school. There are two or three measures which I think should be brought down this session, and which I hope the Government will bring down, as they are long overdue. Two of them are measures relating to municipalities and road boards. The Acts under which those local authorities now operate are old and out of date. A Bill dealing with road districts has been introduced twice, a number of amendments were introduced, and on each occasion the Bill was dropped. Both municipalities and road boards experience great difficulty in working under the existing Acts. Again, as there has been in the case of the Legislative Assembly, so there should be in the case of the Legislative Council, a redistribution of seats. The time of the biennial elections for this House should also be altered. Under existing conditions it is almost impossible to obtain a full vote, which is necessary in order that the views of the majority of electors may be ascertained. In May the farmers are all seeding and very busy indeed, and they cannot leave their work for possibly a whole day in order to record a vote. I hope that an alteration will be made in that respect. Hon. members will not, I trust, consider that I have been parochial in dealing with only such matters concerning my own province. Many matters relating to finance can be brought forward, and will be brought forward, during the present debate, and I am content to leave them in much abler hands than mine. I have pleasure in supporting the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central)
[5.17]: Before I address myself to the motion before the Chair, will you allow me, Mr. President, to join with other members who have voiced sincere congratulations on the well-deserved honour that has been con-

ferred upon you by His Majesty the King. At times, when honours such as this are bestowed, some sections of the people are at a loss to know the exact reason for the bestowal. Without indulging in any fulsomeness I can say that throughout the length and breadth of the State the honour which has been bestowed upon you, Sir, by His Majesty the King has met with approbation. Your very long service to our adopted country, both in the Legislature of this State and in the Federal Parliament, are not overlooked either by the Sovereign or by the people. It is agreed that the honour which you have received is the fitting reward of long and conscientious service. I have to express my sympathy with the relatives of the late Mr. J. R. Brown. I was present in this Chamber when the Leader of the House moved a motion of condolence. I sincerely sympathise with our Chairman of Committees in his indisposition, and trust he will soon be restored to his place. I hope also that the Clerk of the House, Mr. Parker, will speedily recover his health. Now may I offer my congratulations to Sir Charles Nathan upon his election to this Chamber. I have not had the pleasure of his personal acquaintance, but I have long known of his efforts on behalf of the State and the Commonwealth. I must congratulate the electors of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province on having returned a man of Sir Charles Nathan's attainments and record to this Chamber. Though I shall feel bound to exercise my right to differ from him if occasion arises, I shall feel bound to listen attentively and respectfully to anything he may say. His election to the House should result in much good to Western Australia. In the case of Mr. Allsop, too, I consider that the electors are to be congratulated on their choice. The new member for the North-East Province has spent many years in Kalgoorlie, of which city we are so proud, its goldfields having won great renown for Western Australia. Mr. Allsop has long been connected with the technical side of the great industry which lifted this country out of obscurity. Therefore my congratulations are due to both the province and its newly elected representative. Turning now to His Excellency's Speech, the first question to engage my attention is that vital question which is engaging attention in all parts of the world — unemployment. Yesterday Mr. Gray said, by way of interjection, that unemployment

exists in every part of the world and that therefore there is not much in this State for us to get excited or annoyed or depressed about.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I did not say that.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The hon. member said that unemployment existed in every part of the world, and I understood him to express himself to the effect of the remainder of what I have quoted. Perhaps I have made a mistake. In any case, we cannot content ourselves with merely saying, "Everybody else is in the same position; why worry?" Let me ask, why should a young country such as Australia (and a young State such as Western Australia be in exactly the same position as the older countries of the world with regard to unemployment? I do not know how the figures work out per capita, but undoubtedly there are too many unemployed in Australia. It is no use simply replying that the same position obtains in older countries. We have no more right to set up such a comparison than to liken an old man to a young man. We do not expect a young man to suffer from the ailments to which an old man is unfortunately subject. Therefore it seems to me that on the aspect of unemployment here we have cause for complaint. However, we are told that we must not indulge in recrimination, all of us being equally to blame. I have here a reference to unemployment in the report of the Development and Migration Commission, of which Sir Charles Nathan was a member; and I consider that the Commonwealth, despite all its errors of commission and omission, is entitled to credit for having appointed that Royal Commission. In September of 1928, nearly two years ago, the Commission reported on the subject of unemployment. Has any action been taken upon that report by either the Commonwealth or the various State Governments? I regard the report as excellent. If any action has been taken on it, such action is unknown to me. The Commission emphasised its conclusion that Government relief work and special efforts by private citizens to provide small jobs are only temporary and expensive palliatives.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Quite right.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The neglect of the Commission's advice is absolutely depressing. However, there is no use crying. Two years after that report we find our Government, our local authorities, and our

private citizens doing the very thing which, two years ago, they were warned not to do.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What do you suggest?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I wish to make myself quite clear on this matter. I consider that the present Government are to be congratulated upon what they have done for the unemployed in placing them at Blackboy Hill. The present Government have at least tried to do something for those unfortunate people. In my own town I have had some little experience of this sort of thing. It does not matter to me if people say, "These unemployed won't work." Suppose there are 100 unemployed and 75 of them do not want work, are we justified in standing idly by and doing nothing for the 25 who do want work? The present Government are entitled to the thanks of the community for having tried to do something for these men, and for having made the effort in very difficult circumstances. The Leader of the last Government shut himself up in his office and refused to meet the unemployed at all.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: That is not correct.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am correct in saying that he refused to meet the unemployed.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: It is incorrect.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Mr. Collier repeatedly refused to come out and meet the unemployed. He barred them in all sorts of ways, saying "I will meet this man, but not that man." Nothing of that kind has occurred in the case of Sir James Mitchell.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: He has been a jolly sight worse.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The present Government have got these men out of the city. I admire the attempt of the present Government to deal with the situation, though I am pretty sore about what they have done. I acknowledge that the present Government have done something for the unemployed in the metropolitan area; but what have they done for the unemployed in the country districts? As regards the latter, they have left the local committees to deal with them as best they can. I acknowledge that the Government can do only a certain amount, and that they have done the best they possibly could in the circumstances; but the whole trend of Government activities for dealing with the unemployed problem has been to benefit the people of the metropolitan area. The unemployed married man with four children in the metropolitan area has been allowed 1s. per day for himself, his

wife, and each of his children, a total of two guineas per week. Certainly I do not wish to deprive the metropolitan unemployed of that sustenance or relief. But how does the unemployed married man in Kalgoorlie, or Bunbury, or Busselton get on?

