

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 25th August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—BETTING FINES.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: What were the total amounts of fines imposed by the courts in starting-price betting cases—(a) in the metropolitan area for the years 1934-35, 1935-36, 1936-37, 1937-38, and for the year 1938-39 up to 1st August; (b) in country districts for the same periods?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: (a) Total metropolitan area: 1934-35, £7,070; 1935-36, £10,153 10s.; 1936-37, £12,646; 1937-38, £16,596 10s.; 1st July, 1938, to 1st August, 1938, £1,695. (b) Country districts: 1934-35, £650; 1935-36, £1,498 10s.; 1936-37, £2,091; 1937-38, £3,894 6s.; 1st July, 1938, to 1st August, 1938, £405.

QUESTIONS (2)—STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

M.V. "Kangaroo."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: Regarding the sale of the m.v. "Kangaroo"—1, To whom was the vessel sold? 2, At what price? 3, Cash or terms? 4, (a) Were tenders called?; (b) If not, why not? 5, Through what agency was the sale effected? 6, (a) How was the estimated value for sale arrived at? and (b) by whom? 7, (a) Was the vessel recently redecked? (b) If so, what was the cost thereof?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Nils Eric Amelon Mollor. 2, £25,000. 3, Cash. 4, (a) No; (b) it is not customary nor advisable to call for tenders in such matters. 5, The purchaser's duly authorised representative in Australia. 6, (a) By testing the current market value in the United Kingdom; (b) the Agent General in conjunction with reputable ship brokers. 7 (a) No: in February, 1938, portion of upper deck was sheathed and main deck patched as necessary in accordance with Lloyd's requirements; (b) £2,740.

M.V. "Koolama."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the full purchase price, in Australian currency, of the m.v. "Koolama"? 2, What was paid, in connection with the purchase, for—(a) brokerage? (b) interest on debenture? (c) exchange?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, £266,000 sterling. Money raised in London. 2 (a) Nil; (b) 3½ per cent. per annum; (c) Nil.

QUESTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

License Fees and Fines.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What are the total amounts collected for the year by way of license fees in the metropolitan area on—(a) motor buses carrying passengers; (b) motor cars; (c) motor trucks; (d) trailers; (e) motor cycles? 2, The total amounts collected by municipalities and road boards outside the metropolitan area by way of license fees on—(a) motor buses carrying passengers; (b) motor cars; (c) motor trucks; (d) trailers; (e) motor cycles? 3, The total amounts collected by the Police Department in drivers' license fees? 4, The total amount collected by the Traffic Court in fines for breaches of the Traffic Act and regulations for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1938?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, For the 12 months ended the 30th June last:—(a) £4,334 6s. 10d. (b) £119,164 18s. (c) £53,590 17s. 2d. (d) £1,452 14s. 6d. (e) £4,625 19s. 3d. These figures are gross collections, and are subject to reduction by reason of refunds to owners of vehicles that have been scrapped for various reasons, and to local authorities for vehicles transferred to their districts. 2, For the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1937:—(a) £1,542. (b) £101,054. (c) £79,526. (d) £1,506. (e) £2,954. 3, £20,891. 4, £9,801.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [4.38]: At the outset I desire to associate myself with the congratulations that have been offered to you, Mr. President, by pre-

vious speakers. I can only add that, in my opinion, the honour conferred upon you by your re-election to the Chair was well deserved, and I sincerely trust that you will be spared for many years to preside over our deliberations. I also extend my congratulations to our two new members, Mr. W. R. Hall and Mr. Dimmitt. I have had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Hall for a number of years, and have always admired his courage and sincerity. As Chairman of the Kalgoorlie Road Board he is a well-known public figure on the goldfields, and in that capacity has achieved much in the interests of the town in which he lives. I am confident that his knowledge of the goldfields and their requirements will be of great value, not only to his constituents but to the House. I was greatly impressed by Mr. Dimmitt's maiden speech, respecting which I offer him my congratulations. Obviously he is a strong opponent of the Government, but at the same time I am sure that he will be fair in his criticisms and that his business knowledge will be of assistance to the House. I also wish to allude to the untimely death of my colleague in the representation of the North-East Province, the late Mr. C. G. Elliott. Mr. Elliott had spent practically the whole of his life on the goldfields carrying on the occupations of prospector, miner and tributer. His life was devoted to the mining industry, and to the advancement of those employed in it. What he did on their behalf is his finest epitaph.

As regards the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, I think any impartial observer must come to the conclusion that the Government has accomplished a good deal. I am one who will congratulate Ministers on what they have done. Various speakers have accounted for the Government's achievements by attributing them to the increased revenue that it has received, or to the propitious seasons experienced during the time the Ministry has been in office. But, no matter what the reason may be, I am one who in all fairness feels bound to say that a great deal has been accomplished.

As representative of a mining constituency, I wish first of all to refer to the healthy condition of the mining industry. A perusal of the report of the Mines Department shows that the industry is in a much healthier state than it had been in for many years past. The output of gold last year was the highest for over 20 years, and at present

more men are employed in the industry than for many years previously. The importance of the industry to the State is realised when we recall that last year's gold production was valued at 8½ million pounds, and that the industry is probably the largest employer of labour in the State. For the benefit of members who have not had an opportunity to peruse the report of the Mines Department, I wish to bring to their notice the following facts, drawn from the report:—

Yilgarn goldfield.—Another successful year was experienced in this field, and an increased yield of 25,397 fine ounces of gold was recorded.

