

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 11th August, 1936.

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

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

The following members took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll:—Hon. P. Collier (Boulder), Miss Holman (Forrest), Mr. Hughes (East Perth) and Mr. Marshall (Murchison).

QUESTION—FARMS ABANDONED.

Hon. C. G. LATHEAM asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What number of properties (defaulted securities) reverted to the Agricultural Bank during the year ended 30th June, 1936? 2, What was the total number of abandoned properties (Agricultural Bank, Soldiers' Settlement, and Group Settlement) in the Bank's possession at 30th June, 1936?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Seven hundred and ten reverted to the Bank (including six withdrawals). During that period 250 sales were effected (including 13 part security sales), and 249 cropping leases and 258 grazing leases arranged. 2, Total 2,791. Of these 842 are at present leased, and many too poor to offer for sale are being examined with a view to writing off the debt and handing back to the Lands Department.

FEDERAL SENATE VACANCY.

Lieut.-Governor's Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read transmitting a copy of a despatch received by him from the President of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia notifying that a vacancy had occurred in the representation of the State of Western Australia in the Senate. Senator William Carroll having died on the 13th May, 1936.

On motion by the Premier ordered: That Mr. Speaker be requested to confer with the President of the Legislative Council in order to fix a day and place whereon and whereat the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, sitting and voting together, shall choose a person to hold the place of the Senator whose place has become vacant.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the PREMIER, ordered: That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,200,000.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.46]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

Question put and passed.

Appointment of Chairman of Committees.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.47]: As it becomes necessary at this stage to appoint a Chairman of Committees, I move—

That the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleenan) be appointed Chairman of Committees.

Question put and passed.

In Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into a Committee of Supply, Mr. Sleenan in the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: I thank members for the honour they have conferred upon me.

In the past my task has been made comparatively easy by reason of the assistance that has been given to me by members on both sides of the House. I feel sure that this assistance will continue to be rendered to me by members.

Mr. Marshall: Do not be too optimistic.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I trust that members will have no cause for complaint for having elected me as Chairman.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.49]: I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the service of the year ending on the 30th June, 1937, a sum not exceeding £2,200,000.

This is the usual Supply granted at the opening of a session, and authorises expenditure to the amount of £2,200,000 pending the introduction and passing of the Estimates. I hope that the Estimates will be introduced this year earlier than has been the case in the past. It is customary when Parliament does not meet until August for Supply to be sought for three months, otherwise a further Bill would be required within two or three weeks. The Supply asked for now is made up as follows:—Out of Consolidated Revenue Fund £1,300,000, General Loan Fund £600,000, and Treasurer's Advance Account £300,000, making a total of £2,200,000. The amount required from Consolidated Revenue, covering the amount we anticipate having to spend, will be laid out as follows:—In July £470,000, in August £420,000, and in September £410,000, making a total of £1,300,000. This expenditure does not cover the amounts under special Acts, such as interest. It is estimated that the expenditure from General Loan Fund will be approximately £200,000 per month, making a total of £600,000 for the three months. The Treasurer's advance represents expenditure which, at the time it is incurred, cannot be charged against either Consolidated Revenue Fund or General Loan Fund. It is made up of monthly advances to departments, and involves sums concerning which it has to be determined later whether they are to be charged to General Loan Fund or to Consolidated Revenue account. I do not know that there is any further information I need offer on this Bill, except to repeat that I hope to have the Estimates down at an early date, when the whole position can be reviewed. It has been the practice in

years gone by for Supply to be obtained at the opening of Parliament, if Parliament does not open before the 1st July.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.52]: Whilst I am not going to say anything in respect to the granting of Supply, I want to take this opportunity of protesting against unauthorised expenditure by the Government. I have frequently told the House that in this Chamber members have very little control over the finances of the State. If Ministers go on, as they have been doing in the past few months we shall have less control. I notice from the newspapers that the Government propose to spend no less than £84,000 in duplicating the tramway service running between Barrack-street and Claremont. A really good service exists there to-day, and yet, without consulting the House, the Minister in charge has made up his mind to spend £84,000 for no good purpose at all. The expenditure cannot earn a penny in additional revenue beyond what the present service brings in. Another point to which I wish to refer is the purchase of an additional steamer. If the Government are going to adopt that system of expending the State's money without consulting us, there will be very little work for this House to do. Already this State has been committed to a large expenditure. This has just been referred to by the Premier. There is the authorisation of a loan, on which interest will have to be paid, an amount for salaries of members and also the expenditure under many Acts of Parliament to which the State is already committed and for which it is providing funds. Notwithstanding that, we have the Government, during the recess and without acquainting Parliament, making provision for this additional huge expenditure. No mention was made of it last session, and there is no mention of it in the Policy Speech of the Premier or in those of Ministers. It cannot, therefore, be claimed that the Government have a mandate from the public for this expenditure.

The Premier: For what?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: For the expenditure of the money to which I am referring.

The Premier: What money?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The £84,000 for duplicating the tramway service. The Government have committed the State to this, and I find from the newspapers that the

Minister in charge has already ordered the trolley buses.

Mr. Cross: Surely we are not going to stand still forever. We must make progress.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member will not stand still forever.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have also referred to the authorisation of probably a quarter of a million pounds for the purchase of a steamer for the North. I am not saying whether that expenditure is justified or not, but the Government might have waited a little while and sought the authority of the House.

Mr. Coverley: We have been waiting too long already.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If that is so, why did not the hon. member ask the House for this sum to be granted last year?

Mr. Sampson: If it is needed now, it was needed then.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But there was no mention of it. The Government could well have waited until the House met.

Mr. Coverley: It is not a job for the House.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the hon. member were to get all he wants, there would be little need for this House to exist.

Mr. Coverley: We could well do without you.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The same can be said of the hon. member. This House has a right to control the finances of the State. That is our function. That right is taken away from even another place. It is left to members of this Chamber, not to the members of the Executive, to incur this expenditure. Members must know that the House of Commons took away from the King the right to expend money, but in this State we are handing that right over to the Executive, which authorises the expenditure of money. Are we here merely to alter Bills or approve of legislation, or are we here to control the finances of the State? Ministers should at least have waited until the House met before incurring this expenditure, and should have brought down their proposals to members. There is no justification for scrapping the tramway service to Claremont. This expenditure of £84,000 will not add another penny to the general revenue. There are many ways in which money could be better

used than in this direction. Our agriculturists to-day are in such a deplorable condition that they are unable to take advantage of the high price now offering for wheat. A little while ago I had the opportunity of going through the agricultural areas. I saw farmers trying to fallow their land when they had no feed for their stock. Their finances were depleted because they suffered a drought last year. If the Government have any interest in the recovery of the State, they should realise that this money would have been very useful in providing agriculturists, not only with fodder to enable them to fallow but with money to enable them to buy duplicate parts and to replace worn-out machinery. Western Australia has done nothing for this particular industry. Is it expected to make a recovery by duplicating the tramway service to Claremont? Is that going to bring us back prosperity? Is it going to be done by buying an additional steamer for the North-West coast?

Mr. Rodoreda: That will help.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I wish there were additional freights that could be brought down. I am afraid there will be less than was the case last year.

Mr. Rodoreda: Do not you think the position will improve?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope it will. I shall not object to this expenditure when the proper time comes, but I think there are many claims against the Government of a much more important nature that will be more beneficial to the State. If we could avail ourselves of the improved price for our wheat, it would certainly bring more prosperity to the State and be of great assistance to the Government. The money will be absorbed in connection with unemployed, or those on part-time employment, who to-day are causing the Government a great deal of worry. This is the only opportunity I have of protesting, and I desire to protest strongly against unauthorised expenditure by the Government. Why this undue haste? Only a month or so longer was needed to enable the Government to come to Parliament and ask for authority. They can even ask for authority in the Supply Bill. The Premier has told us how the money is to be spent. Presumably £200,000 per month is required for payment of wages. There must be funds available for that purpose. Now the mana-

ger of the State Shipping Service could not have gone to London without some authority, or without some idea as to how payment is to be made for the State ship which it is proposed to purchase. I protest that the money could have been much better used, and for the benefit of all sections of the community. I want to see prosperity re-established in our agricultural areas as it has been on the goldfields. A quarter of a million expended in the agricultural areas, or even in the South-West, where dairy farmers are having a most difficult time, would materially assist towards the return of prosperity. I tell hon. members it is their responsibility to see that the finances of the State are controlled. Such control is not a function of the Executive Council. It is for the Executive Council to come to Parliament for authority. What is the purpose of the Annual Estimates? They came along last year, and we authorised the expenditure of certain moneys as set out in the Appropriation Act. The same remarks apply to the Loan Bill. But in the meantime the Government make up their mind, without authority from the people, for these subjects were never mentioned—the State ship for the North-West was never mentioned even by the Minister for the North-West—to incur this expenditure. If the Minister for the North-West made up his mind meantime, he might have waited a little longer. It is up to this Chamber to do what the people expect us to do, and that is to keep control of the finances. The Premier, however, needs Supply; and I do not propose to prevent him from getting it. Supply is essential. However, I take this opportunity of protesting against expenditure which might well have waited until Parliament met.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.3]: With what interest we have listened to the sweet innocence of the Leader of the Opposition in protesting against unauthorised expenditure! Why, the hon. gentleman was a member of a Government that authorised sums immeasurably larger than those he is now complaining about, without Parliamentary authorisation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What were they?

The PREMIER: I will tell the hon. member.

Hon. C. G. Latham: All right; tell me.

The PREMIER: If he was not a member of the Government I refer to, at least he

was an active supporter of the Government in question who launched the group settlements in the South-West, which have cost this State over £6,000,000—launched them without Parliamentary authority; without any authority whatever.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Parliament did give authority.

The PREMIER: Not until the scheme had been launched and the State was committed to it. Hon. members opposite cannot put that sort of thing over me; I have been here too long. The group settlement scheme was launched without Parliament ever being consulted, and Parliament was committed to it without ever having authorised it. Who started the Harvey drainage diversion scheme in the South-West, which has cost hundreds of thousands of pounds—started it without any Parliamentary authority? Did Parliament approve of that scheme?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes.

The PREMIER: It did not.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, it did.