Hon. E. H. Gray: He comes down to Perth.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: He goes to a local storekeeper, and the local storekeeper keeps him and his dependants until he cannot do it any longer. Then the man comes upon the townspeople. Geraldton was one of the first towns in the State to put in sixpence per pound per week in order to make work for the unemployed. The men who walked from Geraldton to Perth no more belonged to Geraldton than Mr. Gray does. Those men had nothing whatever to do with the Geraldton people. They were persuaded to come down to Perth so that they could throw themselves upon the mercy of the Government of the State. In according praise to the Government for what has been done, I merely wish to express my recognition of the fact that they have done something. Mr. Holmes asked last night why the Government did not set the unemployed to work clearing the rich idle lands alongside existing railways. Like many other things, that is much easier said than done.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is quite easy.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I have a great respect for the various activities of the hon. member in this, his native State. He has made his way here, and it is a pity we have not a few more men like Mr. J. J. Holmes, with all his imperfections. Last night the hon. member said that six years ago he had told this Chamber what was coming. I myself consulted three professors in an endeavour to learn what was responsible for our economic trouble. Mr. Holmes, it seems, could have told me, and his advice would not have cost me anything. But Mr. Holmes is short of a gallop; that's what's wrong with him. He said he had told us six years ago. But we want something more than telling; we want action.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Well, I told you what was to be done now.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes, but if a man of Mr. Holmes' weight would but throw his weight into the job, he would attract a big following and might even hold up the Government of this State. I am not sure of the constitutional rights of this House, but

I said to Mr. Seddon when he was bewailing the trend of affairs the other week, that if those members who have been in the Chamber so many years had decided views on the question—I am satisfied they have done their duty in pointing out the mistakes of those in another place—if they were sure of their ground, why had they not acted and held up the Government?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did not we attempt to hold up the Appropriation Bill, and did we not miss by only one vote?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That was last session, and there was a nigger in the wood-pile there.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You know that somebody slipped on it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It was not I. When we were on the Financial Agreement I was a promising young fellow with Mr. Holmes, who said to me, "Good on you, Hall." I said that no matter what I was told, I was not going to support the Financial Agreement if it was unfair to my State. Mr. Holmes told us last session about the Royal Commission on group settlements. But what did that Commission do? They condemned the groups. I want to ask the Government has any consideration been given to the recommendations made by the Development and Migration Commission, and whether, if the late Government gave no consideration to the question, will the present Government endeavour to have those recommendations put into effect.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the 3,000 farms?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Well, what about them? Whether it was 3,000 or 300 farms, a lot more money might have been spent on them but for that Commission. The next question I come to is that of mining. Here again we have the benefit of this Commission's report, dealing with our own State. In this report they say—

The Commission emphasises the value of gold mining to the community as an avenue for employment and development. The wages paid directly represent from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. of the costs of production, and indirectly a great proportion of the remainder. Increased costs, due to a considerable extent to the static price of gold in relation to the higher price level of the world, have made it necessary to mine ores of higher grade than formerly. The Commission be-

lieves that the future of the industry depends more on the utilisation of larger tonnages of lower grade ores, the mining of which becomes possible only if the costs of production are materially reduced to counter-balance the lower value of gold under present world conditions. There is a consensus of expert opinion indicating that the gold deposits of the Commonwealth are neither exhausted nor as yet fully explored. Appended to the report are statements from the State geological departments indicating that large tonnages of golden ores are already known to exist, and that the prospects of discovering new deposits are certainly not negligible. Facts and opinions supplied by the State experts, shown in the appendices to the report, are distinctly encouraging, and, in some cases, striking. A striking graph is included in the report to show that, while the price of gold has remained stationary, the index figure for the cost of living has risen considerably.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What are you going to do about that?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is a very pertinent question. I desire to direct the attention of the Government to the 28th report of the Development and Migration Commission on Gold Mining, and to urge that consideration be given to the recommendations contained in that report. Also I ask that consideration be given to an article by the ex-State Mining Engineer, Mr. Montgomery, which was published in the "West Australian" of the 10th January last, suggesting alterations to the Mining Development Act. If Mr. Montgomery, who was in the public service for so long and who must possess a very close knowledge of the subject, can see his way clear to point to the desirability of effecting amendments to the Act, it is up to any Government with the welfare of the industry at heart to seriously consider giving effect to Mr. Montgomery's recommendations.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What are you going to do if the Government do not see fit to give effect to your views?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I wonder if the hon. member is really seeking information or whether his question is due merely to idle curiosity. In the words of the prophet, I advise him to wait and see. The hon. member last night lost his temper with a very old member, and if he is not careful, presently I shall have to lose my temper with him. The Government comprise so many Ministers and they have so many things to attend to that this report may have escaped their notice.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is a wonder Mr. Montgomery did not make those recommendations when he was a Government official.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: All I can say is that when an officer in the service makes recommendations, it is a totally different thing from making recommendations after he is out of the service. Mr. Montgomery may be able satisfactorily to explain that to the hon. member, and I will endeavour to get into touch with him and find out why he did not make those recommendations while he was still in the service. But certainly, with his knowledge of the mining industry, Mr. Montgomery's views on the question of amending the Act must be very sound. His suggestions were published quite recently, only in January last, and if the late Government did not give consideration to them I ask the present Minister to make a note of it and see whether effect cannot be given to those recommendations. Now we come to the department on which it is said we are losing £1,000 a day. Last year this House and another place agreed to a recommendation for the re-engagement of the Commissioner of Railways. I have long thought that our existing system is wrong. We pay £2,000 per annum to the Commissioner to run the railways. We put him in the position, and it does not matter whether he is a good man or an indifferent man, he is not allowed to draw on his own initiative, but is hedged around with Arbitration Courts and unions, and last but not least, I daresay since Cabinet appoints him, Cabinet does not hesitate to instruct him. Suppose the Commissioner wants to cut out one of the few trains running to None Such. The member for None Such gets busy. An indignation meeting is held in None Such, and the electors tell their member he must get that train restored. Thereupon he goes to the Government and the Government—actually I do not know of my own knowledge how these things are done—probably takes some satisfactory action. In my view the railways should be run as a business concern free from political interference. Why do we not give the Commissioner of Railways a free hand? I am not alone in this idea, for on the 9th February last this was published in the "West Australian"—