Coolgardie goldfield.—This field showed an increase of 1,538 fine ounces.

Dundas goldfield.—This field showed a vastly increased production of 17,108 fine ounces of gold.

East Coolgardie goldfield.—This field, comprising East Coolgardie and Bulong districts, experienced a most successful year, producing 1,181,896 tons and 429,175 fine ounces of gold. These figures exceeded 1936 respectively by 100,319 tons and 30,644 fine ounces. The number of men engaged in goldmining was 4,250, which was an increase of 184.

North-East Coolgardie goldfield.—This field showed an increased production, mainly owing to the activity in the Kurnalpi district. The field gave employment to 178 men.

Broad Arrow goldfield.—This field recorded an increased tonnage but a smaller return than in 1936. It was very active, however, and contained many good producers.

And so on. In practically all the mining centres increased outputs were the rule last year, and more men were employed. Naturally I cannot claim that the Government is entitled to the whole credit for that state of affairs, but I do maintain that what I have quoted is eloquent testimony to the success of the policy that the Government has carried out for many years in sponsoring and supporting the industry to the best of its ability. I could refer to towns such as Norseman, Wiluna, Big Bell, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, which not many years ago were struggling but now are flourishing centres carrying prosperous populations.

I wish to congratulate the Government also on the assistance it has given to prospectors. Prospectors are still a vital part of the mining industry; and although they are a race of men who do not ask for much, their welfare should be a consideration of every Government. The present Government has a good record as regards the prospectors.

The price payable for sands has been increased from £4 to £4 4s. 11d. That does not sound very much, but it means many thousands of pounds in the pockets of the prospectors. Again, the increase from 15s. to £1 per week for prospectors on sustenance is something that is highly appreciated by the great body of prospectors generally. I meet them frequently, and the expressions of appreciation I have heard from them show that the responsible authorities have accomplished a great deal.

I have one complaint to make on behalf of the prospectors, and that is in connection with lease rents. I hope the Chief Secretary will investigate the position. The prospectors complain that £24 annual rental for a 24-acre lease is sometimes a hardship. Under our mining laws a prospector takes up a piece of land that is called a prospecting area. After holding it for 12 months he can get an extension for a further six months, but he then must either give up the ground or convert it into a lease. If a prospector finds payable gold and is doing well, it is only reasonable that he should pay the rent of £24 a year. Nobody has any complaint to make on that score. Very often, however, a man does well on his lease for 12 months or longer, but the time comes when the gold cuts out, and although he is not making a good living, he is reluctant to give up his lease, and at that time the rental proves to be a hardship. This proposal has been put to me by the Amalgamated Prospectors of Western Australia, and although I find difficulty in submitting any suggestion, I hope some scheme may be evolved whereby relief may be given in such cases.

I was glad to find in the Speech that fair rents legislation is to be introduced once more. I am almost tired of speaking on the iniquitous rents being charged in Kalgoorlie, but the position has not altered. I am pleased that the population of the goldfields is still increasing, and that the large number of people living there have abundant faith in the future of Kalgoorlie, Boulder and the goldfields generally. The housing problem is very acute and is occasioning anxiety to all public men. I believe that a solution would be found in the passing of a fair rents Bill and the extending of the workers' homes scheme to the goldfields. Last session we considered a fair rents Bill that did not receive the

approval of some members because it was designed to apply to all parts of the State. The conditions on the goldfields are very different from those existing in other parts of the State, and I can appreciate the views of the members who raised that point.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Do you think that the introduction of a fair rents Bill would encourage builders to erect houses on the goldfields?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I would not like to answer yes or no to that question, but I do not think it would discourage building. The average person who invests in property seeks only a fair return. Simply because many people have been reluctant to chance their fortunes in building on the goldfields, the few who have done so have reaped the rewards. We do not mind people who have so invested their money securing a fair return, but we contend that they have overstepped the bounds of fairness and that the residents should be protected from that class of person.

On coming to the city from the goldfields one notices a feeling that the goldfields are transitory, that Kalgoorlie and Boulder will collapse again and that the fields generally do not offer a good investment for a housing scheme.

Hon. L. Craig: You do not agree with that?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Those in the best position to judge are probably the mining companies, and the majority of the big companies are increasing their plants and making provision for many years of operating. The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council has embarked on a sewerage scheme that is to cost many thousands of pounds, and in addition is erecting a modern Olympic swimming pool that will be one of the best of its kind in the southern hemisphere. Those authorities should be in a position to judge of the future of the goldfields, and they are certainly expressing their faith in the future. One hesitates to dogmatise about the mining industry and the price of gold, but the indications are that the good conditions now prevailing will continue for many years. I consider that the Government would be fully justified in building wooden houses on the goldfields. Such a scheme would permit of the utilisation of Western Australian products, would provide a considerable amount of employment and would assist in solving a vital problem. In addition, it would constitute an

important social service by giving working people, who are rarely able to save sufficient to buy homes for themselves, an opportunity to purchase one of those homes. A person that buys a home of his own, no matter how humble it might be, becomes a good law-abiding citizen. He has a stake in the country and is the better citizen in every respect.