The PREMIER: Only after having been committed to it. Parliamentary authority was not asked in the first place. Every Administration of Western Australia has had to commit itself to expenditure without Parliamentary authority, depending upon being able to justify the commitments made. If Parliament is in recess for six or seven or eight months of the year and important matters come along, are the Government to sit down and say that they can do nothing, that they are helpless until Parliament meets? If occasion arises for the provision of a new State ship for the North-West after the session has closed, are the Government to sit down and say, "We can do nothing until Parliament meets"? This is a new-found virtue of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Raphael: The only virtue he has!

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman objects to the expenditure of money without Parliamentary authorisation. If I had time I would be able to produce figures showing that the Government of which he was a member—

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is plenty of time.

The PREMIER: There will be plenty of time to-morrow and the day after. I shall be able to produce figures showing that the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member committed the State to the expenditure of huge sums

of money without any authorisation whatever. I repeat, this is a new-found virtue on the part of the Leader of the Opposition, objecting to the Government committing the State to the expenditure of money without Parliamentary authorisation. Let him look up the Harvey drainage deviation scheme.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I will look it up directly.

The PREMIER: Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent on that deviation, and the only return the State has got from it is in the form of compensation claims from some of the settlers concerned. I reiterate, there is the group settlement scheme to which the State was committed without any Parliamentary authorisation whatever. The hon. member, as a matter of fact, was a member of the Administration which started the Nornalup settlement scheme without any Parliamentary authorisation. He will remember my criticism of that scheme while I was occupying the seat in which he now sits, criticism on the ground that the Government in question embarked on the scheme without first consulting Parliament.

Mr. Thorn: Why have you not lived up to that?

The PREMIER: And now the Leader of the Opposition is complaining that the present Government are committing Parliament and the State to expenditure without authorisation. Of course the hon. gentleman knows that what he has uttered is old claptrap, which has been heard in this Chamber for 30 years past. The hon. member knows perfectly well that no Ministry can go on, with the House in recess for six or seven months of the year, without committing the State to some form of expenditure without the authority of Parliament. The hon. member knows perfectly well that if the Government do wrong in that direction, Parliament has the remedy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What is it?

The PREMIER: To put the Government out of office. That is the remedy. This is too belated a cry altogether, about lack of Parliamentary authority. I ask members for the North-West—one at any rate of them does not belong to our party—what is the objection to the purchase of another State ship? In every election for the last six or nine years the Party opposite has committed itself to the policy of State ships on the North-West coast.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But not to the purchase of new ships without authority.

The PREMIER: Well, what are we to do when old ships are worn out? Is the North-West to go without ships?

Hon. C. G. Latham: We would ask Parliament for authority.

The PREMIER: Hon. members opposite committed themselves to the policy of State ships for the North-West. I could quote "Hansard" for hours to show that members opposite have committed themselves to that policy. At one election, during which I visited the North-West, I saw placards everywhere proclaiming, "We, the National Party, stand for State ships for the North-West." They have fought elections on that declaration, and have won elections on it. And now the Leader of the Opposition complains about our arranging to purchase a State ship for the North-West. Does he say we should wait for Parliamentary authority when an old ship is worn out and there has been a wreck on the North-West coast? Does he say that the North-West is to remain without shipping accommodation? I like this idea of Parliamentary authority. Why, the policy of the Opposition gives the present Government authority to provide ships for the North-West trade.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We gave you authority to spend money for the agriculturists, and you have not spent it.

The PREMIER: It is useless to try to switch away from the North-West to the agricultural areas. I venture to say that the hon. member will continue to support State ships as he has done during past years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am not against the purchase of a new ship.

The PREMIER: But without authority? In order to make a business deal are we to wait six or eight months for Parliamentary authority to spend the money? The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that every Ministry has to decide questions arising during the six or eight months of the recess, and must not sit down and wait six or eight months for Parliament to meet. Would any business man wait in that way for authority? Of course not. The outburst of the Leader of the Opposition represents merely a new-found spasm of virtue in this direction. The Government of which he was a member indulged in the same practice extensively. In fact, all Governments have done so, and of necessity. No Administration can sit down and wait for months and

months until Parliament meets to obtain authority to do things which, in the judgment of the Administration, ought to be done. If the course the Leader of the Opposition suggests were adopted, great losses might be incurred by the people in the North-West. If a cartage subsidy involving, say, £20,000 is requested, is the Ministry to say, "We have no authority"?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Now justify the Claremont alterations.

The PREMIER: That matter can be dealt with on its merits.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is all I ask you to do.

The PREMIER: I venture to say that at least that work will hold its own with the Harvey drainage deviation scheme.

The Minister for Mines: All we have got from that deviation up to date is applications for compensation; we have got no revenue.

The PREMIER: The complaint of the Leader of the Opposition was based not on any particular instance, but on the principle of the Government spending the State's money without Parliamentary authorisation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: On unnecessary expenditure too.

The PREMIER: The Claremont scheme will stand on its own, just as will—let me remind the Leader of the Opposition—a great many schemes involving the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds in agricultural areas. Indeed, I can go further and say that millions of pounds have been spent on such schemes in agricultural areas.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are thinking of Forrestania.

The PREMIER: No. That is a tinpot little thing compared with some of those other schemes on which money has been lavished.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We know it cost close on half a million, anyway.

The PREMIER: I merely say, in reply to the Leader of the Opposition, that unauthorised expenditure is essential to Governments unless Parliament meets before the end of the financial year and the financial proposals are brought forward. Has there ever been in this State, or in any other Australian State, or in the Commonwealth arena, a Ministry that has not incurred expenditure, or committed the State or the Commonwealth, as the case may be, to expenditure, without Parliamentary authorisation?

Of course not. Every Government has adopted that expedient—every Commonwealth Government and every State Government. Every Government this State has had has adopted that course. They will continue to do so because it is necessary. Even the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member and Governments that he supported before he became a Minister did so, and every Government in the future will find it necessary to act along these lines.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.16]: Of course the Premier has merely tried to ridicule the views I expressed. He has not supplied any sound argument or solid reply to what I have contended. He has endeavoured to cloud the issue by making the assertion that I supported a Government, or was a member of a Government, that actually did what I am protesting against now. There is no analogy between the two circumstances. The Premier referred to the Harvey drainage scheme, but he is perfectly aware of the difficulty the Government of the day experienced in providing employment in avenues that did not necessitate the expenditure of much money on equipment, plant and material. There is no comparison between the two actions. Even so, was that action any more ridiculous than that of the Minister for Lands who cleared blocks of land that people are leaving to-day in their hundreds?

The Minister for Lands: I did not clear it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister went through the South-West and took people off certain blocks because he considered there was no virtue in clearing such land, and placed them on holdings in the Busselton, Margaret River and other areas. Yet to-day those people are leaving the blocks to which they had been transferred.

The Minister for Lands: And the blocks will be cleared.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not protesting against the Government providing employment where it is necessary, but the expenditure of the money to which I have taken exception will not result in one day's work for any individual in the State.

The Premier: Which money?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The £250,000 that is to be spent on a new boat. Of course, there is no hurry for that expenditure. As regards the duplication of the transport facilities to Claremont and the provision of

trolley buses, I admit that certain parts of the trolley buses will be manufactured at the Midland workshops, but I contend that that proposed duplication of the transport service is not justified, and there are many other avenues of expenditure that could be undertaken with greater advantage. I do not oppose the State Shipping Service. That is not my attitude at all. On the other hand, nothing has happened in connection with the shipping service that necessitates such an expenditure.

The Minister for Mines: Only that one of the boats has been wrecked.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the Premier suggests that the psychological moment for the purchase of a new ship had arrived, the facts are that six months ago the circumstances for the purchase of a vessel were more favourable than they are to-day. At that time he could have secured a subsidy in England to assist in the purchase of a vessel.

The Premier: We took steps six months ago.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Why did not the Premier inform the House?

Mr. Raphael: The House was not sitting.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I refer to the time I was in England, when money could have been obtained at a much cheaper rate.

The Minister for Mines: But the boat was not wrecked then.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Which boat?

The Minister for Mines: The "Minderoo."

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And that vessel has been replaced.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course it has. Even so, are we to replace every ship that is wrecked on the North-West coast? Is that the policy of the Minister for Mines?

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course not. Why then does the Minister advance such an argument? I have never opposed the provision of ships for the North-West coast, nor do I oppose that policy now.

The Premier: No, you just want the service to die.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Nothing of the sort.

The Premier: Of course you do.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is a cheap way for the Premier to get out of it, merely to say that I want the service to die. As to his remarks about group settlement, the Premier knew all about it.

The Premier: After all had been signed, sealed and delivered.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is not so. The Premier endorsed the scheme and he went to England and secured a better agreement.

The Premier: I did not.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not only did the Premier go to England and secure a better agreement, but when he returned to the State he embarked upon even greater expenditure. If he desires to condemn the group settlement scheme, and to blame members who sit on the Opposition side of the House in this Parliament, he must remember his own share in the undertaking and accept his measure of responsibility. In fact, he should accept more of the responsibility than should members on this side of the House.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not want to go into this matter, but the Premier raised the issue. His Government spent £1,250,000 a year for not less than three years before the present Minister for Lands took over.

The Premier: But we were committed to the expenditure.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: How can the Premier say he was committed, when he went to England and signed a new agreement? The Premier knows quite well what was done; he knew all about it. Nevertheless he endeavours to bluff members of this Chamber by the remarks that he has made. There would have been no excuse for me to raise objections to the expenditure of the funds I have referred to, if the money were to be utilised in the provision of employment. Doubtless the Premier has found it difficult to provide employment, and if the money had been for that purpose, nothing would have been said. On the other hand, I will do my best, with the aid of members sitting on the Opposition side of the House, to prevent the duplication of the tramway service at an expenditure of £84,000, of which not one penny is justified. Only a little while ago one of the lines was lifted and shifted at considerable ex-

pense. I do not believe the Premier was consulted in that undertaking. Had he been consulted, I do not think he would have agreed to commit the State to that expenditure. If money is to be spent in providing employment, let it be spent elsewhere and not in the duplication of an already existing service. The Premier cannot justify that particular expenditure.

The Premier: Can I not?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course the Premier cannot. Everyone knows that the cheapest form of transport in the city is the tramway service.

Mr. Cross: No, the trolley bus.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What does the hon. member know about it. He may have been a "trammie," but he does not know that on the one experiment we tried there was a loss at the rate of £1,500 a year.

Mr. Cross: I drew attention to the position three years ago.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member has interjected without any knowledge whatever of the position. If he were aware of the facts, he would not interject. I can see that we are in for an interesting time this session if we may judge from this opening, but I will not allow the Premier to get away with this sort of statement. He referred to the Nornalup scheme. He knew that the object of that was to place unemployed married men in work.