Sydney, Feb. 9.—The need for placing railways on a proper basis of capitalisation and giving the commissioners full power to conduct the services as business undertakings

was considered at recent meetings of the Loan Council and at the last Premiers' Conference. The matter was discussed yesterday by the State Treasurer (Mr. Stevens), when replying to a deputation of Katoomba residents who urged the electrification of the western line. Mr. Stevens admitted that the scheme provided that the commissioners should insure their own stock and borrow on the markets of the world. Until that was done, he added, Governments would find it difficult to finance their railways. In Canada it had been done. Sir Henry Thornton was given complete autonomy, with the result that Canadian railways to-day paid a higher dividend in proportion to capital than any other system in the world.

If we want to make our railways pay, then in the name of all that is sensible let us give the Commissioner complete charge, and let him run them as a business undertaking.

Hon. G. Fraser: And immediately we would find Mr. Hall going along to the Minister for some concession.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL. The hon. member is out of order in suggesting such a thing. Although I represent the best Province in the State I have never yet gone to the Commissioner for anything for that Province.

Hon. G. Fraser: I said the Minister.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Nor the Minister either. Unless the Commissioner is given a free hand, his position should be abolished and the department run, the same as any other department, by a secretary. In the Railways we have the Commissioner and a secretary also, but why we should continue to have both I cannot understand.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How are you going to alter that?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: As I quoted just now, there is the example of Canada. Let the Government find out how the railways are run in Canada. It is wonderful what Canada can devise.

Hon. H. Seddon: As for instance, the sales tax.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That has nothing to do with the case. Another thing I cannot understand about our railways is why we should have a separate department dealing with the construction of lines. About eight months ago, between Wiluna and Nannine, I saw from 30 to 50 beautiful draught horses being fed on oats and chaff. On inquiry I found they belonged to the railway construction branch of the Public Works Department. I was informed that the Works Department had built the line and were running it, and would continue to do so for a consider-

able time. It was only last week that I learnt of an agitation in the agricultural districts that the Works Department should hand over the line, which was in a fit condition for traffic, to the Railway Department. Why the Works Department should come into the matter, I cannot understand. If we had never departed from the golden rule of constructing big public works by contract, this sort of thing would not occur. It is one of the things that I regard as being largely responsible for the present unsatisfactory position of the railways. Let me refer to the question of rationing work on the railways. Everyone who has eyes should be able to appreciate it. Yet we have men who have been educated in our schools refusing their help to cope with the conditions with which we are faced. Here is a Press report dated the 17th August on the rationing of railway work in New South Wales—

Without the rationing of work in the New South Wales railways, the Commissioners would be justified in dismissing 5,000 men forthwith, the Chief Commissioner (Mr. Cleary) said to-day. "So far we have held the fort against those people who think we should not ration," he stated, "and I feel very much in the position of a man who has to protect some people from themselves." Mr. Cleary explained that the surplus of the staffs of engine drivers, firemen and cleaners, was 600 men. He had had to point out to them that if dismissals were to be avoided there must be greater rationing than now existing. "In the last two months we have paid out in salaries and wages and for things we have bought, a total of £100,000 a week more than we have taken from the public," he added.

Yet men are so misguided that they object to sharing the work available. In Melbourne and Bendigo also, men objected to the rationing of work.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And here, too.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. I have received at least 20 letters from railway employees, officers included, requesting me, as a member of Parliament, to make one of a deputation to the Premier to protest against reverting to the 48-hour week. What terrible tyrants to ask men to work 48 hours a week! It is depressing to receive such requests.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about the district allowances?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am grateful that the hon. member has reminded me of them. I can speak feelingly on the question of