Last year when I spoke on the Address-in-reply, I mentioned the subject of third-party insurance. I am quite in accord with the views that have been expressed on this occasion. Another effort is to be made to legalise the State Insurance Office. I earnestly hope that such legislation will be passed this year. I would be prepared to pay almost any price to secure its passage. Last year's Bill provided that the State Insurance Office should be empowered to compete with the private companies. I would be prepared to forego much, provided the office were legalised. The existing position is undoubtedly a disgrace. I refer particularly to the compulsory provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. We on the goldfields are repeatedly having brought under our notice instances of workmen meeting with accidents and not being covered by insurance. Last year I told the House of cases that had come before me, and this year there has been a succession of them. A company that was operating at Edjudina exhausted its funds and did not pay its premiums with the State Insurance Office. A number of men met with accidents, and although months have passed, the claims have not been paid. One young fellow had one of his hands, not blown off, but so injured that he will never regain the use of it. He has been in St. John of God Hospital for months, and owes the hospital over £100. The doctor has been generously treating him for months. He comes to me almost every day in the week requesting me to do something for him. The company has gone into liquidation and the liquidator cannot pay the State Insurance Office the premiums that are owing. Consequently, the State Insurance Office will not recognise the man's claim until the premiums are paid.

Hon. A. Thomson: Were any payments made by the company to the State Insurance Office previously?

Hon. M. E. HEENAN: Yes. The State Insurance Office adopts the attitude—probably a reasonable one—that it will not pay the

claims for compensation until the premium is paid. My contention is that such a state of affairs should never have been allowed to arise. Workers' compensation insurance should be compulsory, and any person about to employ a worker in any occupation, let alone such a dangerous occupation as mining, should be obliged to take out the necessary cover.

Hon. A. Thomson: I quite agree with you, but I do think the State Insurance Office should not have been quite so hard in the case you mention.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: In time, I daresay the problem will be solved; but in the meantime the man of whom I have spoken is destitute; apparently nothing can be done for him. That seems to be the price we are paying for not legalising the State Insurance Office.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No, it is not. A private company would have met that claim, but the State Insurance Office cannot do so because of advice it has received from the Crown Law Department.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: My contention is that if the State Insurance Office was legalised, such a state of affairs could not arise. If the State Insurance Office cannot be legalised, then other insurance offices will have to be approved. Cases like the one I have mentioned should never be allowed to arise.

I now desire to touch upon one or two local matters. I express the hope that the Government will procure additional Diesel cars, or have them constructed. I have in mind the line from Kalgoorlie to Laverton and Leonora, which serves such important centres as Broad Arrow, Menzies, Leonora, Gwalia, Laverton and Beria. It is a very busy line. At present I think three trains run over it per week and many people travel by them. The journey from Kalgoorlie to Laverton occupies 13 hours—a whole day. A Diesel car would prove a great boon to the people residing in those districts. I had the privilege of travelling on a trial run of one of those cars, and I think the Government would be well advised to have more of them constructed. I should very much like one in my district.

The practice on the mines, of paying twice per month instead of fortnightly, presents a difficulty. I am afraid I cannot say how the position can be remedied; but per-

haps Parliament can amend the Mines Regulation Act to overcome the difficulty. The mines now pay on the 3rd and 18th day of each month and there is much agitation in all parts of the goldfields to secure regular fortnightly pays. The chief sufferers appear to be housewives and boarding-house keepers. Miners are charged a weekly rate by boarding-house keepers, and these unfortunate business people lose two weeks in the year, or have great difficulty in collecting the amount due for those two weeks. I sincerely hope something can be done in this regard.

I congratulate the Government upon the appointment of Mr. Justice Wolff to the judiciary. Mr. Justice Wolff has a very fine record of public service and his elevation to the bench brings credit not only to himself, but to the Government that appointed him. Now that the Government has appointed an additional judge, I suggest that he be sent to circuit courts at such places as Kalgoorlie, Geraldton and Albany. Quarterly sessions have been held in Kalgoorlie for some time and have been presided over by the local magistrate. That is hardly fair to the magistrate himself or to the litigants, because matters of grave importance are dealt with at courts of sessions. I hope that in future a judge will preside at the centres mentioned. That is all I propose to say in supporting the motion.

I draw attention of members to the fact that during the forthcoming weeks we are celebrating a "Back to the Goldfields Month" at Kalgoorlie and I invite as many members as possible to visit us.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Can you secure accommodation for them?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes, I think we can. Everyone will receive a very warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: If members decide to accept the invitation I have extended to them, their visit will prove of benefit, because they will obtain first-hand knowledge of matters that are the subject of some of the Bills that will later be discussed in the House. Members will be able to judge of the progress that has been made by the goldfields; they will be able to investigate the housing problem, and will be welcomed at meetings of prospectors and of miners. In addition to all that, they will, I am sure, have a very

enjoyable holiday. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [5.8]: I desire first to offer you, Sir, my congratulations upon your appointment to your high office. I also congratulate the two newly-elected members, Mr. Dimmitt and Mr. W. R. Hall. I have known Mr. Dimmitt for many years and have been associated with Mr. Hall on the State Executive of the Road Boards' Association. I heartily join in the welcome that has been extended to both these gentlemen.

I desire to express my appreciation of the work that has been done by the Government in the South-West Province during the past year, particularly the re-building of Cave House. The members for the South-West Province have made many requests for this work to be put in hand, but there was considerable delay. However, the long wait has been rewarded by the commencement of the magnificent building at Yallingup, and great credit is due to the Leader of the House for his interest in the matter. His assistance is also keenly appreciated by the local authorities.

