

designed, chiefly by the municipal council at Narrogin and other public bodies, to induce the Government to start the line. I was at Narrogin when a rally of the unemployed was called in the park on Sunday morning. Only 15 men turned up.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Was there any unemployment there?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Not worth mentioning, for some of the 15 men already had jobs.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You will find 15 unemployed in any town in the Great Southern.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Narrogin ought to have about 15 unemployed at any time so that the men might be used for odd jobs. I notice in this morning's paper that the unemployed position at Narrogin is all right. The Government had some railway constructions to the southwards and asked for 12 men from Narrogin, but they obtained only two. The people of Narrogin have been promised that the line will be built. The whole thing was worked up to persuade the Government to start it.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You had better move the motion again, and use better arguments.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Public bodies at Narrogin are wrath with me for taking this action.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You are supported here.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I realise that if another motion came before another place it would also be supported. I have tried to make the way easy for the Premier. Some 12 months ago a deputation from Narrogin asked him to hurry on with the work. Knowing this I talked the matter over with the member for Pingelly, who tabled the motion on the Thursday night for the appointment of a select committee to deal with the question. My reason for making the suggestion was that when the deputation came before the Premier on the following day he would be in a position to say diplomatically that the question was now in the hands of Parliament and was sub-judice.

Hon. J. Cornell: You have given the show away.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: We thought the Premier would do this, but evidently he did not see the point. When I moved the motion in this House I again thought I was making the way easy for the Premier, and that he would ask the advisory board during the recess to make a report, and then do what was best in the interests of the State. This, however, has not been done. I have been snubbed in the town in which I am living because I will not support a fifth railway to run into it. I do not mind being snubbed by a little coterie or by an unscrupulous politician.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You ought to regard that as an honour.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The greatest reward any public man can have is the knowledge that he has conscientiously and faithfully done his duty. I feel it my duty to emphasise this question, and I hope the Leader of the House

will insist upon his Government giving it the attention it so well deserves.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Hickey, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 7.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 8th August, 1923.*

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAY RATES, BACON PIGS.

Mr. JOHNSTON (for Mr. Pickering) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that for the past 12 months a rate has existed for bacon pigs by which the consignor was enabled to load en route, from starting point to completion of loading—on branch lines only—the freight being charged from the farthest point, and that by these means the grower procured from the buyer a more favourable price for his products? 2, Has this rate been cancelled since the 1st August for the South-Western district? 3, Does this rate and system of loading still apply on branch lines in the Eastern district? 4, If so, on what lines? 5, What is the reason for preferential rates in favour of the Eastern districts as against the South-West?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Such a concession has been allowed since July, 1920, in certain localities. It is now in operation between Narrogin-Naremben, Wagin-Lake Grace, Kataanning-Nyabing, and Foggitt Jones' Siding, Bellevue. 2, The concession has never been in operation in the South-West district generally, but only between Busselton and Boyanup, Manjimup-Bridgetown, and Foggitt Jones' Siding, Bellevue. These sections were deleted from the list as from the 1st of July, 1923, on representations that the objects for which the concession was instituted had been fulfilled. 3 and 4, See No. 1. 5, The stimulation of pig breeding in certain defined localities.

### QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS, REMOVAL OF NAMES.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Premier: How many names have been removed by objection from the electoral rolls for each of the electoral districts of the metropolitan district, Guildford to Fremantle inclusive, during the past twelve months and also during the half-year ended 30th June last?

The PREMIER replied: The information is contained in the following table:—

Electoral District.	No. of names removed by objection.	
	During twelve months ended 7th Aug., 1923.	During six months ended 30th June, 1923
Perth ... ..	566	559
East Perth ... ..	628	623
North Perth ... ..	625	619
West Perth ... ..	559	559
Canning ... ..	676	676
Claremont ... ..	497	497
Guildford ... ..	446	446
Leederville ... ..	647	647
Subiaco ... ..	586	586
Fremantle ... ..	653	653
North-East Fremantle...	520	520
South Fremantle ...	371	371

### QUESTION—DWARDA-NARROGIN RAILWAY PROJECT.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: When do the Government intend to resume the construction of the Dwarda-Narrogin railway?

The PREMIER replied: The House will be asked to authorise a deviation before the construction of the line is started.

### QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH CON- STITUTION, CONVENTION.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Premier: What action was taken to give effect to the following resolution, agreed to by both Houses of Parliament last session: "That in the opinion of this House the Premier should communicate with the Commonwealth and State Governments, and urge the summoning of a Constitution Convention to consider the amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution"? 2, What were the results of his action?