district allowances, because I was a civil servant stationed in Geraldton for 15 years, and did not receive one penny above the Perth rate. Nowadays, every civil servant outside the metropolitan area gets a district allowance. But there is a subtle influence always operating in favour of the people of the metropolitan area. At various times I was stationed at Mullewa, Meekatharra, Wiluna, Mt. Sir Samuel and Laverton, and while I was on the goldfields I received my allowance. Apart entirely from the question of the cost of living, if it be possible for the Government to grant district allowances, I think efforts should be made to do so. Regarding the railway employees who approached me on the question of the 48-hour week, I replied to those who reside in my province.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: But some of them live more cheaply in the country than in the city.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes; but how on earth that is possible, I do not know. The hon. member is obviously in agreement with the Arbitration Court, which fixed the basic wage for the country at £4 5s. a week and for the city at £4 6s. I cannot understand how the Court arrived at that decision. Some people in the country may live more cheaply than in the city.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Some of them live in tents.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not know whether the hon. member has ever lived in the city, but I could prove to his satisfaction that it is much cheaper to live there than in any country town in the State.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Generally, I agree that it is so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes interjected.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is a bit of the hon. member's cheap humour, but he is not going to make me cross, as Sir Edward Wittenoom did him. Before leaving the question of the unsatisfactory financial position of the railways, let me refer to the detrimental effect caused by the thousands of acres of unproductive land adjacent to the system. Travelling down the Wongan line, I have inquired who owned certain land and taken steps to ascertain why it was not being put to use. The late Government secured the passage of a Closer Settlement Bill, but made little, if any, attempt to deal with this important question.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They did not resume one acre.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Collier Government would have been only too ready to complain about this Chamber if the measure had not been passed. We passed it, and yet the Labour Government took no action to put it into operation. I hope the present Government will consider this matter, because it would help to overcome the present heavy loss sustained by the railways. In travelling over the railways, one is astounded at the great areas of land adjacent to the lines still in a state of nature.

Hon. H. Stewart: Where will the present Government get the money to repurchase estates?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It will not be necessary to repurchase. Holders of conditional purchase land adjacent to railways should be compelled to fulfil the conditions. I am quite safe in saying that they are not fulfilling the conditions. I have a case in mind. A man came here from South Australia and sought a block next to one occupied by his father. A report was submitted months ago alleging the non-fulfilment of conditions, and I have been waiting since the 14th of this month for the inspector's report as to whether the complaint was justified. The inspector's report has not yet been received. This indicates the delay that takes place in enforcing the conditions of the Land Act. Let me also direct attention to the absurd policy of spending huge sums of public money to build roads parallel with railway lines, thereby enabling motors to compete successfully for traffic that the railways should enjoy. Country Party Ministers have had this matter brought forcibly under their notice, and I hope that action will be taken, even at this late stage, to remedy such a suicidal policy.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Motor traffic could not successfully compete with the railways if your suggestions were carried out.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am grateful for the hon. member's compliment. We are not justified in spending money on roads to create competition with the railways. I was a member of the Geraldton Municipal Council when the main roads proposals were first discussed and, if my memory serves me aright, it was distinctly laid down that no main road should be constructed parallel with a railway.

Hon. H. Stewart: That was a Federal condition, and the States worried the Federal authorities until they agreed to alter it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It was intended that the roads should be constructed as feeders to the railways, to give producers decent access to the system and enable the produce of the country to be expeditiously transported. Yet the very people who should have been alive to the danger were responsible for the error. "Stead's Review" for April, 1928, contained the following reference to "Railway v. Road Transport":—

The struggle between the four great British railway groups and the powerful road transport interests is about to reach its height in a Parliamentary contest, in which the railway companies are seeking full powers to run road services. That motor transport has made serious inroads into railway business is only plain fact. The issue between the two has now reached the "all-out" stage, in which arguments are used that the plain man cannot possibly accept. One cannot help recalling the rivalry of railways and canals a century ago, which was settled at the expense of the public by the defeat of the canals. To-day the case is vastly different. It is decidedly not in the public interest that road competition should cause higher railway freights and fares, since we cannot dispense with railways, and the inevitably higher charges in prospect would be a still further blow to the heavily hit industries now struggling to survive.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the railways should not be denied the facilities now freely given to road transport companies. Not only do the railway companies need the powers they ask to connect their innumerable terminal and country stations with outlying districts not served by rail, but it seems only fair to grant them facilities to safeguard their enormous invested capital by fighting in the open a new competitor, who enters the field with many undeserved advantages.

The technique of modern transportation is changing so rapidly that it would surely be a capital mistake on the part of Parliament to trammel its natural development in the public interest. To give the railways the powers they ask is not to close the door to their future control. Parliament can intervene when it likes. But to give the motor transport companies all they ask is only to hand over the public to another selfish monopoly.

That was published two years ago. Forewarned should have been forearmed. The officials in charge of affairs in this State had ample warning of the danger and should have guarded against it accordingly. I am not forgetting that in the Old Country the railways are owned by private companies, whereas here they belong to the people. Whenever in years past our national debt was spoken of, people used to say our railways were our big national

asset. I wish to refer to a matter about which we have cause to feel very gratified, namely, the way in which our wheat production has increased. During the year 1913-14 our wheat area under crop was 1,097,193 acres, and the yield was 13,331,350 bushels, a State-wide average of 12.2 bushels. Last season the area under cultivation was 3,568,000 acres, the yield 39,081,000 bushels, and the State-wide average 10.95. Every Minister I have followed in the last few years has referred with pride to the strides we were making in our wheat production. What he was thinking about was not the strides we were making in wheat production, but our progress in bringing additional areas of land under cultivation. The time has now arrived when more attention should be turned, as I feel it will be by the present Ministry, and our present very practical Minister for Agriculture, in centralising all possible efforts upon an increase in the yield per acre. That is one direction in which we shall be assisted out of our difficulties. We must increase the yield per acre. The Agricultural Bank has done good work. That is generally admitted. As it is run by human beings, however, it has made mistakes. It was a big mistake to continue to assist clients who were not living up to their responsibilities when both prices and seasons were good. In times like the present the head officials of the bank have become a little tired of the manner in which they have been treated by many of their clients, in just the same way as the people who have been lending us money have become tired of the way in which we have treated them. It is a natural corollary. People who have lent us money say, "We must shut down upon those borrowers and make them pay their way." Mr. McLarty, too, says he has had enough of those people who pay everyone else but never repay the bank. I had occasion to see him this afternoon about a particular property that was in the hands of a settler. I was informed that the owner of the property had owed the bank money for many years, but had recently acquired an expensive motor car. I cannot plead for consideration for such people. Business must be conducted in a businesslike manner and the clients of the bank must live up to their obligations. We hear a lot about moneylenders. They are called miserable