I regret I am unable to congratulate the Government upon the legislative programme set out in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. Measures similar to several of those mentioned in the Speech have already been dealt with by the House, but there appears to be no reference to a policy to adjust the unfortunate unemployment position.

Many parts of the State are crying out for water supply schemes. Most of them are essential and must eventually be put in hand. Is not this the time when such reproductive works should be undertaken? I understand that at present many men are receiving rations, and that hundreds are employed on Government relief work. That is a wrong policy, when one considers the possibilities of the State. We are continually being told that the State depends principally upon the primary production. Yet in the fertile Harvey district production is practically at a standstill owing to the inadequate water supply. Many representations have been made to the Government to effect an improvement, but the position is still acute, and while the irrigation area has been restricted, farmers are still unable to obtain sufficient water for their requirements. The irrigation scheme at Har-

vey is recognised as a very great asset to the State.

Hon. T. Moore: Are the people at Harvey paying their rates?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Yes. In the meantime, further progress there is impossible. The Waroona irrigation scheme has not been established very long, but there also trouble is foreseen in the near future if more water is not made available. Irrigation has done much for those districts and the benefit will be felt increasingly with the passing of the years. I understand that the present storage facilities are near the limit of safety, which represents less than two-thirds of the area originally intended to be watered. Waroona has the advantage of a condensed milk factory, which is owned by the Nestle milk company, and the manager, Mr. Appleby, who is a keen business man, has experienced difficulty in the dry season of the year in obtaining sufficient milk to allow of economic working. The factory is treating 4,000 gallons of milk daily. The company pays £2,000 a month for supplies and exports over 1,000 cases of milk every week. An important factor, too, is that this industry relieves the supply of butter fat, because the milk is not separated. Surely, this is a valuable industry and deserves full consideration in conjunction with the urgent need for a better water supply for that centre.

Member: What do the producers get for their milk at the factory?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: The price is based on butter fat rates, plus 4½d.

Hon. L. Craig: They pay 4½d.

Hon. T. Moore: How much do they receive per gallon?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I cannot say.

Hon. L. Craig: About 8d.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I think 7½d. or 8d. a gallon. One of our most urgent problems is country water supplies. Millions of gallons of water run to waste in the winter, and there is a serious shortage in the summer. When Mr. McCallum was Minister for Works, he said that in 1948 the Canning Dam would be over-taxed, and then attention would have to be directed to the Serpentine River, 30 miles south of Perth. At this rate, many more water schemes will be required to supply the metropolitan area in the future. I am advised by a professional man that the possibilities of the Avon River for water conservation have been dis-

regarded. This river is said to have the right fall and to possess a tremendous catchment area and more water could be impounded there than in all the other completed schemes combined. If that is so, the possibilities should be investigated before the Serpentine supply is taken from the farmers in that district. Serpentine is a rural centre, and the farmers there feel greatly concerned. The Great Southern districts appear to be faced with a similar problem, which is becoming increasingly serious.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Piesse express himself as agreeably surprised at the remarkable carrying capacity of the farms he had seen during a recent visit to the South-West. That part of the State is making rapid progress. Most of our export industries are situated there, and everything possible should be done to encourage further development. I agree with the remarks of other speakers about the unsatisfactory state of the Bunbury Harbour. The good work done in the past should at least be maintained. An up-to-date dredge would not cost more to work than the old one now being used, and a new dredge would be able to maintain a greater depth of water. Producers will continue to press for better shipping facilities at Bunbury, principally to eliminate the extra cost of railage to Fremantle.

Every industry in the South-West is doing very well. The manufacture of butter last year increased by 22 per cent., and the fat-lamb industry is expanding beyond expectations. One farmer settled in my district only four or five years ago, and this year he tailed 1,100 lambs. Right through the Bridgetown and the Upper Blackwood district farmers are breeding more lambs. In my opinion, too much is being said about the necessity for having the right type of ewe and, with so much criticism, inexperienced people might take the view that to engage in fat-lamb raising would be unprofitable unless they could obtain a certain type of ewe. That is not so, and, furthermore, if everyone waited until he could breed from a particular type, much time and money would be lost. Not long ago I obtained 21s. for Merino lambs at a big lamb sale, and Southdown-cross lambs brought up to 24s. at the same sale. Experts do not always agree, and my advice would be to use common sense and breed as near as possible to the type that buyers prefer. Most farmers are trying to improve their flocks to meet requirements.

Members were asked by Mr. Wood to take notice of his remarks on the wheat question. I do not think we have any grudge against the wheat farmer. In fact, our attitude is just the reverse. I am satisfied that the wheat-farmer is entitled to all possible consideration, and that it would be good for the whole State if the industry could be put on a sound basis. I shall give it my full support at all times. The wool industry is in a better position, inasmuch as the world is not over-supplied. I consider, however, that wool-growers have a difficult time ahead, and no careless attempt should be made to dictate prices and terms that are likely to encourage the manufacture and use of substitutes. Let us try to win back some of our old markets and thus create more competition. The industry is of vital importance to Australia, and no effort or expense would be too great in order to protect the trade.