Mr. Raphael: Miles away from their homes.

Mr. Withers: And isolated in the bush.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Do these members want everyone to live in the cities? They would very soon starve if people were not out in the back country.

Mr. Withers: And they are starving now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Some of them are doing very well. They made a good deal out of tobacco this year. Decidedly the Premier knows that 80 men or so were given a chance in the Nornalup scheme. We get into trouble irrespective of what we do! If we put men on cutting grass on the footpaths and so keep those individuals in the city, we get into trouble. If we send men out to Nornalup to get them away from the city and give them something to do, we get into trouble just the same. The Minister for Lands stated that half the living of the people came from the land, and that very argument justified the Nornalup scheme. We paid married men with families more than £2 a week, and we were condemned for

doing so. I do not raise any objection to the Supply Bill, but the Premier has not replied to the points mentioned. He endeavoured to create the impression in the minds of North-West members that I oppose the shipping service, whereas the facts are that the party with which I am associated has always regarded the State ships for the north in the same light as the railways for the agricultural areas.

The Premier: Millions have been spent in the South-West.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And the Premier knows who spent that money.

The Premier: Yes, your Government.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And the Premier endorsed the work and went to England where he fixed up a better agreement.

The Premier: I had to improve on the wretched agreement your Party secured.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And the Premier proceeded to spend at the rate of £1,250,000 a year when he came back and did not seem able to stop. The Minister for Lands cannot stop either.

The Premier: Did I go with a free hand? Of course not, I was tied by the agreement made by the previous Government.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It was ratified by Parliament. No agreement requiring ratification by Parliament is binding until it receives the sanction of Parliament, and I do not remember hearing one word of protest from the present Premier.

The Premier: You must have been asleep.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: However, I raised two points only. I claimed there was no undue haste necessary regarding the purchase of a new boat for the North-West and Parliament should have been asked to authorise the expenditure in the usual way. No doubt that authority would have been granted by members. As it is, Parliament has no control over expenditure. Members on the Government side of the House are prepared to back the Executive and that means bureaucratic government, not democratic. I warn members accordingly.

The Premier: That is a new idea.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Bureaucratic government by a Labour Government!

The Premier: You have just discovered this?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have known that it has been going on for a long while, and I have taken the first opportunity in this Parliament to say that I will not allow the

Government unnecessarily to spend the people's money without securing the authority of Parliament.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [5.28]: With what the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have said to one another during the debate, I entirely agree. On the question of the group settlements, it was Sir James Mitchell who inaugurated the scheme at a cost to this State of £6,000,000. In return for that cost to the State, at the earliest opportunity the Premier gave that man the best job in the State at a salary of £2,000 a year. And we pay in £2,000 a year to wipe it off! To make that improvement, men have been put on the groups and have been put off again. I do not wish to enter into any recriminations regarding the past. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is the function of Parliament to say, at the earliest opportunity, in what manner public funds shall be spent, and I propose to move an amendment to the clause.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are too early.

The Premier: Yes, the Bill will come later on; we are not dealing with clauses now.

MR. HUGHES: I shall bring the matter forward at a later stage.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.30]: I submit that members have been criticised by implication by the Premier in respect to the need for an additional State steamer. Time after time members on both sides have stressed the need for an additional steamer for the North-West coast, and always there has been more or less an approval of the suggestion that an additional steamer was necessary. Of my own knowledge, I can say that if another steamer had been operating on the North-West and Northern coast during the past 12 months or two years, there would be better trade than is the case today. In Darwin the position is that the steamer does not call sufficiently frequently and, as a result, the great bulk of the trade previously done by this State has been lost to the Eastern States. Only a few days ago I made inquiries in Darwin and was advised that, whereas previously supplies of certain manufactures were obtained in this State, those lines are now obtained from Sydney. There is no question about that and if any member disputes it I can give the names of the commodities and the firms who have

ceased placing orders with Western Australian manufacturers.

Mr. Coverley interjected.

MR. SAMPSON: I can assure the hon. member, than whom none probably knows the North-West better, that that is so, and he will agree with me that another steamer was necessary many months ago. Hence it is futile to submit to us that this need suddenly arose. Time after time the need has been mentioned here, and members of the Government appeared to regard the suggestion with a complacent and approving spirit. The Leader of the Opposition is perfectly right. The matter could have been brought forward many months ago, and I am sure, had that been done, the approval of Parliament to the purchase of another boat would have been given. There is no need to say that the State vessels provide a service to the North equivalent to that of the railways in the South. They provide an excellent service, and I would be one of the last to take a different view. The position, unfortunately, is that when the Government do decide to do anything, they either keep the matter a close secret or, when later on action is taken, many months pass before any real progress is made. The position regarding electric current is a case in point; it thoroughly bears out the statement I have made. The amount of £84,000 to be expended for the provision of trolley buses and other equipment is another example of unnecessary expenditure of public money. It has been pointed out by the people most concerned—the residents of Claremont and district—that private enterprise is prepared to supply the necessary transport and that such transport would be warmly welcomed and would present advantages in comparison with the proposed trolley bus service. In spite of the need for money in so many quarters, the Government have thrown aside the obligation to submit the proposal to Parliament and have gone ahead, and I say they have done an injustice to private enterprise who were prepared to do what was necessary. I will not labour the question; it is an old, old question. We lay tramways and we root them up. Then we put down something else, and thus we are constantly adding to our loan indebtedness, though there are in the State plenty of people with sufficient money to do what is necessary in the way of providing many of these public works. The Premier and his Ministers load themselves with blame unnecessarily and

bring upon themselves doubt and misgivings because they do something which, were they operating a business, they would not do. They should consider the financial aspect. Since transport conveniences are usually or frequently a source of loss, and since all Governments require money for essential public services, they should leave the provision of transport to private enterprise, particularly in a case like this where so many of the people vitally interested urge that the Government should take that course. Suppose previous Governments had done wrong, we are not here worshipping at the shrine of any past Government. We are here striving to the utmost of our ability to do what is right. The Premier, however, endeavoured to shelter himself behind some alleged wrong-doing on the part of a previous Government. Every Government is subject to criticism and none more so than the present Government, because, in spite of the wrong-doing of the past, they persist in it. I say there is no justification for arguing that, because in the dim long ago some Government did wrong, the present Government should persist in adopting a similar course.

The Premier: Except the stupid things you did when Minister for a while.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is easy for the Premier to make offensive remarks without submitting with them some intelligent statement. Therefore I shall not be offended. I will take it that he is hard-pressed for a reply. Remarks more or less in defamation of me will not cause any great anxiety. As to what I did or did not do, if the Premier can find in that some justification for a continuance of wrong-doing, God bless him; I shall not deprive him of that small consolation.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [5.37]: I wish to say a word or two on the objection raised by the Leader of the Opposition and his colleague on the subject of unauthorised expenditure for a State steamer. During the course of the hon. member's remarks, I interjected that since we were last in session, one of the boats trading on the North-West coast had been wrecked. I referred to the "Minderoo." The hon. member must know that the "Minderoo" and its sister ships are running on the North-West coast under permits from the Commonwealth Government, relieving them of observance of the

conditions under the Navigation Act. When the "Minderoo" was disabled and became a wreck, either another permit had to be issued to the company or the State had to give a guarantee that another boat would be placed on the coast. I should like to know whether the Government's action would have been appreciated had they sat down and refused to make any statement as to duplicating the present service on the coast until Parliament met, seeing that the Commonwealth Government had given us a certain period in which to say yes or no; otherwise another permit to the company would have been approved and issued.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know it is only an annual permit.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When once a permit is granted—

Hon. C. G. Latham: A yearly permit.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is right; the company have the permits and how many years have they had them?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Permits have been cancelled from time to time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member said that the wrecked boat had been replaced. What with? Is that the kind of boat members opposite wish to see in the North-West trade, a cargo steamer with no accommodation for passengers and with no refrigerator space? That is the class of boat put on the coast without a permit because it is not complying with the conditions. Is that the kind of boat members desire? At Cabinet meeting after Cabinet meeting, the Chief Secretary presented letters written by him to the Commonwealth Government, together with replies from the Commonwealth Government stating definitely that we had to say yes or no. The Government would have been lacking in their duty, knowing the opportunity then presented to get some finance towards the provision of a new boat, had they let the time go by and waited for Parliament to meet and be informed that we were thinking of putting another boat on the North-West coast. Any Government, irrespective of party, that adopted such a course would not be worthy of governing this or any other country. That is all I wish to say on the question.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.41]: I had no intention of speaking again but the remarks of the Minister for Mines compel me to reply to his statements.

The Minister did not tell members all there is to be told. He knows that the permits granted by the Commonwealth Government are annual permits and that the ship will not be out here for at least 12 months. Consequently, what harm could it have done? The permit has been granted for 12 months. The conditions as regards passengers are totally different—

The Premier: If a permit is granted for a ship to come here and the company build a ship, it would mean that the annual permit would have to be renewed.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, those permits have been cancelled from time to time.

The Premier: Not so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, I say so definitely. Permits were cancelled when we were in office. The Commonwealth Government issue the permits and cancel them from time to time. The permits are granted for 12 months only. The conditions are totally different as regards passengers, as the Minister for Mines knows. One-half of the people coming from the North nowadays come down by car.

Mr. Coverley: That shows how little you know about it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I know the roads that are being built, one of them from Meekatharra, and the expenditure that is being incurred from Yuna northwards, and I know that there are air services twice weekly which bring down passengers. The population of the North is not so numerous that the ships are going to be loaded backwards and forwards.

Mr. Coverley: During the last six months every boat has been full.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Due to the fact that the meat works have been operating, and to tourist traffic.

The Premier: You do not believe in another State ship at all?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not say anything of the kind.

The Premier: Then what is your argument about?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That the authorisation of Parliament should have been obtained. Anyone would think, from the argument of the Minister for Mines, that once the permit was granted, no other permit could be granted.

The Minister for Mines: I would not like our chance of getting it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I say that permits have been cancelled from time to time. I think the Minister for the North-West should hunt up the records.

The Minister for Agriculture: I wish you would make sure first of all.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am speaking from knowledge; the Minister is interjecting from guesswork. I know enough to say that the Minister would have led members astray by indicating that the permit was granted forever. He knows that it is only an annual permit.