men who grind out interest from the people. Those of us who have been fortunate enough, or silly enough, to lend money have had experiences of our own. Those who are crying out about the moneylenders should pause before they speak. It is a pity the people in the Old Country have gone on lending us money. That is what some of my friends say to me.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is our own fault that the interest rate has gone up.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Some of my friends have said to me, "It is a pity you ever lent us any money." What nonsense it is to talk in this way against the money-lender. It is, however, not worth while getting cross about it. Mr. Collier said, "Why is it, when everything is in a bad way, that money is tight and hard to get?" He was the Heavensent Treasurer in charge of the finances of the State. Mr. Lovekin said—

It could not be expected that the Labour Party, supported by practically half the House, would personally forsake its principles, and then subject itself to ignomy. My contention has been that Mr. Collier should be asked to carry on and that he should adjust his Cabinet to give representation to all parties.

I hope Mr. Lovekin is sure of his ground in regard to secession. How could Mr. Collier carry on without the permission of the people? And yet he wonders why money is dear. When everything else is cheap, money remains dear. A man who has had his experience must know the reason. His own common sense must tell him. If there was not so much talk by certain people of repudiation, others might have a little more confidence in us. When there is talk of repudiating debts which have been incurred by Governments with their eyes open, is it any wonder people become nervous?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And put up the rate of interest.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. We have made this mistake. We were like the man who is trying to get rich quickly. We have urged all sorts and conditions of people to go on the land. It has been thought that any fool can farm land, but we have paid dearly for that belief. All kinds of people were assisted by the Government to take up land, but greater care should have been taken to see that they were fitted to make their living there. It is wrong at a time

like this to talk of putting men off their blocks. Of course I would have no mercy upon those who may have been dishonest, but in the case of the man who has failed because of circumstances over which he has no control, I hope the Government will be lenient and deal mercifully with him. Every case should be handled on its merits, and worthy settlers should not be forced off their blocks. I know of a case in my district in which a returned soldier had to abandon his holding. This is now lying idle, a breeding ground for vermin, both animal and vegetable. It is doing no good to anyone. I hope every consideration will be given before a settler is forced to leave his holding. The cost of obtaining bank credit is a matter deserving of much thought. I feel sure it will receive consideration at the hands of the Government. It should not be too much to expect that the Government would provide primary producers with loan money for legitimate use at rates much lower than those now prevailing. I may perhaps illustrate a point I have to make about the land tax by quoting my own experience. I wished to do something for my son who will follow me. I raised on my life insurance policy about £1,500, which I put into the land. Before I had been able to collect one penny piece from this sheep proposition I had to pay no less than £200 in taxation, in rates, land tax and vermin tax. It is wrong to treat men in this fashion when they have been told that, in order to develop the State, they must take up land. I did not engage in this venture from a philanthropic point of view; I did so because I regarded it as a safe and sound investment. I did not expect to make a fortune but I thought some consideration would be extended to me. Had I started a business in Perth I would have had only one tax to pay.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You would have lost the lot.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It seems to me I have already lost the lot. I do not know whether the Government can see their way to abolish the land tax altogether, but I do think consideration should be given to the people on the land. I am, of course, referring to land that is used for agricultural purposes. To shoot a man with both barrels, and to make him pay land tax whether he is making any profit or not, and

a tax upon the income he gets, is unjust. I wish to draw attention to an article published in the "West Australian" on 18th February because it has to do with the question of finance. It deals with farmers' insurance, and is written by Harold Burston.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: A very able writer.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. The writer quotes from remarks made by Sir Arthur Duckham, and proceeds—

Insurance cover against drought risks is not a new idea. A scheme operated for some years in the prairie States of America; owing to unsoundness it collapsed in 1919, but it has since been revived on a restricted scale. In Australia, the possibilities have hitherto been considered only in a general way, and no scheme has been formulated that has fully reviewed methods of compensating drought-stricken producers, the probable funds required for adequate relief, and how the money may be obtained. Sir Arthur Duckham's comments have revived interest in the problem, but the proposal is still generally regarded as impracticable, especially by insurance men, although no effort has been made to plan an exhaustive investigation, or to obtain evidence which would permit a well-informed opinion of the possibilities. The scope of an effective scheme would be so extensive, and conditions so varying, that underwriters contend that only a national system is practicable. Their point of view may be readily appreciated. The huge financial losses caused by severe droughts would appear liable to exhaust the funds of the most powerful organisation called upon to meet them. But drought risks are not the extreme hazards that they formerly were. Extensive development of primary industries in all States has given a wider spread to risks, improved water and transport facilities have minimised losses, and research and better farming methods, combined with more sympathetic financing, have curtailed the number of complete failures. There is still wide scope for improvements in planning natural and artificial defence against droughts, and the provision of these additional protections must be considered in relationship to the development of any proposed scheme of financial compensation by means of an insurance fund.