I agree with Mr. Angelo that the ever-increasing number of road accidents should receive the attention of the Government. Hundreds of people are being killed or injured every year, and it is time steps were taken to prevent excessive speeding which, in my opinion, is the cause of most of the fatal accidents. I have previously expressed the view that the only way to prevent speeding is to have affixed to motor engines governors limiting the speed to 40 or 50 miles an hour. The limiting of speed by regulation alone has proved a failure. Mr. Angelo was correct in stating that his figures represented accidents in the metropolitan area only. They covered the year 1937-38 and indicated that during that period 71 fatal accidents and 405 serious accidents had occurred. Even more accidents occur in the country districts. I have not actually witnessed many accidents, but I have arrived on the scene shortly after such occurrences on different main roads in the country. In one accident eight people were injured; one died almost immediately and six were badly hurt. On another occasion five people were travelling to Bunbury when the car swerved off the road and collided with a tree. Three of the five were killed. In a third instance two out of three people were killed. If accidents in the country and in the metropolitan area were totalled the figures would indeed be alarming. I should like Parliament to make many amendments to the Traffic Act. For instance, car drivers should be compelled to stop before crossing any main thoroughfares or should

be held responsible for the consequences in the event of an accident.

Hon. A. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I assume we shall have an opportunity of dealing with amendments to that Act during the session, and on that occasion I shall have more to say about the matter. Mr. W. R. Hall said that more money should be spent on the Great Eastern Highway. The main road authorities have had many problems to solve, and I think it is admitted that the claims of all main roads on the available funds have been carefully considered. Several roads in the wet districts of the South-West are yet unfinished. It may be of interest to mention that 3,000 miles of main roads have been declared. Of these 713 miles have been completed; 226 miles are under construction, and 119 miles have been approved. That makes a total of 1,058 miles completed, under construction and approved, equal to one-third of the total declared. Considering all the circumstances, this is a very fine achievement and the Director (Mr. Tindale) and his staff should be congratulated.

As to the much-discussed rabbit virus, the Road Boards' Conference a few days ago decided to ask the Government to make application to the Commonwealth for a supply of the virus for use in this State. The result of the request is being awaited. According to reports, the virus will prove to be one of the best methods of dealing with the pest, and I trust that the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research will recommend its being made available at the earliest possible date.

I regret that the Government found it necessary to bring a man from the Eastern States to fill the office of Chief Inspector of Fisheries. When the former Chief Inspector (Mr. Aldrich) was appointed, we were told that the Government wanted a man that understood hatcheries, the intention being to expand the industry in every possible direction. Local applicants were said to be unsuitable for the position. Mr. Aldrich, however, did not have a chance to do very much because his department, in spite of the fact that considerable revenue was received from the industry, was not granted the necessary funds. The consequence has been that the industry has declined. The staff has been reduced, and the inspectors that remain in the department appear to be engaged principally in collecting fees. I understand that

the new Chief Inspector is a very competent man, but my point is that we have men in the service capable of doing all the work that is being performed by the department to-day, and the appointment of a man from the Eastern States is not in conformity with the Government's slogan of putting Western Australia first.

Something should be done to assist in the distribution of fish. Owing to the state of the Perth markets, the representative of the Mandurah fishermen was instructed not to allow their fish to be sold for less than a certain price. I am told that, in consequence, several truck loads of fish were given away to institutions. The fishermen concerned number about 100. They are Australians, and most of them are married and have families to maintain. They have license fees and other obligations to meet and cannot be expected to make a living under such adverse conditions.

Hon. A. Thomson: How many fishermen are there?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Nearly 100; and most of them are married.

Hon. A. Thomson: Are they Britishers or foreigners?

Hon. A. TUCKEY: They are Australians.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where are they?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: At Mandurah: I desire to refer to the Fish and Game Society. Branches of the society have been formed in many parts of the South-West by people who hope to do something to improve fishing in the streams of the South-West. They have spent a good deal of time and money, but have not received the support from the Government that was expected. The Government should take more interest in the movement and assist branches of the society to import trout for liberation in the streams of the South-West. The necessary experimental work cannot be carried out without money. The Government has granted the society one or two small amounts, but I hope further assistance will be rendered.

Hon. A. Thomson: I agree that a large sum of money should be expended in assisting that project.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: In most instances good results have been attained, but further investigation is required. We want to find out the enemies of fish in the different streams, and methods of dealing with them.

Hon. A. Thomson: If trout could be established in those streams, tourists would be encouraged to come here.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Yes, the scheme should do much to increase tourist traffic. Last year a friend of mine arrived from overseas to do some fishing in this country. He stayed four or five months and spent £400. His sole aim was to engage in the sport of fishing. He was very disappointed. He remarked to me that unless the Government provided more attractions for tourists, they could not be expected to come here. He also said that probably many people would come here if they could get the type of sport they wanted. I was sorry he was disappointed, as I thought he would have been a regular visitor, if sufficient attractions could be found for him. Other speakers have referred to the condition of the schools in their provinces. The position seems to be the same all over the State. In my province the schools could hardly be in a worse state. We have been promised a school for some years, and were told three years ago that it was No. 1 on the list of urgent public works.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is it still "urgent"?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Last year it dropped to No. 5. I do not know where it is to-day. To be No. 1 on the list does not count for much. I was surprised to read in the "West Australian" that a new high school was to be built at Geraldton as soon as funds were available. Apparently money is no object. Seemingly thousands of pounds can be found for the larger centres without any trouble. I realise that a large sum of money would be needed to effect the necessary improvements throughout the State, and that the Government cannot be expected to do everything at once. The condition of some of the country schools is deplorable. I know one school where, during the winter, the teacher has to move the 30 or 40 infants from one side of the room to another, according to the way the wind is blowing. If the wind is from the west the children have to be moved to a certain part of the room, and a shift to another point of the compass necessitates the children being moved again to avoid getting wet. Some slight improvement has been effected, but the position is still bad.