The Minister for Mines: I admitted that it was granted for 12 months.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Well, it could have gone for 12 months. This money could better have been expended on assisting some of the industries, and thus helping to bring back prosperity to the State. The point I revert to is that no harm could have been done had the Government waited until Parliament met.

The Minister for Agriculture: It was very urgent.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Everything the Minister does is very urgent. I shall have something to say regarding some of his actions later on. The Supply Bill must go through, but I shall watch all legislation closely.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Sleeman in the Chair,

The PREMIER: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending 30th June, 1937, a sum not exceeding £1,300,000 be granted out of Consolidated Revenue, £600,000 from the General Loan Fund, and £300,000 from the Public Accounts for the purpose of temporary advances to be made by the Treasurer.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Bill Introduced.

In accordance with the foregoing resolution, Bill introduced, and read a first time.

Second Reading.

On motion by the Premier, Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Issue and application of £2,200,000—agreed to.

Clause 2—Sums available for purposes voted by the Legislative Assembly:

Mr. HUGHES: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause:—*Provided that out of the aforesaid sum of £1,300,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund there shall be issued and applied for relief of unemployment and/or for the provision of work in relief of unemployment and for no other purpose the sum of £200,000, being approximately the amount collected and due to be collected under the provisions of the Financial Emergency Tax Act from the 1st July, 1936, to the 30th September, 1936, inclusive.*

The CHAIRMAN: I regret to say that I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. HUGHES: Why not?

The CHAIRMAN: It is out of order; it conflicts with the Constitution Act.

Mr. HUGHES: On what grounds?

The CHAIRMAN: It conflicts with Subsection 8 of Section 46 of the Constitution Act.

Mr. HUGHES: Then I shall have to disagree with your ruling.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

Mr. Hughes: I move—

That the Committee dissents from the Chairman's ruling.

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

The Chairman: The member for East Perth submitted a proviso to Clause 2 of the Supply Bill and I ruled it out of order because it conflicted with Subsection 8 of Section 46 of the Constitution Act.

Mr. Hughes: I very much regret that one of my first acts in the House should be to disagree with the ruling of the Chairman of Committees a gentleman for whom I have the greatest respect and the one man in Western Australia to whom I am deeply grateful for what he has done for me in the past. It would seem an act of ingratitude to challenge his ruling, but I am sure that he is particularly broad-minded, and will dissociate any personal feeling from my action on such an abstract subject as procedure. The hon. member is a layman with a very fine legal mind and a gentleman who, I am sure, would have made a capable lawyer had he cared to adopt the law as a

profession rather than become a politician. On this occasion I think he is putting a somewhat too restricted meaning on the section of the Constitution Act on which he has based his decision. This section reads—

A vote, resolution, or Bill for the appropriation of revenue or moneys shall not be passed unless the purpose of the appropriation has in the same session been recommended by message of the Governor to the Legislative Assembly.

We have already had a Message from the Governor asking the House to appropriate a certain sum of money for carrying on the purposes of the Government, but in that Message there is no specification of the purposes for which that money is required. The Leader of the Opposition drew the inference that certain of that money was to be applied to the purchase of a steamship, while the member for Victoria Park appeared to get hot and bothered about the tramway to Claremont.

Mr. Raphael: I can look after myself; you look after yourself.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Hughes: I am quite capable of looking after myself.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mr. Hughes: In a general way, the Message merely refers to the appropriation of a sum of money without specifying the particular purposes to which that money shall be applied. If such were contrary to the Constitution, we would not be in order in passing the original motion moved. Having agreed to make available in a general way a certain amount of money to be expended in carrying on the functions of government in the interim, I submit that the House is well within its rights in saying that of that money a certain amount shall be applied in a specific way. If that were not so, the position would be that, having got a naked appropriation of a large sum of money, the Governor would not issue his warrant for the expenditure of any of that money because the purposes had not been set out in the Governor's warrant: and to put an extreme technical meaning on the amendment I have moved, as the Chairman of Committees has done, simply means that attached to the Supply Bill there should be a schedule of all the heads of expenditure, the direction in which it is proposed to use this money. All that the Constitution Act requires is, I think, that there should be in a general way a message from the Governor asking for the appropriation of certain moneys for the purpose of carrying on the business of the

country. In the ordinary course of events I would not have taken the extreme step of moving to disagree with the Chairman's ruling, but the question is one of the most important in the State. Although we have emerged from the depression, and are now in the heyday of prosperity—

Mr. Mann: Oh, are we!

Mr. Hughes: I can only refer members to the Premier's London cable. We have this situation, and want rampant all around us. It is owing to the seriousness of the position that I have taken this drastic step.

Point of Order.

The Minister for Lands: On a point of order. Is the hon. member discussing the motion before the Chair, or some other motion? He has moved that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed with on certain grounds. Is the hon. member entitled to go beyond that subject, or must he not stick to the motion before the Chair?

Mr. Speaker: The Minister for Lands has asked for a ruling as to whether the hon. member for East Perth is in order. Of course the hon. member—and he knows it—must discuss the matter before the Chair, which is that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed with. If the hon. member has departed from the strict motion, I hope he will not do so again.

Dissent Resumed.

Mr. Hughes: The last time I was discussing the Constitution Act in this House—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will confine himself to the motion before the Chair.

Mr. Hughes: I submit that one is entitled to deal with the aspect, not only of the Constitution, but also of the necessary implications as the result of the Chairman's ruling. If one be not allowed to deviate a little from the strict matter of the grounds upon which the motion is based, it will be impossible to discuss any such constitutional subject at all. However, I am sorry the Minister for Lands wants to burke this question by hiding behind trivial technicalities. I am more concerned with the welfare and the humanity of the people I represent, than with musty old precedents and trivial technicalities that might be brought forward. In conclusion, I submit that the Chairman of Committees on this occasion is in error in the interpretation he has placed on that section

of the Constitution, and that, having appropriated this money for general purposes, the Government would have sufficient authority to discuss the question and be within the provisions of Subsection 8 of Section 46 of the Constitution Act. It is with great reluctance and my apologies to the Chairman of Committees that I move my motion.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any seconder to the motion?

Mr. McDonald: I will formally second it.

Mr. Sleeman: I can assure the member for East Perth or any other member that I take no umbrage when a member moves to disagree with my ruling. After all, the Chairman is only human, and sometimes I think I am a very poor human being at that. Certainly I would not pretend that all my rulings are correct, but on this occasion it seems to me that the member for East Perth in his desire to do something for someone, has been a little hasty in trying to get it in at this stage, when it is quite out of order.

Hon. C. G. Latham interjected.

Mr. Sleeman: The motive behind the hon. member's motion is no warrant that the motion is correct and in order.

Mr. Speaker: That remark is not in order either.

Mr. Sleeman: I claim that under the Constitution Act the motion of the member for East Perth is not in order.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The member for Murchison will put away that newspaper.

Mr. Sleeman: I took the precaution to look up "May," a Parliamentary authority dear to the heart of the member for East Perth when previously he was in this House. "May" on page 531 of the 13th edition, says this:—

The Committee may vote or refuse a grant or may reduce the amount thereof, either by a reduction of the whole grant or by the omission or reduction of the items of expenditure of which the grant is composed; but the Committee have no other function.

So not only does the hon. member's motion conflict with the Constitution, but we also have "May," that great authority, to say that on this occasion the Chairman's ruling was correct.

Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for East Perth has moved an amendment in the form of a proviso as follows:—

Provided that out of the aforesaid fund of one million three hundred thousand pounds out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund there shall

be issued and applied for the relief of unemployment and/or for the provision of work in relief of unemployment and for no other purpose the sum of two hundred thousand pounds, being approximately the amount collected and due to be collected under the provisions of the Financial Emergency Tax Act from the 1st July, 1936, to the 30th September, 1936, inclusive.

That proviso has been ruled out of order by the Chairman of Committees, following on which the member for East Perth has moved that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed with. As has been already stated by the Chairman of Committees, "May" sets out the functions of a Committee, as follows:—

The Committee may vote or refuse a grant or may reduce the amount thereof either by a reduction on the whole grant or by the omission or reduction of the items of expenditure of which the grant is composed; but the Committee have no other function.

This rule applies to every Parliament under British rule. As has been the usual practice for many years, the Supply voted in this Bill corresponds with the expenditure for the similar period of the last financial year. If this proviso were permitted, the Government would be compelled to introduce a further Supply Bill for the same period to make good the additional amount required in the Bill for the relief of unemployment, which would be increasing the burden on the people. And what is of more importance, it would also be an infringement of the provisions of Subsection 8 of Section 46 of the Constitution Act, 1921, which provides as follows:—

A vote, resolution or Bill for the appropriation of revenue or moneys shall not be passed unless the purpose of the appropriation has in the same session been recommended by message of the Governor to the Legislative Assembly.

Such a message has been read. The hon. member for East Perth must know that as a private member he has no right to increase the amount designated for appropriation, although he may move for a reduction of that amount. The hon. member, under his amendment, would have had a certain amount appropriated for a special purpose, and so the Government would have had to bring down another Bill for the same amount, in order to make good the deficiency. The subsection (8), which I have read, provides that the destination of the Vote shall not be altered by a private member unless he has a Governor's message. The proviso clearly alters the destination of the Vote, and is therefore out of order. I uphold the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. Lambert: If I were the hon. member I would give notice of appeal.

Mr. Hughes: And you would bring the High Court over here.

Committee resumed.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report was adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

FEDERAL SENATE VACANCY.

Parliamentary Joint Sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce to members that, in furtherance of the resolution passed this afternoon, I consulted the President of the Legislative Council and we have fixed Wednesday, the 19th August, at 4.30 p.m., in the Legislative Council Chamber, for the joint sitting of Parliament to elect a Senator.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 6th August.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [7.32]: I desire at the outset to extend my sympathy to the Premier regarding his recent illness and to assure him that we are very pleased to see him back in his place in Parliament. We desire him also to convey to the Minister for Railways (Hon. J. C. Willcock) our regret that he has been laid aside through ill-health and our wish that he will experience a speedy recovery. I extend my congratulations to the new members of this Chamber upon their election. It is unfortunate that after every election we lose some of our friends. While naturally their places are always filled, it is some time before we get to know the new members quite so well.