The article I have just read is worthy of serious consideration. I do not say that at the present moment anything in the direction suggested can be done, because we are told there is no money available for anything, but I do think the present Ministry should give attention to the scheme outlined. As sure as the sun rises to-morrow, if we should be unfortunate enough within the next year or so to go through what some of the Eastern States have gone

through, without having made any preparation to meet it, we shall if possible be worse off then than we are now. We are very properly told not to be pessimistic. On December 7th, 1928, a leading article appeared in the "West Australian" headed "Mr. McCallum's optimism." Amongst other things, it said—

It is to say the least of it inspiring to hear a Minister of the Crown thus indulging in the language of hope, especially when, as in this case, there is warrant for such indulgence. Who could ever have dreamed 20 years ago that wheat would be successfully grown as far east as Southern Cross.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I shall now quote an extract from a speech made by Mr. Alex. McCallum, reported in the "West Australian" of the 7th December, 1928—

Where, in the past, gold mining had been exclusively carried on there were hundreds of miles of fencing and a forest of windmills, delicensed houses had been turned into homesteads, schools built, and even the totalisators of the disused racecourses into shearers' quarters; where there was desolation and absolute abandonment there is now nothing but progress and prosperity.

The "West Australian" commented—

These words of the Minister are literally true, the facts he states furnishing one of the most picturesque chapters in the romance of settlement in this country. Though in greatest measure the State owes its good fortune to a favourable climate, to the undreamed of fertility of much of our soil and to the enterprise of its settlers, much credit is due to that courage tempered by caution, which has characterised, it might almost be said, every administration which has directed the country's affairs since the grant of Responsible Government, and courage tempered by caution was never at a higher premium than it is to-day.

Hon. H. Stewart. That was in 1928?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes.

Hon. H. Stewart: How we have fallen!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Mr. Holmes remarked on the unconstitutional action of the late Government in granting certain Government employees the 44-hour week and long-service leave. The question which Mr. Holmes asked on that point seemed to me most pertinent. I thought there was only one answer to it, but I have since learnt that Mr. Holmes was not altogether correct in his premises. The hon. member wanted to know why, if the late Government could grant the

44-hour week and long-service leave without reference to the Arbitration Court, the present Government could not, equally without approaching the Arbitration Court, restore the 48-hour week. Mr. Holmes probably knows but has forgotten that under the industrial laws of this country an agreement, having been arrived at between employers and employees, can be referred by them jointly to the Arbitration Court for registration, or for being made a common rule. I submit, however, that our industrial arbitration laws never for a moment contemplated the granting by a Government of such concessions as were in fact granted by the Labour Government to State employees who were admittedly strong supporters of the Ministry in power.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: On the eve of a general election.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. I regard that as one of the most unsavoury and most unsatisfactory phases of the late Government's tenure of office. However, I wish to make it clear to Mr. Holmes and to others of his way of thinking, that it is compulsory to approach the court in order to have the hours of work altered, seeing that the agreement has been registered by the court and has become a common rule. In the circumstances its terms cannot be altered without the sanction of the court. Some of the remarks made last night by Mr. Holmes fitted in exactly with what I tried to express when I was a much more immature member of Parliament than I am now. I then said that I considered there were too many members of Parliament. Strangely enough Mr. Holmes, in the light of a Parliamentary experience extending over a quarter of a century, now says exactly the same thing. I quote a telegram from Melbourne published in the "West Australian" of the 7th instant—

Criticising the Ministry for having failed to introduce economies while imposing additional taxation on the people, Mr. MacFarlane, the Nationalist member for Brighton, suggested in the Legislative Assembly to-night that there should be a reduction in the number of members of both Houses and a reduction in the salaries of members and Ministers. In the past 23 years, he said, there had been a vast extension of Federal legislative activity, so that the legislative field of the State Parliament had been cut down very considerably. Economy on the lines indicated would show that Parliament was at least willing to share in the burdens of the people. Mr. Macfarlane's suggestions were not received favourably by Labour members.

This goes to show that men of an experience comparable to Mr. Holmes's are beginning to realise that Australia can get along with fewer members of Parliament. My own view is that Western Australia would be administered better, as well as more economically, if this House and another place had only half their present numbers. Further, if we have to do with only one House in these times of supposed enlightenment, when every man and every woman 21 years of age and outside a gaol or lunatic asylum has a voice in the choosing of legislators, this Chamber should be the one to govern the country. I agree with the present Minister for Defence, who bounced up and down the stage of the Geraldton town hall and said, "The man who pays the piper has the right to call the tune." Mr. Holmes said practically the same thing last night; and I, notwithstanding my immaturity in point of experience, say it to-night. If there is one House that should have the right to dictate this country's policy, it is the Legislative Council, through which those who pay the piper should have the right to call the tune. The "West Australian" of the 23rd instant published a highly interesting article on Hong Kong, from the pen of Mr. Frederick Stubbs, F.R.G.S. I am a loyal, native born West Australian; but if I had £1,500 to invest I would seriously think of going to Hong Kong to invest it.

In his article Mr. Stubbs says—

When one thinks of the humble beginnings of this great city, with its million inhabitants, its busy port, its vast commerce, its splendid roads and residences; its stores, banks, clubs, one is proud to think of what one's fellow countrymen have accomplished. When in 1841 Hong Kong was ceded to Britain, it was a barren island inhabited by a few thousand fishermen, smugglers, and pirates. Few thought that it could ever be of any use to England, and writers condemned its acquisition. Within twelve months of the British occupation the population had increased fourfold. In 1905 it stood at the head of the ports of the world for the magnitude of its shipping, surpassing, it is stated, even London and New York, and still remains one of the world's busiest ports. One reason for its rapid growth is the security it offers to Chinese merchants who flock to it from the mainland. In 1918 a million Chinese entered the city. The benefits conferred upon the Chinese race are as great as those that accrue to our own. It is they that chiefly occupy the city, the British forming but a very small portion of the population. They do most of the trade, and own most of the wealth. The British keep the peace. For it is a Crown colony, governed—and well governed—from London through a

Governor and council. There is no municipal council, everything is administered efficiently and economically by the Governor-in-Council—police, water, roads, sanitation; no expensive Houses of Parliament, few costly public offices, no suspicion of graft. Lucky people!