Several Bills were brought down at the end of last session. I feel sure that if the Bread Act, which has been so much discussed, were brought down again, the Government, realising that it is not all that was desired, would put it into different form. I

also feel concerned about the Electricity Act, which affects 127 road boards. The Bill was passed before the local authorities had an opportunity to become acquainted with its provisions. Many of them knew nothing at all about it. I ask the Government in future to introduce such Bills much earlier in the session. To introduce a measure of such importance, and affecting so many local governing bodies, at the fag end of the session is not fair. Neither is it fair to the representatives of the people that legislation should be submitted so late. When the Electricity Bill was being considered, we tried to secure an amendment providing for the appointment of a representative of the road boards to the board. The Minister, however, objected. I am still of opinion that the local governing bodies should be represented on the board. The Sussex Road Board was about to extend its electricity plant when the Bill was passed. In January the road board put its scheme in motion, knowing nothing about the Bill. Some of the plant for the extension had been purchased and the local authority was then told that nothing could be done without the consent of the board. Five months have now elapsed without the local authority being able to obtain any information. We can expect certain delays to occur when a new Act is passed, but five months is rather too long to keep a road board waiting for a decision on such an important matter. Representation of the Road Boards' Association on the electricity board would make for smoother working. It is a great pity the amendment was not agreed to, but something should be done to ensure smoother working of the Act. When the Fair Rents Bill comes before us, I shall be prepared to discuss it. We do not yet know what proposals it will contain.

The Transport Board is to be commended for the improvements that have been effected. Mr. Millen has done very well. He seems to have co-operated with the people affected and to have done his job in a satisfactory manner. His is a big task. Parliament passed the transport legislation to assist the railways. My great objection is that it affects only the country people. As in most other instances, the country people have to pay. Much has been said about the improvement in the railway figures. That is largely due to the efforts of the Transport Board. The metropolitan area contributes very little to railway freights and fares, which, in the main, are paid for by the

country people. If we have to make up the deficit on the railways, the whole State should share the burden. People sending goods from Fremantle to Midland Junction should contribute something towards the railway deficit, just as would people sending goods from Perth to Pinjarra. The present arrangement is one-sided. Although the railways have reached a better position, it is not fair that the country people should be made so largely responsible for the improvement. I support the motion.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [5.40]: I congratulate you, Sir, upon your re-election to the high office of President. We have already done this, but members individually have thought fit to congratulate you, and if one of us omitted to do so, he might be thought to have done so purposely. I also welcome the new members. I hope that they will have a pleasant time amongst us, and that the State, through their guidance, will attain great prosperity. I sincerely regret the passing of our esteemed friend, Mr. Elliott. He certainly was one of those who made friends, and we all regret his demise. I have been in the Chamber for a long time and have heard criticism levelled at many Governments. To my mind only mild criticism has been levelled at the present Government, showing that it must be doing a fairly good job.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Perhaps members have only been firing blank cartridges.

Hon. T. MOORE: Those who have protested have done so on very trivial grounds. There was one protest about the engagement of a person who happened to be a friend of the party in power. I should like members who have offered that criticism to say whether they would not, when in power, pass over Labour supporters in filling positions. I am sure that Mr. Holmes, when he was Minister for Railways, did not, in filling positions, go beyond those he knew well.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Times were different then.

Hon. T. MOORE: If that is the only fault the Government has committed, namely, to appoint someone who had Labour leanings, it is a very poor charge to have to answer. Reference has been made to trouble at Collie. I believe in getting through this world with as little industrial unrest as possible. In times past, because Governments did not do the right thing, we had weeks and months of

trouble. We want to avoid all that and to arrive at a solution before trouble actually occurs. We want to prevent any disputes that threaten to crop up. We in this State have been particularly fortunate for many years with respect to industrial upheavals. Seeing that we have got over our industrial differences in previous years, why should members pick on something now and endeavour to show that we are heading towards more trouble? Up to date the Government has done well. Every family has its troubles, and in the industrial field we cannot hope to avoid them. The Government, however, has grappled with all these things in the early stages, and we have surmounted them quickly. The criticism that has been levelled against the Government satisfies me that it has made a fairly good job of its handling of the State's affairs. Members ask why the Government has not done this and that. They ask that heedlessly. If we considered what all these requests meant, we must ask ourselves where all the money was to come from. To carry out all the requests that are made would be an impossible task. Mr. Dimmitt had the idea that the Government should step into the breach. He received applause from members when he said, "After all, we should look after our assets." His statement sounded really fine, but the asset he was worried about was a piece of ground at Nedlands, a very rich suburb.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Rich in its representation.