Mr. Marshall: We are always following in their wake.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Perhaps the hon. member thinks I regard him as a new member because I did not see him in his place at the opening of Parliament. I extend my congratulations to the member for Subiaco

(Mrs. Cardell-Oliver). It is interesting to note that both sides of the House are on an equal footing regarding the presence of lady members. I congratulate her also upon having got into harness so promptly and upon the good work she has been carrying out in endeavouring to provide a milk supply for children who are really in need of it at the city and town schools. She is doing good work and, in addition, rendering great service to the primary producers in encouraging the use of their surplus milk supplies. I extend to her my thanks for what she is doing and wish her great success in the movement. With regard to the Government, we have them again in charge of the Treasury bench. They have not the large majority that they enjoyed during the preceding Parliament and so I presume a great deal more care will now be exercised on the Government side of the House than last year. In the previous Parliament, Opposition members felt that the numbers were very uneven, and at times were prone to regard their prospects of securing desired alterations in legislation almost hopeless. I remind the Government and their supporters that to-day they are not in the happy position of representing a majority of the people of Western Australia.

Government Members: Oh!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the details of votes cast at the last election are reviewed, and allowance is made respecting those seats that were not contested, it will be found that the present Government do not represent a majority of the people.

Mr. Withers: How often have any Government represented a majority of the people?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Opposition side represent a majority of the electors at present, but unfortunately we have not sufficient members returned to place us in power. I draw attention to this fact because some members on the Government side of the House desire all sorts of unfair and unreasonable things at times, and this fact may remind them that while they may ask and expect those things, they are not entitled to them.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: You are not blaming us for that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, a great deal more than the hon. member may expect. I doubt whether the Labour Party had a policy at the latest election. I read the election speeches of the Premier and his supporters,

and I doubt very much if they had a policy. If there were one, it was: Take us as we have been during the last three years.

The Premier: I would have lost the election if I had had a policy.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Perhaps so.

The Premier: Of course, I say that jokingly.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It cannot be said on this occasion that the Government received the endorsement of the people in respect of legislation they may introduce. One unfortunate aspect, from the Government point of view, was the East Perth by-election. During the course of that campaign, the Premier was foolish enough to associate the Government with the contest. I was interested in the report published in the "West Australian" of the 7th May last in which the following statement appeared:—

"In this election it is not a question of any candidate. It is not Mr. Kenneally. It is not Mr. Hughes. It is the Government." With these words the Premier (Mr. P. Collier), speaking at an open-air meeting last night, identified the Government with the East Perth by-election campaign, in which the Minister for Employment is opposed by Mr. T. J. Hughes. . . . "It is the Government," he repeated. "If you do not want a Labour Government, if you want to return to the conditions of three years ago, you know what to do."

As the Premier decided to make the East Perth by-election a Government contest, instead of a contest between two men, I presume he will be prepared to admit that the result of the election was a vote of no-confidence in the Government.

The Premier: I will resign to-morrow!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know that the Premier is so anxious to resign as all that, but he will resort to these jokes of his! We shall leave him on the Treasury bench for a while longer until we secure a more substantial majority than we possess at present. It is foolish to associate a Government with a by-election because if an adverse result is recorded, it does not reflect great credit upon the Administration. I was interested enough to attend one of the East Perth election meetings to ascertain what the policy of the Government was, if it could be said that there was a policy submitted to the electors. The policy that was submitted to them was that there was to be a magnificent drive along the Swan River from Barrack-street to beyond Maylands! I hope that the Government will accept the decision of the East Perth electors as an intimation that they do not desire that work

done. On the contrary, I hope that the Government will remember that the East Perth electors, by their decision, endorsed the policy that the Opposition advanced when we contended that if there were to be any such beautification scheme along the river foreshore, the task should be left to the local authorities concerned and that State funds should not be used for such an undertaking. I do not desire to raise another issue that has been discussed earlier, but I would remind the Premier that during the East Perth by-election campaign no question was raised about a new State steamer for the North-West coastal run, nor was there any reference to duplicating the tram service to Claremont or the provision of trolley buses. We can congratulate the Premier on his balanced Budget. After all, we need not be unfair, but at the same time we can claim that the Premier has been extremely lucky. I have gone through the details of the grants made available by the Commonwealth Government to the State last year, and I find that they represent a total of £2,644,382. That is a very large amount of money and the citizens of this State ought to be grateful to the Federal Government.

Mr. Hegney: Was that the total for one year?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. That money represented a direct gift to the people and has not to be repaid. No interest has to be paid on that amount, which does not include £150,000 made available for rural relief and the adjustment of debts. So I consider the Government have been extremely lucky. Then again, in going over the returns available to members, I notice that the Government exceeded their estimated revenue by over £600,000. We predicted last year that the revenue from the financial emergency tax would be considerably more than the Premier estimated, and I mentioned £800,000 as the probable amount that would be received by the Government. Even my estimate was below the return actually received. That tax represents a big drain on the people, but it has enabled the Premier to balance his Budget. I am wondering how much longer we are going to have that form of taxation. I am always interested to note that the Government

take the credit for the absorption of the unemployed and for men getting back to work. I do not know that they are entitled to any credit on that score; I do not think they are. The economic conditions have altered not only in this State but throughout Australia. I know what the gold mining industry has done. When we were in office there were 3,000 or 4,000 men engaged in the industry and I think the number now is something over 12,000.

The Premier: Has that anything to do with the policy due to the change of Government?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Nothing whatever.

Mr. Patrick: What about the increased price of the product?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The volume of employment is determined by the value of the product won from the soil. Gold has doubled in value during that period, and the industry has attracted large amounts of capital to the State. It is a good investment for money and the industry provides much employment.

The Premier: What about the amount of assistance your Government gave them?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I admit that a great deal of assistance could not be given. Neither did the present Government give the men much assistance.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, oh!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Government certainly obtained some money from the Commonwealth Government and sent men out prospecting on 15s. a week. Somewhere about £100,000 was made available to the Minister for Mines for prospecting.

The Minister for Mines: You are a long way out if you say £100,000.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Last year the amount was £40,000 and the year before it was £15,000 for metalliferous mining. Some time before that there was a large sum of money, of which a great deal was made available to the Minister for Mines to assist mining.

The Minister for Lands: But you said £100,000.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am referring to the three years.

The Minister for Mines: We did not get a shilling for two years.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister received £40,000 last year.

The Minister for Mines: We did nothing of the kind.

The Premier: Remember there was a change in policy.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There was no change in policy. The Premier knows that.

The Premier: Of course I know it too well.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I should like to point out how the value of the product determines the standard of living. No doubt at present the mining areas provide a better standard of living than do any other areas.

The Premier: Did you send out 2,000 men looking for gold?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We sent out as many as we could with the money available. We received only £220,000 from financial emergency taxation whereas last year the Government received £827,000.

The Premier: You cannot put that over me.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is a fact.

The Premier: We shall see.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The increased loan funds available to the Government also enabled them to provide a great deal more money. I was mentioning that the prosperity of the goldfields is due to the increased price obtainable for the product and that there is a better standard of living on the goldfields than elsewhere in the State. For those permanently employed in secondary industries in the city, I admit that the standard of living is very good, but what about the part-time workers, the men who to-day must be very much below the bread line? Coming to the agricultural areas, a great proportion of the farmers are in a worse position than are the people in the city. The niggardly amount of money allowed to the agriculturists of the State during the last 12 months is not even a pittance. A sum of £6 a month has been the amount for a married man on a farm and £4 for a single man, out of which it has been necessary to buy duplicate parts and everything else. If we could spend some of last year's surplus to assist the farming industry, it would bring prosperity to the State quicker than anything else.

The Minister for Lands: Your Government gave the farmers only £1 a month.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It was not £1 a month only. None of the money now being distributed comes from the State Treasurer.

The Minister for Lands: The amount was £4 a month.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister for Lands changes his mind every few minutes. That is the trouble with him.

The Minister for Lands: We are giving the farmers £6 a month.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A little while ago the Minister said we gave the farmers £1 a month and now he is up to £4 a month. Presently he will make it £10 a month.

The Minister for Lands: You gave them £4 a month and we are giving them £6 a month.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: None of that money came from the State Treasurer. It was contributed by the other wheat farmers of the State. If we had had this amount distributed, it would have been no less than 3s. 3d. per acre, the same as in the other States of Australia, but the arrangements made with the State Government were that the wheatgrowers of this State should get 1s. 10½d. and that the balance should be a contribution to the men in necessitous circumstances. The point I want to make is that the Government should use some of the funds to enable the farmers to recover their position. Even if this be termed a selfish motive, its effect will be reflected throughout the State. The Premier will remember the prosperity that the State enjoyed when harvests were large and prices were high. We are able to say to-day that wheatgrowing is profitable at 4s. 2d. a bushel, the price ruling at present, if the farmers were in a position to avail themselves of it. But very little fallowing will be done in the north-eastern part of the wheat belt, or even in other parts, because the farmer has not the capital to enable him to do it. Therefore I am going to ask that the surplus money which the Treasurer has—

The Premier: Which surplus?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The £88,000 surplus at the end of the financial year. If the figures for the first month of the current financial year may be taken as an indication, the prospect is that the Premier will end the year with another substantial surplus.

The Premier: A good deal of the surplus of the past year has gone to the farmers.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I looked carefully through the figures published in the newspaper at the end of the financial year and found only £48,000. I could not trace any more, and I should like the Premier to tell me how he makes up the £200,000 men-

tioned in his statement to the Press a little while ago. I wish to impress upon the Government that we are justified in making money available to assist the wheatgrowing industry. I admit that the money must be advanced with care, but it ought to be advanced, and if it were, I believe it would bring prosperity to the State quicker than anything else. When a man attempts to buy duplicate parts and pay for fuel for carting water and for a hundred and one other things, he loses heart. When he finds himself in financial difficulties he has little heart to tackle the work that should be done. Coming now to the Government's employment policy, I do not consider that very great efforts have been made by the Government. I think theirs has been a policy of wait and see. No attempt appears to have been made to absorb men into permanent employment. A great deal has been said about using goods produced in Western Australia. The figures for last year are not encouraging. The value of our imports for the year just closed exceeded that for the previous year by £1,800,000. We might be able to do more in that direction than we are doing to-day. It is no use talking about using Western Australian goods if we do not encourage people to use them.