Hon. G. Fraser: No politicians there?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: No. That is just what I have said. What is the sense of that interjection? It is to the credit of the late Government that they were the first Government in this State to try to put hospital finance on a proper footing. Let it also be said to their credit that they established the Pardelup prison farm. With regard to the cost of maintaining the Old Men's Home, while I have no desire to push the inmates out into the wilds, I would point out that if the home were located in the country, many of the old men would be able to do a little gardening and so provide vegetables and other requirements of the institution, thus helping to keep down the cost well below what it is at present. I have heard the Minister for Health say that he intends to bring down a measure which will provide for hospital finance. I hope the Bill will be introduced during the present session. On the subject of the sterilisation of the unfit I desire to bring under the notice of the House an extract from the "Scientific American" of January, 1928—

The Supreme Court of the United States has been called upon to pass on a case resulting from the Virginia sterilization law. Under that law, a sterilization operation was performed on an 18-year old, feeble-minded woman, who was the daughter of a feeble-minded mother and the mother of a feeble-minded child. The Virginia law permits the superintendent of the state colony for epileptics and feeble-minded to cause operation to be made when it is his opinion that it would be for the best interests of society, but only after complying with numerous safeguard provisions.

In its decision, the highest Virginia court pointed out a fact which everyone could see, were it not for the intervention of sentiment; namely, that since the state may in case of need (war, riot, etcetera) call on the best citizens for their lives, it would be strange if it could not also call for this lesser sacrifice. "Three generations of imbeciles are enough," says the Virginia Court, and the United States Supreme Court upholds that sentiment.

I do not say that it is necessary to create an expensive department to give effect to the proposal. In my opinion that phase was largely responsible for the defeat of the measure introduced by the Labour Gov-

ernment. At the same time, I think we should see to it that people of this type are not allowed to add to our population. Something was said last night about Collie coal. I do not want to be offensive, but there are some members of the House who know a lot more about Collie coal than I do. During the last session of Parliament, notwithstanding that a Labour Government were in power, negotiations were carried on for some time between the Collie miners and the Collie mineowners on one hand and the State Government on the other hand. What for? The object of the negotiations was to see if the State Government could not sign once more the three-year agreement for the use of Collie coal on our railways. I have been informed on good authority that the cost of running our railways has been added to by many thousands of pounds per annum to honour the agreement entered into last year. When the coal question was being dealt with last night, Mr. Hamersley interjected to Mr. Holmes, "Would you give the coal orders to New South Wales?" We must face the facts regarding what we get. Unless we receive the whole-hearted co-operation of every man and woman in this State, we will pay dearly for our neglect. We have to face the trials of the present. It has been said that adversity makes strange bed-fellows. There is an unholy alliance—I quite understand what I am saying—between the Collie coal companies and the Collie miners, who have combined to extract from the primary producers, who live under hard conditions, an unfair toll in support of the Collie coal industry and the use of coal which is necessary to keep the railways going. In the Irwin River district we have a coal deposit worthy of the careful consideration of the Government. In the "Geraldton Guardian and Express" of 23rd December, 1929, Professor David was quoted as follows:—

There was a high percentage of ash in the coal tested from the Irwin field, but it must be borne in mind that experience in connection with Greta measures had taught that they were high in ash content in one place but at a distance of a few miles the quality would be greatly improved.

Our own geologist at that time, Mr. Gibb Maitland, also reported favourably on the coal seams at Irwin, and when discussing the question with Mr. Bridges, of Mingenew, Professor Woolnough said he would not bore at all, but would just sink shafts and get the coal, which he was quite sure

was there. But that field has not been exploited, because there is a private railway company operating in the area.

Hon. H. Stewart: Why does not the company sail in and make some money?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The company should do so. The development of that part of the Central Province is being held up because a land grant for a railway was given to a private company. The interests of no portion of the State should be held up because a private railway happens to run through it. If the Irwin coal field were opened up, the people at Collie might be made to see a little reason. Let me deal with other phases. I read a statement in the "West Australian" that indicated that the Dental Hospital was hanging out the S.O.S. for more Government assistance. I will not read the article that appeared in the paper under the headings "Dental Hospital. Effect of Unemployment. Application for Free Treatment." This is for the poor people of the metropolitan area who have the toothache! The Government provide money for them. What happens when the primary producer, his wife or his children, who are sick and tired of being told that they represent the backbone of the country, happen to suffer from toothache?

Hon. H. Stewart: They get the teeth out.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It is high time that we realised, in these days of financial depression, that we are giving too much to people who should be made to do for themselves. A little self-help is needed, and things are done for the people in the metropolitan area, while the people in the out-back centres get along as best they can. Is that sort of thing warranted in these times? Poor Ben Strange passed over the Great Divide the other day, and that reminds me of a cartoon that appeared in the "Western Mail" a little while ago, in which was depicted a poor chap floundering about in a pool. An aristocratic-looking individual was shown on the bank, and at the foot of the cartoon were the words, "Get on the Land, Young Man." We must laugh at all these things; it is useless for us to cry. For too long the people of the metropolitan area have been pampered by being provided with free this, and free that. Recently there was an appeal on behalf of the Kindergarten, and the lady in charge

said that unless the people of Perth supported the Kindergarten, she did not know what would become of our boys and girls who would be our citizens of the future. Mention of boys and girls brings me to the subject of education. I have had it on good authority that the ex-Minister for Education, Mr. Drew, was a jolly careful and capable administrator. While many faults may be found with our system of education, I recognise that in the ex-Director of Education, Dr. Cecil Andrews, and in the present Director, Mr. Wallace Clubb, and his officers, we have men who realise what was, and is, the big job in front of them. Mr. Clubb and his staff are continually hammering home the fact that we should strive for the development of character in our boys and girls. Notwithstanding that, I find that Professor A. C. Fox, when speaking at the annual graduation ceremony of the Kindergarten Union recently, questioned what results in general culture in Australia had been attained by education. He asked, whether the thousands of students turned out from Universities had any effect on the standard of the community? I shall not read the report, but here is another interesting extract—