Hon. T. MOORE: I agree. People in the country districts are not nearly so well off as are the people at Nedlands, but they do not approach the Government to do this, that and the other. What Mr. Dimmitt termed an asset was apparently a playing ground. What we want in the country is schools. For the newer areas we are always requesting schools. They are more necessary than are playing grounds, although I hope these, too, may be brought into existence. The hon. member seems to think that the Government should do this, that and the other, but the asset that the Government has looked after is the asset I myself am always solicitous for, namely, the people of the country. In helping the unemployed the Government has had its hands full. It is the people who represent the greatest asset. I am not worried about property while the human asset is at stake. That is the asset Mr. Dimmitt should con-

sider if he wants this State to prosper. The women and children as well as the men of the State have had a rough spin. Members are aware of that fact; they know what we have passed through during the past few years, but there is no harm in again directing attention to it. The women and children will be the asset that I will seek to look after while I am in this House.

Regarding the outlook today, the Government will have a hard row to hoe, because with all the requests that are being advanced, the national income will be down. The national income has been falling as it is; we are aware that there have been appalling falls in the prices of wheat and wool, and now, because the States have not the cash, we are trying to induce the Commonwealth to do something to assist the wheat-growers. We know that the Commonwealth is in a position to raise the money. Unless action is taken the position will be something like that experienced in 1930 when wheat fell to 2s. a bushel, and wool also fell to a very low rate. So, from that point of view, I am particularly alarmed. I hope I shall not be called a pessimist, but I face the facts. We must not fail to realise that it is the people in the country that are keeping the State going, not those that live at Nedlands. Many of the Nedlands residents are middlemen who live on the man on the land.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They are what are called parasites.

Hon. T. MOORE: I have no desire to call anyone by that name. Anyway, I have explained the position as I view it to-day. We are going to experience great difficulty in carrying on the main industries of the country. With regard to the wants that have been referred to by members in this House, it would seem, in respect of employment, that during the last few years the cry all the time has been, "What is the Government going to do about it?" In days gone by it was, "Good old private enterprise" that we had to lean on. What has happened to private enterprise? Has it died a natural death?

Hon. A. Thomson: The Government has taken over a million pounds from private enterprise by means of the financial emergency tax.

Hon. T. MOORE: Private enterprise is not mentioned to-day. We were fortunate

in this country in having the mining industry to assist us, and I direct members' attention to this fact that whilst we are having a prosperous time on the goldfields, we are sending out a crop of fine young men as prospectors, and I foresee that in the years to come we shall experience the same set of circumstances as those through which we have passed, namely, that those young men will be taken into the mines as fine healthy young Australians, and they will emerge later on, only to fall back into our hands, in spite of what is regarded as the wonderful ventilation that is provided below ground. While goldmining is booming as it is to-day, I trust that the State will make the best possible use of the advantage being gained from it and do something to tide us over the situation until the industry goes down. We must not forget that gold is a wasting asset, and if my suggestion is carried out, it will be possible in the interval to put other industries on a decent footing.

I should like to call attention to another matter, reference to which I do not think has been made by any other member in the course of the debate. I refer to yet another steal of State rights by the Commonwealth, and against this I wish to register my protest. I refer to national insurance. I draw members' attention to the fact that a considerable sum of money is going to be taken by the Commonwealth from employers, while the workers are to be taxed—a section of the workers, not all. Let us consider how this will come about. When Federation was entered into, the Commonwealth agreed to take over our old-age pensioners. That was the business of the Commonwealth and it was carried on for years. It has, however, always been a troublesome burden. Let us not forget at the same time that the Commonwealth has had control of indirect taxation through which everybody paid. The Commonwealth still has that field. Then the Commonwealth imposed an income tax, something that it was not entitled to do, and at the end of almost every financial year its coffers were full or overflowing. Last year the Commonwealth had a bursting Treasury, its surplus having been over £3,000,000. Then what does the Commonwealth do? It declares that the pensions burden is too heavy to be carried, brings in the national insurance scheme and in that way inflicts another penalty in the form of tax-

ation on the people of the States. This is going to be a very heavy load for the people to carry. That surely was a Commonwealth responsibility, but it has been put on the States and we have no chance of getting out of it. The money is to be taken from us and handled by the Commonwealth to meet old-age pensions. There was a time when I was a strong Federationist, but I am slipping. If this kind of thing continues, where are we going to finish? The Commonwealth is loading us up all the time. One particular section of the community proposes to go on strike rather than pay. That section is the farmers of this country, and I say they are justly entitled to do so. Should they go on strike I shall be wholeheartedly with them. We must register a protest, or else the Commonwealth will go on taking and taking until we have nothing left. Surely the Commonwealth has a big enough field to exploit—the field of indirect taxation.

In respect of unemployment, the present State Government has done particularly well in the district I represent, especially where married men are concerned, and I wish the people to understand that clearly. I have had less trouble from the unemployed during the period the present Government has been in power than I had had for years, and I commend the Government for the work it has done in the Geraldton district. There may have been isolated cases of distress or difficulty, but they were very few. Recently there was trouble up that way when one of the local members rushed into print. Three men had been employed on a certain work and had completed the work. They did not want anyone to know that they were out of employment and so did not register. They were waiting for the same job to start again. But they found that it did not start, and they rushed to one of the local members. Only two or three men were involved, and so on the whole I consider we have done very well by the people in the district I represent.