Mr. Withers: Do you blame the Government for that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not want the Government to take the credit for solving the unemployment problem, because it is not yet solved. I got the figures from last year's returns showing that in the aggregate approximately £1,800,000 more was sent out of the State for overseas and Eastern States goods than was the case the year before. A considerable proportion of that money could have been kept in the State. I admit the national income has increased considerably, but if it had gone back to what it was in 1928-29 there would not be so many unemployed. I thought the policy of the Government was to get these men back to work quickly. That is what they advocated when they were on this side of the House. They said it was better to have men in full-time employment because such men would provide employment for others. That does not appear to be the principle underlying the matter to-day. The position cannot be sat-

isfactory until our agriculturists are more prosperous. To-day they cannot employ anyone. If they were more prosperous, they could employ a number of men. The best employment is not Government employment but that of a private nature. In such employment men earn a great deal more than they do with the Government, and give a great deal more in the way of service. I do not think the Government have any agricultural policy. The member for Irwin-Moore (Hon. P. D. Ferguson) last year stated that the Government had no agricultural conscience. He was quite right.

The Minister for Lands: He was sorry for it afterwards.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You were sorry.

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member was sorry he had spoken.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Government have no agricultural policy. The same thing applies in the case of group settlement. Parliament must do something to bring these industries into a more prosperous condition. There can be no better opportunity than is offering to-day. If that were done, they would be able to absorb more men into employment, and greater prosperity for the State would ensue. I hope the Minister for Lands will present to the House the report upon the operations of the board that was appointed under the Rural Relief Act.

The Minister for Lands: It is already there.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I shall be glad to see it. I did not know it was there. It is so difficult to hear the Minister sometimes when he is speaking, especially when a lot of talk is going on around the Chamber. I protest against the distribution of the money in the manner that is being done to-day. We find that the secured creditors are receiving up to 20s. in the pound, and that those people who are rendering great service to the man on the land, the small storekeeper, doctors, chemists, etc., only receive 2s. in the pound. A much fairer distribution than that could be made. Why is the secured creditor not dealt with? Many of these people have had their accounts paid by the Associated Banks, and are in a happy position compared with the men who have probably rendered as much assistance to the indus-

try but who happen to have been unsecured. In the other States where the authorities are dealing with the same question it has been necessary to find additional funds. I do not think the Government of this State have made any attempt to find additional money with which to carry on those who are worth carrying on but have had their credit stopped. While the Government are competing with private industry, interest is going up. If it goes up to six or seven per cent., these people will have no hope of carrying on, and might as well leave their farms to-day.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Other people, too, have no hope of carrying on.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They have more hope than the farmers have. The farmers' work has been carried out in the interests of the State, and we ought to use this money to reduce the load of debt upon them.

The Premier: I think you are an absent-minded young man.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think so.

The Premier: I know what the Government have done.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What?

The Minister for Lands: We will remind you later on.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister is always ready to remind us about something. This £1,300,000 which has been granted to the State for three years for the rehabilitation of our industry is an innovation. I hope the Minister will look into the matter and see that a better distribution of the money is made, and that those people who are secured shall contribute something to the rehabilitation of the industry as well as those who are not secured. Nothing I can say can inform the Government of the position more clearly than the returns submitted to-day by the Minister for Lands. That hon. gentleman informed the House that on the 30th June last there were no fewer than 2,791 farming clients of the Agricultural Bank. That represents probably one-fifth of all the farms controlled by the Bank. There is something radically wrong.

The Minister for Lands: How many farms are there in the country?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: About 10,000.

The Minister for Lands: Wheat farms?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There are not many involved outside the wheat areas.

The Minister for Lands: Are there not?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There are some in the South-West.

The Premier: How many came into the hands of the Bank when you were in office?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The net increase was 722. That figure is taken from the reports of the Agricultural Bank. During the last three years defaulted securities in the hands of the Bank increased by 1,576. That should inform the Government that something is radically wrong. Every time a defaulted security comes into the hands of the Bank, it depreciates the values of the securities operated by the Bank. How often has the Minister for Agriculture been through the agricultural areas in the last year? He has not been through the drought-stricken areas once, except to a show last year, and he could not devote much time to it then, because the House was sitting.

The Premier: And he may know more than you know when you attend a show surrounded by a lot of your supporters.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Premier may interject like that if he wishes. If a Minister wants first-hand information, he must go into the country himself. It is all very well to get paper information. When the Premier wants to know something about the mining industry, he goes to have a look at it. How often has the Minister for Lands visited the group settlement areas to study the problems and difficulties there? If he has been, it was only to make a hurried trip so that the settlers did not see him. I have been told that that was the case. Ministers should go to the agricultural areas and study the problems confronting the farmers, and so get a personal understanding of their difficulties.

The Minister for Lands: I think I have a problem of my own.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister has never encountered the problems these people have to meet. I have heard the Minister talk, in this Chamber, about his ragged trousers and other difficulties; but the conditions of to-day are totally different. The national debt is now heaped on to everything produced and purchased by the farmer. Formerly a pound was worth a good deal more than it is worth to-day. At present to obtain credit is an utterly different

thing from what it was when the Minister for Lands was a boy. Since he has grown up, he has had no trouble whatever with regard to his farm.

The Minister for Lands: Neither have you!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have not spent the length of time in this Chamber that the Minister has. While Parliament is in recess, it is fair for Ministers to go out and see what the problems of the industry are. There would not be half the trouble in the group settlements that there is to-day if Ministers would go out and meet the settlers.

The Premier: The Minister should go out and meet the settlers?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. Why not?

The Premier: Because that is outside the province of Ministers.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Why is it outside the province of Ministers?

The Premier: Because of the Agricultural Bank Act.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I anticipated that. I wish to find out who determines the agricultural policy of this State. Is it the Agricultural Bank Board now? That would be an absolute innovation. Is there any Government policy in regard to the matter? Have the Government appointed an Agricultural Bank Board of Commissioners to determine Agricultural Bank policy and group settlement policy?

The Premier: No. Be fair!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Government determine the policy?

The Premier: The board were appointed under an Act passed by this Parliament.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But not appointed to fix policy.

The Premier: It would suit you all right to go down there and make promises to the settlers.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have never made any such suggestion. But at least Ministers might go down and see personally what the problems are. Then the settlers would have a great deal more confidence in the Government than they have at present.

The Premier: These Ministers will not do that. You are most unfair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not unfair. The Premier: Outrageously unfair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not outrageously unfair. I am fair.

The Premier: The old game of political influence in the Agricultural Bank which suits your Party all right!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Does it suit our Party all right? I say definitely that the Government are responsible for policy and that they ought to go into the country and see what the problems are.

The Premier: Be honest.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am honest.

The Premier: You are not.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What I contend now having listened to the Premier is that the Agricultural Bank Board were appointed to accept responsibility for everything. However, they will not do so while I am here.

The Premier: Did you not know what was in the Bill?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Premier and his Ministers are responsible for policy.

The Premier: Did you not understand the Bill when it went through?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I tried to get the Minister for Lands to understand it. No Minister of the Crown is going to shelve responsibility on to me.

The Premier: You won't get away with that claptrap!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Premier can be offensive but that furnishes no reply to what I say.

The Premier: You can go for your life!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am on the side of the group settler. I say that to-day he is very badly treated.

The Premier: Are you on his side whether he is right or wrong?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is about time that members of the Government went down to the groups and saw what the position really is.

The Premier: Are you with the settler, right or wrong?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We have the present Chairman of the Agricultural Bank Commission saying, "This is only the work of a few agitators." I remember him when he sat in this Chamber and talked about agitators. Was there ever in this State a bigger agitator than he used to be? There never was a bigger agitator in Western Australia. I will say there is no man in this State who did more agitating in the interests of the workers than that gentleman did. And now he attacks settlers who try to defend their rights. He knows they have no income and have had no chance of getting an income. Yet he demands payments

from them before they have had a chance to get any money. That is perfectly true.

The Premier: Perfectly wrong.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The same demand is made on the agriculturists. The Premier says it is their responsibility. The Government have to accept the responsibility. They may have put through an Act of Parliament, but I cannot forget the gentleman sitting here knowing very well, while the Bill went through, that he might accept the position of chairman, a £2,000 a year job.

The Premier: That is a dirty thing to say.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Is it?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There will be more said about it presently. I will not allow it to be stated that I used this question for political claptrap.

The Premier: That is worthy of you.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I gave the chairman a chance. He has had 12 months, yet he has never been in the farming districts to see what the position is there. When the Bill in question was going through, the argument of the Minister for Lands was that the former trustees did not travel enough, did not meet their clients. What have these Commissioners done? They have never been to the agricultural districts at all. I want to know who determines the agricultural policy of this State. Is it the board, or is it the Government? I maintain that the responsibility is that of the Government.

The Minister for Mines: It is nearly time the people of this State rose up and said that no more money was to be squandered.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In reply to that interjection I suggest to the Minister that he look after the Mines Department. He knows nothing about agriculture.

Mr. Marshall: He probably knows more about it than you do.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Hon. members opposite are getting a little annoyed, but there is no justification for it. In the present position there is something radically wrong. The Minister for Mines talks that sort of stuff but does he know what the agriculturists provide for this State? Who does he think provided the cash for the buildings in the city of Perth?

The Minister for Mines: The workers on the goldfields, and the price of gold, probably.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What about the time when the goldfields were depopulated?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member had better address the Chair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am trying to, Sir. I say definitely that the Government have got to accept responsibility for agricultural policy and group settlement policy, responsibility for the south-western portion of the State. When the settlers there are placed in a position of being able to do some good for themselves, we shall all reap the benefit of it. It is no use to say that the farmer is wrong. If this were a business proposition, there would not be one of those farms on the hands of the Government. It is not a profitable investment; otherwise the farms would be taken up. Surely that is a reply to the argument used on the opposite side. It is useless to say that the farmers and group settlers are wasters.

The Premier: Who said that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It has been said repeatedly.

The Minister for Mines: I have not heard it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then the Minister for Mines has been deaf for a long time.

The Minister for Mines: If so I—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Mines will keep order.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The chairman of the Bank Commission said that this was the work of agitators. Of course he was qualified to express himself on the subject of agitators.

The Minister for Mines: And you are qualified to call the settlers wasters. You are the only man that ever called them that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Certain gentlemen are so unaccustomed to speak the truth that one wearies of taking notice of them.

The Premier: It is the first time in your life that you have supported agitators.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I contend they are not agitators. There must be some reason for their trouble, for you could not get them all to come out without a cause for it. Let the Minister go down there and see what the trouble is. The settlers are not ferocious people; they will meet him without violence.

The Minister for Lands: I have been down there dozens of times and I know the position well.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Well, why not try to do something for the settlers?