“It was with interest that I noted in the ‘West Australian,’ the coincidence of the remarks of the Director of Education and of Miss Walton, on schoolgirls’ studies,” said Dr. M. A. Clarke, M.A. (Lecturer-in-charge of French and German at the University) yesterday. “Not only did they coincide with one another, but with the impression conveyed to me in a month’s recent contract with schools. The principal of the Methodist Ladies’ College spoke of a decline in reading, and the Director of Education of a decline in tenacity. I have to note the uniformly low level of attention in reading, which points to both these things. Seldom are boys and girls able to exert enough attention to comprehend a page of print which they have to read and upon which they are to be questioned.”

Here is another extract which appeared in the “West Australian” under the headings “Education Methods. Address by Professor Cameron.” In the course of the report there appeared the following:

Professor Cameron said that the field of education was so large, that experiments being conducted were so many, that it would be possible to refer to a few only of the modern developments. . . . Dogmatic assertions from individuals, however highly placed, must now give way to those that were backed by scientific evidence. Results covered a very wide field. For example, it had been shown clearly

that school organisation for such subjects as reading, writing and arithmetic was inadequate, as too much emphasis had been placed on class work. Consequently, greater attention was being given to individuals. Again, there was a growing body of evidence that arithmetic was taught too early. An account of an experiment had just been published in which the writer showed quite clearly that long division could not be adequately handled by children whose mental age was below ten years.

As one of those the circumstances of whose parents did not permit him to enjoy a good education, I do not take up the attitude that what was good enough for me is good enough for my children. I am with those men and women who say that our children must have the best education it is possible to provide for them. At the same time, we must not forget to stress the point that it is our bounden duty to see that value is given for the money expended. I have before me an extract from “The W.A. Teachers’ Journal” of September 20, 1929. The article shows that the housing conditions for teachers in the country districts are a standing disgrace to Western Australia. Mr. Drew’s name is mentioned, together with others, in the course of the article, and he knows all about the position. Here we are paying higher wages and handing out more money all the time, but we neglect other things that cost money too. We send our teachers into the country districts, and when we do so, we should see that they are decently housed so that they may exercise and maintain the respect that is their due. Mr. Drew went into this matter when he was Minister and, with others, he had to confess that he recognised the justice of the claims for better housing accommodation for teachers, but the excuse advanced was that the finances did not permit of an improvement. A little while ago I mentioned the Old Men’s Home. I noticed in “Answers to Correspondents” in the “West Australian” recently, it was stated the annual upkeep of the Old Men’s Home at Claremont cost about £22,000. If the institution were established in the country areas, where some of the old men could undertake a little gardening, the cost would be much less. I wish to refer to our great North-West. I want to know if the Labour Government took any notice of the recommendations advanced by the three practical men who were appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into beef supplies and the possibilities of the North-

West. Time does not permit me to go into this question fully, and I merely mention the subject in order to direct the attention of the present Government to the report and to ask whether they will use their influence in an endeavour to prevail upon the Perth City Council to at least carry out one suggestion made by the Commission. A most important proposal related to the establishment of a sewage farm in the metropolitan area so that store cattle from the Kimberley district could be placed there to fatten before being killed for consumption.

Hon. J. T. Franklin: That matter is in the hands of the Government; the City Council have nothing to do with it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am merely dealing with the report as I find it. I am pleased to hear from Mr. Franklin, who is Lord Mayor of the City, that the matter is in the hands of the Government. The establishment of such a farm has been carried out elsewhere, and it would be a wonderful thing for the people if a similar farm were established here.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Can you suggest where we can get the money to do it?

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is the point.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The project should be tried out. We need not endeavour to do so on a big scale straight away. Let us experiment. Let us see if our people cannot enjoy similar benefits to those available to people elsewhere. I have read the evidence tendered to the Royal Commission and I noticed that, although it was rather apart from his usual line, our Engineer-in-Chief favoured the proposal, which also appealed to our Principal Medical Officer. I hope the Government will not lose sight of this proposal, and although we may not have the money available now, we do not know when the gods will favour us and another Golden Mile will be opened up. Should that happen, all our worries and troubles would disappear. I shall not indulge in repetition. Mr. Kempton dealt with an important matter when he referred to the provision of railway facilities for settlers in the Central Province. I realise that we have no money for the work at present, but the people there are living in the face of great disabilities, and I am sure that Mr. Drew will also refer to the question when he speaks. I shall say

nothing further on that subject, and thank hon. members for having listened to me so patiently.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 27th August, 1930.

	PAGE
Questions: Newmarket hotel	90
Licenses Reduction Board	90
Electricity, State loans	91
Address-in-reply, third day	91

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

QUESTION—NEWMARKET HOTEL.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that the Newmarket Hotel is situated upon land which is the property of the Railway Department? 2, Is the hotel leased, or is it managed on behalf of a Government department? 3, If leased, was this done by tender or by private treaty? 4, What were the terms and arrangements of the lease generally?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, 3, and 4, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—LICENSES REDUCTION BOARD.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Attorney General: 1, Is it a fact that the Licenses Reduction Board has been re-appointed for a further period of three years? 2, What is the total cost of wages and salaries connected with the working of this board? 3, What is the total amount of allowances, including fares, etc.? 4, To what accounts will these costs be charged?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, No. The Licenses Reduction Board is not