There are some who can weep over almost anything that is done by a Labour Government but when their own Government was in power, and when things certainly were in a deplorable condition, they had nothing to say. Mr. Baxter is aware of the circumstances existing at the time when money was being collected every week from those who were in employment. Another party was in

power then and there was no weeping or wailing. But the scene changes, and to-day I say that everything is right and the change is for the better. I hope the Government will be returned in March to continue its good work.

Hon. C. F. Baxter interjected.

Hon. T. MOORE: I do not deny that the previous Government experienced bad times, and I will give it credit to that extent, but there are members who wail now but who were silent at that time. It is remarkable also that in that period there was a Commonwealth Labour Government and that Government, too, was having just as bad a time, but it made an honest attempt to give us 4s. a bushel for our wheat. When the proposal was made the Government had to pass a Bill through the House to guarantee us 3s. Of course, the Commonwealth Bank being owned and controlled by the Associated Banks said, "No, don't pay," and we never got it.

Hon. J. Nicholson: When did the Commonwealth Bank pass over to the control of the Associated Banks?

Hon. T. MOORE: The Commonwealth Bank was the only bank that could have provided the money.

Hon. A. Thomson: I thought the Commonwealth Government was supreme over all the banks.

Hon. T. MOORE: Is it? We went through bad times and I know that every Government then in power grappled with those bad times. I will give our own Government—the Government now in power—credit for its work and for trying just as hard as those that had gone before it to make a good job of the difficult situation. I commend the Government for it.

One other matter to which I wish to refer is that of land rents. Unfortunately the greater portion of this State was settled at a time when the prices of wheat and wool were at a high figure. Wheat was worth £1 a bag and wool was bringing between 2s. and 3s. a lb. The inner areas were all taken up, and settlers wanted to go out further and further each year. Unfortunately the Lands Department priced the land too highly, and since then there has been a reluctance to bring the prices down. I am referring now to the marginal areas. Every country representative has those areas in his district. Go to the Lands Department and one will be told, "Why worry; we are not pressing for the rents."

Hon. A. Thomson: No Government ever does press for them.

Hon. T. MOORE: No, but the point is that the rents are being debited against the settlers. Year after year the amount owing is debited against them, and that is not a business proposition. No man would remain on the land if he knew what he was up against and the rents were such that they were beyond his capacity to pay. The sooner the Government realises that the price of the land held by farmers in the outer areas should be reduced, the sooner will the men on the land have some hope regarding their financial position. When that day arrives, they will make an attempt to meet their obligations. As it is, the farmers know that they cannot pay their total indebtedness and do not make an attempt to reduce it. I do not blame them for their attitude. The position is quite different, for instance, in the area where Mr. Holmes is located. In that new and fertile area, crops run to 10 and 12 bags to the acre, but in the outer areas of which I speak, the returns would be 10 to 12 bushels. That indicates the tremendous difference between the two classes of country, and one would naturally think that the prices would disclose a relative margin. Unfortunately they do not. Those outer areas were taken up with the prices fixed on the basis of boom conditions, and there is great reluctance to reduce those prices to figures more in keeping with the real value of the land.

Hon. A. Thomson: What prices were paid for the land?

Hon. T. MOORE: From 6s. to 8s. an acre for the land I refer to. The rainfall is very light and, in addition, the land does not possess the necessary growing qualities. I could take members to some parts where, irrespective of whether the block is fallowed or not, the farmer cannot secure results.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then it is not wheat-growing country.

Hon. T. MOORE: That is the point. Mr. Holmes knows the position and agrees with me. Unfortunately that area is settled and the farmers are there. In the circumstances, the sooner the price of their land is reduced, the better it will be for all concerned.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Some of the agricultural land was priced as high as 27s. 6d. an acre.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes. In Victoria, which is a very fertile little State, land was valued

as high as £1 an acre. In conclusion, I desire to commend the Main Roads Department and the Commissioner for Main Roads upon the excellent work carried out in the country districts. A tremendous task had to be undertaken and the board set about it in an energetic manner. Of course, complaints are made and naturally we in our part do not consider we have had our fair share of bitumen surfacing. We think that too much has been done in the South-West and not enough in our area. Nevertheless I commend the department for the great work that has been done. It is now possible to travel from Perth to the North-West in a comparatively very short space of time. When we know that such good work has been accomplished, we should express our commendation, not only of Mr. Tindale and his officers, but of the men who actually did the work, despite the fact that some people say there have been loafers on the job.

Hon. A. Thomson: They are now practically all trained men.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, but they were not trained to the job when they started, and they have carried out excellent work. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, GOLDFIELDS EXPRESS TRAINS.

Second-class Passengers, Additional Comforts.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways: As the Railway Department receives about three times as much revenue from second class passengers as from first class passengers in fares from Kalgoorlie, and for approximately the same outlay, will he consider providing additional comforts on all express trains for second class passengers, such as—(a) more comfortable sleeping accommodation; (b) foot warmers; (c) hot water bottles for those booking sleepers; (d) lounge car accommodation.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The question of increasing the amenities provided for all passengers (including those travelling second class) is and has been constantly before the Commissioner of Railways. Considerable improvement has, as members are aware, been made and it is hoped to provide additional comforts as circumstances permit.

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF SPEAKER'S POSITION.

Point of Order.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [4.33]: I rise to a point of order. This House is not properly constituted for the conduct of business on the following grounds:—

In view of the fact that Mr. William Dartnell Johnson when last elected to the Legis-