The Minister for Lands: It is a matter for the Bank.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And the Bank authorities say they cannot do anything. I think of that enterprise of sending 21 policemen to evict a man and his wife and seven children! I do not know the facts of the case, but it seems extraordinary that a man who used to stand in this House and put up arguments against that kind of action should send 21 policemen to evict a man and his wife and seven children.

The Premier: The Minister for Lands, who has been there so often, knows much more about the matter than you do. You are playing to the gallery.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If I am playing to the gallery—which I do not admit—I am not the only one to do that sort of thing. I say the Premier was playing to the gallery when he was going to solve the agriculturists' problems by writing a cheque for £100,000. He said he was going to the Loan Council about it. That was not playing to the gallery, was it? No, of course not. But I say here is the Premier's chance now to write out a cheque for £100,000 and put the group settlers in a position to make good. The chance is here now, and all that is required is for the Government to say to those settlers, "You shall have six months' exemption from interest, after which you will be charged 3 per cent. for five years, and after that you will have to get on your farms and on your feet." Then we should be providing money for the State, because those settlers would have the means whereby to meet their commitments. However, I am not to be told that the trouble down there is caused by one or two individuals. It is all right for the Premier to say it is propaganda, but he knows it is quite true. Another contention respecting the producers will probably annoy the Premier still further. I say he had no right to associate himself with the James case before the Privy Council. I think it was in 1926 that a Bill was introduced in this House to provide for the marketing of dried fruits. No one knows better than the Premier the great beneficial effect that has had on the fruit-growing industry, for it converted a depressed industry into one of reasonable prosperity. I give the Government credit for having done that. Last year or the year before, we had introduced another Bill, to give the dairymen the same right to market their produce. But we knew very well in 1926 that if ever the position was tested we could not keep out from this State dried

fruits coming from other States. Indeed, the Federal Government were approached by the State Governments of Australia and asked to pass supplementary legislation.

The Minister for Lands: Not by us.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the premier represented you in South Australia.

The Premier: Not a bit of it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I know it was one of the Ministers. I feel certain it was the Minister for Lands. He knew it was necessary to have supplementary legislation. I can quite understand Mr. Ogilvie, the Premier of Tasmania, standing up, but his State, Tasmania, had nothing to gain. In that it is situated quite differently from Western Australia. Why did not our Premier associate himself with Mr. Forgan Smith, the Premier of Queensland? Simply because Mr. Forgan Smith said it was necessary to have this additional legislation. It is extraordinary that after passing legislation to help our dried fruit industries, and after seeing the result of it, we should find money to brief counsel and so associate ourselves with a band of merchants.

The Premier: I will answer that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Well, I want an answer to it.

The Premier: And I will give it to you.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In Tasmania they have no dried fruits, and in consequence the price of dried fruits went up. Again, they had no export of butter. Certainly their dairymen received a little benefit from that legislation, but Mr. Ogilvie's State does not export any butter, and so I can quite understand his saying that they had nothing to gain except increasing the price of goods to their own people, and had to import those goods from other States. I can understand Mr. Ogilvie's attitude, but I cannot understand the attitude of this State. To get any benefit from the present situation, we shall have to agree to amend Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act.

The Premier: Have you ever studied that section?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes.

The Premier: Yet you do not understand why I objected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I could quite understand it if Section 92 was being used exclusively by the Federal Government;

but they only came into it on the advice of the States.

The Premier: That is not right.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, this legislation was passed in this State before the Federal Government came into it.

The Premier: You do not understand Section 92.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course I do. Section 92 was never used, except for the benefit of the States.

The Premier: It could have been used against them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But it never was so used.

The Premier: It could be so used in the future.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That would be the time to take the action, if the section were being abused. It would not be too late. What I am worried about is that we have built up a degree of prosperity for certain of our primary producers and, unfortunately, it has been torn down by the decision of the Privy Council. I do not know whether we can make up some patchwork of it between the States, but certainly if any merchant decides to unload produce on this State, he can do it in spite of us, whereas under that legislation we did have some protection. This brings me to the question of a home consumption price for wheat. It was introduced by the Federal Government last year to assist this State to get a better price for those of our farmers who are producing wheat, to give them some compensation for the high prices they had to pay for their purchases from sheltered industries. That was the intention, but this has broken it down. I do not believe in an excise duty on wheat; I do not think it is fair, because if the excise duty is fixed during a session of Parliament and the price of wheat goes up, the consumer will be called upon to pay the extra charge. It is all right for the Premier to shake his head.

The Premier: You know you are talking rubbish.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not talking rubbish. The Premier did not realise what he was doing when he associated himself with one of the States that was getting no benefit at all from the legislation.

The Premier: Oh yes, I know.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: At any rate I hope that our dried fruit and dairying industries will not be allowed to revert to the chaotic conditions that obtained prior to the introduction of that legislation. I am anxious that the Government shall safeguard the position. It is too late to complain, but it was certainly annoying to find the Premier associating himself with outside interests to defeat legislation that his Government introduced and which he supported. That is the effect of the appeal to the Privy Council.

Mr. Thorn: The Premier hobnobbing with capitalistish merchants!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I want to ask the Minister for Agriculture if he proposes to carry out his threat announced on the 15th July last when he intimated that he would not receive any more deputations until the end of the year. If he intends to adhere to that attitude, every small trouble that could easily be settled in his office will have to be dealt with on the floor of this House. The Premier and I have been members of this Chamber for many years and I do not think either he or I can remember any other Minister refusing to receive deputations between July and the end of the year. Even the Premier himself would not adopt such an attitude. Does the Minister for Agriculture propose to adhere to his threat?

Mr. Thorn: I do not think he meant it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I certainly hope he did not. It will simply mean that many pettifogging arguments will have to be thrashed out here whereas they could be dealt with easily in his office. If he adheres to his threat he will do something that has never been heard of before in this State. I hope he will reconsider his attitude. Perhaps he is overworked. I do not know why the Premier gave him so many departments to administer. He is in charge of agriculture, education, police, the North-West and in addition, I think, exercises general supervision.

The Premier: And he holds them down just as well as you held down one department.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That may be so, but I certainly did not shut my door to the general public for six months of the year.

The Premier: At any rate he is holding down all those jobs as well as you held down one.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Perhaps so.

Mr. Wilson: He does not want to waste time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If I desire to introduce a deputation to the Minister for Agriculture, I shall expect him to receive us. I do not say that I shall fix the date and time; that will be for the Minister to determine.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: He will probably make an exception in your case.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Next I want to make a complaint regarding the refusal of the Agricultural Department to supply information to a newspaper published in the Eastern States. The "Land" newspaper of Sydney communicated with the Agricultural Department on the 7th March last with a request that information, to be contained in about 400 words, should be supplied by the officers of the Agricultural Department regarding various phases of agriculture in this State. There was no suggestion as to what information was to be submitted but the desire was that the information should be published in the Sydney journal. The Director of Agriculture (Mr. Sutton) replied to the Associate Editor of the "Land" newspaper on the 18th March as follows:—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 7th inst., asking to be supplied with certain information regarding various phases of agriculture in this State. I regret having to advise that it will not be possible to arrange for officers of this department to comply with your request.

The Premier: Is not that paper the official organ of the political Country Party of New South Wales?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know that it is.

The Premier: Of course you know.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Even if it be so, the journal has a circulation. Does the Premier suggest that if I had some information of interest to the workers, I should not use the official medium of the workers of this State? Of course I would do so. If the "Land" circulates amongst the agriculturists of New South Wales, should not the Director of the Agricultural Department avail himself of the invitation and thereby use the paper as a means by which to advertise this State? There was no question of payment for the insertion of the information.

The Premier: Surely it is the job of your political party to supply such information, and not that of Government officers or a Government department.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is a difference between a political party and the activities of the Agricultural Department. All the paper desired was some information about agriculture in Western Australia. The Minister had a wonderful opportunity to advertise the State and had he availed himself of that opportunity, it might have been the means of disposing of some of our vacant farms to people now in New South Wales.

The Minister for Employment: Why did not the paper employ a journalist to supply the information?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Why does not every paper do so?

The Minister for Employment: They do.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Decidedly they do not. Frequently the departmental officials are communicated with by various journals asking for information. Then again the information that would have been supplied by the agricultural officials might possibly have been more reliable. It seems to me that a golden opportunity was missed to secure an advertisement in the Sydney paper. We have the "Agricultural Gazette" published departmentally, and I should think the editor of that journal could have furnished clippings if he had not time to type out the mere 400 words that were desired. It was certainly bad business and displayed a lack of courtesy. There is a clamour for land in New South Wales and I noticed the other day that over 1,000 applications had been received for one block. Here we have abundant land available for settlement and the Minister for Agriculture should have availed himself of this opportunity to secure an advertisement.

The Premier: What State was that in?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In New South Wales. If the Minister had availed himself of this opportunity to secure a good advertisement for the State, he might have disposed of a number of our vacant properties. There is no demand locally because of the smallness of our population. The goldfields absorbed a large number of our people who might have taken up land and in the circumstances a golden oppor-

tunity was missed. I hope the Minister will see to it that such an incident does not recur. Now I desire to refer to the question of starting price betting.

The Premier: Something over which your Government had no control?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That can be said of the present Government, but to a greater degree. Judging by the reports that appear every Monday in the "West Australian," this form of activity has become a means of revenue to the present Government. I do not know whether the Act requires to be altered, but certainly it looks to me, having regard to the fines collected every week, that something should be done.

The Premier: It is the same old Act.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is a difference between what we did and what the Government are doing. The Premier knows that we arrested men who frequented these betting places, and they were taken to the lock-up and fined £1 for having been on premises used for the purposes of gambling.

The Premier: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course, that was the position. We arrested not only the men who were running the premises, but those who were there for the purpose of betting. That was stopped.

The Premier: The Government have given no instructions whatsoever to the police.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then I want to know why the police have altered their methods. I do not know whether the Commissioner of Police has drawn his Minister's attention to the fact that they are not preventing starting price activities by any means. Evidently the business is illegal, and the fines are imposed to prevent individuals from carrying it on. It is not preventing them at all. I will not support any Bill having for its object the legalising of betting shops in the city, but if it is the Government's intention that there should be legalised betting shops, let us have the measure. If not, for goodness' sake, let the Government use means to stop the betting, and not permit the continuance of the present state of affairs in order to collect revenue.

The Premier: That is worthy of you!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Every Monday there is a large sum of money collected from

that source, and the legislature never intended that should be so. The fines were not enacted for that purpose; they were enacted to deter people from betting. The Commissioner of Police should inform the Minister that the fines are no deterrent and that some other means should be adopted to prevent such betting.

Mr. Lambert: What would you suggest as an alternative?

Mr. Withers: Would you reduce the fines?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Probably the member for Bunbury would reduce the fines.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am told that there is an arrangement amongst starting price bookmakers under which they pool a certain amount of money every week and pay the fines from that fund.

The Minister for Mines: That is inside information of which I know nothing.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Does the Minister for Mines infer that he knows everything that is to be known about starting price betting? I do not think any Minister knows everything about it. The Minister for Mines should not interject in that way. If starting price betting is against the law, it is time we stopped it. If necessary, we should tighten up the law.

The Minister for Mines interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The men who go along to the starting price bookmakers with their few shillings are those who are paying the fines. The Premier is aware of that, and I know he does not desire its continuance. He is as strongly opposed to this sort of thing as I am.

The Premier: I know there has been no departure from the practice adopted when you were in office.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know whether there has been or not, but it is time something was done.

The Premier: I assure you there has not been any departure.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will also show the Premier, when a suitable opportunity occurs, that men were arrested during our time in office, and that this is not being done to-day.

The Premier: It happened all along when you were in office.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But I say we arrested people. I do not know whether instructions were given to the police to refrain from making arrests. In our time people were frequently arrested for the

offence, and a noise was made in the House about it on one occasion. The police said they had to make arrests because otherwise it was difficult to get the names of offenders; they could not rely upon the names given in the shops. To-day they are not making arrests. I consider that a lot of people would be deterred from patronising those places if the police made arrests.

Mr. Marshall: Did the police make arrests during your regime for illegal betting on racecourses?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member knows they did not.

Mr. Marshall: Why not?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That has not been done for a long time. Of course, the member for Murchison is quite right. Legally, I believe that people are not entitled to bet on racecourses, but successive Governments have taxed the bookmakers on their operations, and that has been tantamount to admitting their right to bet on racecourses. I wish to correct a statement or two made by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants). I desire to extend to the hon. member latitude similar to that extended to me when I first entered this House. After all, the hard-headed members usually treat the newer members kindly. The hon. member stated that the basic wage employees on the goldfields should not be subject to the provisions of the financial emergency tax, that the Bill introduced in 1934 provided exemption for workers on the basic wage, but was altered. That statement is not correct.

Mr. Styants: Neither is your statement. I did not say 1934.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am referring to 1934 and 1935, in which years Bills were introduced. In 1934, the Bill introduced by Mr. McCallum provided for a rate of 4d. in the pound where the amount of salary or wages was £3 12s. per week or more, and did not exceed £4 10s. a week "in the case of a person who proves to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that he is regularly maintaining or contributing to the maintenance of one or more members of his family who is or are resident and domiciled in Western Australia." In the Bill introduced by the Premier on the 11th September, 1935, the wording was exactly the same. If the hon. member, as a student of politics on the goldfields, gathered the impression that another place altered the measure, I wish to tell him that was not so. The

Bill was passed in another place without amendment.

Mr. Styants: The goldfields worker on the basic wage pays the tax, but not so the worker in the metropolitan area.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Anyone receiving over £3 12s. pays the tax, but it is idle to blame another place for making an alteration when in fact it made no alteration. The Bill was passed by both Houses as introduced by the Government. If the hon. member wishes to give effect to his ideas, he will have to move for an exemption above the basic wage. The hon. member also expressed a desire that a fair rents Bill should be introduced because people on the goldfields were paying £2 a week for old houses constructed of weatherboard and scrap-iron. If that is so, there is a wonderful investment offering to anybody possessed of money. There must be something radically wrong; otherwise the opening would have attracted a good deal of capital. If the hon. member secures the passage of legislation for a fair rents court on the goldfields, it might have the effect of deterring building and thus people of the goldfields will find themselves in a still more difficult position. It would be better to get the Government to agree to a Bill, such as that introduced in another place last year, providing for the erection of workers' homes on the goldfields. Since then the Premier has agreed to the proposal, and, under his instructions, 40 homes have been built.

The Premier: I have not instructed the board.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Premier invited the members of the board to go to the goldfields; there was a friendly gathering, and they said they would build homes there.

The Premier: I was not present.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the Premier invited them to go to the goldfields.

The Premier: Yes, I did.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And they built 40 houses. It seems to me that should be a very good investment for the Workers' Homes Board. While I do not suppose it would pay to build elaborate houses there, seeing that the goldfields are a doubtful proposition—when the price of gold is up, houses are built, and when the price of gold falls, houses are pulled down and carted away—a cheap class of comfortable cottage could be provided, and I think the Workers' Homes Board might undertake the work. That appears to be the best remedy. The

board should build another 100 or 150 homes, and thus the difficulty would be overcome. A rental of £2 a week for a house built of weatherboard and scrap iron is too much, but a fair rents court might have an effect the reverse of what the hon. member desires. I offer that suggestion in a friendly spirit to the hon. member, and warn him that care is necessary. As to the Transport Board, I wish to tell the Minister that I am absolutely and keenly disappointed in that body.

Mr. Withers: In what way?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Here in the city they are making no provision at all in many places for transport. I do not wish to think that I am trespassing on his preserves, but in that suburb people are being forced to build garages and use motor cars. A little while ago an alteration was made for a bus service to Claremont, and one would have thought that the buses would have taken the route along which the people live. Instead of that, the buses are run down a road with long golf links on one side and the people have to cross the golf course in order to use the buses. A street further down passes through the heart of the suburb and would have been the more convenient route for the bus. I should like the Minister to have a look at that route and say whether he would run a bus service there. If people have a few pounds to spare, they will buy a car, and thus traffic congestion in the city will be increased. The Transport Board ought to take into consideration the traffic congestion in the city, and ought to look at these places and provide the facilities where they are wanted. That would be cheaper for all concerned. Evidently the board has decided that our apiarists may cart their bees by truck, and may transport their honey to the place where it is treated, clarified, etc.

The Minister for Works: Had you not better leave that to the member for Swan?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This applies to my own district. Immediately the apiarists desire to market their honey, they have to send it by train, because they are not allowed to send it by motor truck. The result is that these people will be forced to establish depots in the city. We do not want that. I hope the Minister will look into that question and see that it

would be much better if industries of this nature could be maintained in their own district. People importing honey have an advantage over the local producers, in that they have only to ship it to Fremantle and put it straight on the market. The local producers, on the other hand, have to send their honey by train whereas it could be far more conveniently transported by motor truck. It is a small industry, but it is worth while assisting. I should like the Minister for Health to furnish us with a statement regarding the Hospital Fund. Why should the Perth Hospital have to ask people of the State to eat stew on Sunday? I know the Minister is very jealous regarding the fund he controls. Some six years ago, when he was Minister for Health before, he got from the Treasury £110,000 with which to maintain his hospitals, and he did very well with the limited means at his disposal.

The Minister for Health: Is that all I got?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes.

The Minister for Health: What about the £46,000 from the entertainments tax?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He did get £38,000, but the fees that were then collected from the hospitals went into general revenue, and the two amounts practically balanced.

The Minister for Health: Did they?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hospital fund must be worth close on £200,000 annually now.

The Minister for Health: Approximately that this year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And yet one of the most important hospitals in the State has to ask the people to eat stew on Sunday although they have been taxed all through the year to support the hospital. There must be something wrong that there should be this shortage in hospital revenue. There ought to be sufficient money coming in to maintain our hospitals decently. If there is not sufficient money the Lotteries Commission ought to be able to assist in the maintenance of the hospital.

The Minister for Health: Are they not doing so?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would point out that that is merely a voluntary form of taxation. The Government do get £60,000 out of it. I know that money does not go into

Consolidated Revenue, but it relieves the Treasury in many ways through not having to give so much to charities, orphanages, and the like.

The Premier: The principles of the Act have not been altered. They are the same as they ever were.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They are the same, but they have not been carried out.

The Premier: They have been carried out.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister for Health knows that they have not been carried out. I told him last time the Bill came before us that we ought to amend the Act. I did not desire to create the impression that I was arguing against the Act, because some of the objects on which money was being spent were worthy of support.

The Premier: Are you talking of the Lotteries Commission or the hospital?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am talking of the Lotteries Commission at the moment.

The Premier: I was referring to hospitals.

Mr. SPEAKER: There are too many conversations going on in the Chamber.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The only thing I am going to blame the Treasurer for is that he unloaded the Wooroloo Sanatorium upon the Minister for Health.

The Premier: Was that not a legitimate thing to do?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If so we might unload other institutions upon the Health Department.

The Premier: Last year £15,000 extra was added to the Hospital Vote to make up for that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: When I brought this question up last year the Minister said he would get it back somehow.

The Premier: And he did get it back.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am glad he did.

The Minister for Health: You ought to have known better than to say what you did because the report on the question was on the Table of the House.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I knew what was set out in the Estimates. I knew what happened last year. There was no item on the Estimates for this amount.

The Premier: I had to find £15,000.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I knew the Minister for Health would get his own back. It is not fair that the people should be asked to make an additional contribution to the Perth Hospital when already they are taxed

1½d. in the pound. This tax was imposed to obviate any cadging for hospital purposes. I do not know what the new arrangements are, but I think the sooner we get back to the old arrangements the better, instead of asking the people to eat stew on Sunday.

The Minister for Health: We are worse off now than when you interfered. You are absolutely responsible for the shortage of money because of the Bill you brought down.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We will give the Minister the opportunity to go back to the old position when the Bill comes before us again. I daresay he will give his support now for the repeal of the tax. Of course the Premier will not be with me.

The Premier: Of course not.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We will see whether the Minister will help us. He knows he is wrong.

The Minister for Health: I am not wrong.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course he is. How else would he get £200,000 a year into his own hands to do what he liked with? Before that he always had to go to the Treasurer, just as I had to do.

The Minister for Health: You were not too successful.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, because there was no money then. To-day the Premier has the money.

The Premier: Do not put it back upon me.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Premier has threatened me with all sorts of things this evening. I hope in his reply he will agree that what I have said is correct. If I am wrong I shall be pleased to apologise. I do ask him to give a little more consideration, particularly to the agricultural and allied industries in the future.

The Minister for Health: I hope your statements in connection with other departments are more correct than they have been in connection with mine.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.45 p.m.