The PREMIER replied: No action was taken because a Premiers' conference was to be held to consider financial matters between State and Commonwealth.

### QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASES, RENTS.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Minister for Lands: What was the total amount of rent paid to the Government by pastoral lessees in the North-West districts for the year ended 30th June last?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: Districts are not separated in ledgers, and the information cannot be accurately obtained without considerable expense. The approximate amount was £93,000.

### QUESTION—SAND REMOVAL, HUME PIPE COMPANY.

Mr. HUGHES asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Under what conditions are the Hume Pipe Co. (Australia), Ltd., allowed to remove the sand from the land belonging to the Railway Department, situated between Claisebrook Road and Summer Street, East Perth? 2, How many times has the railway fence been removed to permit of the company's operations? 3, By whom has the cost of these removals been borne?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 (a), The tramline not to be laid closer than 12 feet to "Down" main; (b) the cutting not to be taken out deeper than railway line formation; (c) the batters to be neatly trimmed as sand is removed; (d) the company to pay cost (estimated at £3) of shifting back fence or do the work to our satisfaction; (e) in carting sand over the six-inch pipe main from Summers Street tank to Perth, which is approximately 1 foot below the surface, care to be taken that same is not affected; timbers to be placed over same; (f) at such times as the removal of sand approaches telephone pole No. 22, arrangements to be made as to distance and batters so as not to affect its stability. 2, On four occasions. 3, Hume Pipe Company (Australia), Limited.

### QUESTION—POLICE PROSECUTIONS.

#### *Policeman's defalcations.*

Mr. HUGHES asked the Premier: 1, What was the amount of the defalcations of a certain police constable, which were recently discovered in the Police Department? 2, Is it a fact that—(a) the accused did not answer his name in the police court but was taken privately before Mr. W. A. G. Walter, P.M., and granted bail; (b) when the first period of remand had expired the accused again failed to answer his name, but during the afternoon was again taken privately before Mr. W. A. G. Walter, P.M., and further remanded; (c) owing to restitution having been made, Mr. W. A. G. Walter, P.M., sentenced the accused to only six weeks' imprisonment; (d) the period of incarceration was spent by the accused in the police gymnasium? 3, If so, why were these special privileges and concessions given the accused?

The PREMIER replied: 1, £866 19s. 4d. 2 (a) No; (b) No; (c) I am not aware of the reasons which actuated the magistrate in his decision; the proceedings were in accordance with law; (d) No. 3, No privileges or concessions were granted.

*Imprisonment without the option.*

Mr. HUGHES asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that the Police Magistrate (Mr. W. A. G. Walter) recently sentenced a first offender to one month's imprisonment, without the option of a fine, for taking 2s. worth of coal, and that the privilege of mitigating his offence by making restitution was denied the accused? 2, If so, for what reason was the privilege of making restitution denied this accused, whereas it was allowed to a police constable who received extraordinary leniency as a result thereof?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes, except that the value of the coal is understated. 2, The magistrate exercised the discretion vested in him by Statute.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Mullany, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for Irwin (Mr. C. Maley), the member for Kimberley (Mr. Duraek) and to the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), and for two months to the member for North Perth (Mr. J. MacCallum Smith), on the grounds of urgent private business.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.40]: I have read the Governor's Speech with a considerable amount of interest, and the statement contained in the first paragraph represents what is distinctly the most important utterance in the Speech. It sets out—

My advisers, recognising the paramount importance to the State and Empire of speedy increase in population and development, are vigorously pursuing the policy of immigration embodied in the agreement between the Imperial, Federal, and State Governments.

There has been a good deal of discussion in this House regarding the class of migrants we are receiving in Western Australia. When I returned from the Old Country last year, I had the privilege of making a few statements regarding immigration matters. I have a report furnished by the Agent General for Western Australia, and dated December, 1922. He deals with migration within the Empire, and in the course of his remarks Sir James Connolly says—

During the beginning of the period under review, we handed over the direct control of general migration to the Australian Migration Department, Australia House, retaining the general control, particularly so far as it may relate to (1) the appointment of the officers who are to deal with the Western Australian migrants, and (2) the right of control by the Agent General so far as their actions, etc., are concerned

(not their pay). The arrangement should be satisfactory inasmuch as we have sufficient control to enable us to see that we get the right people and in the right numbers, while the Commonwealth undertakes the financial responsibility of them as to the cost of selection and the passages.

I intend to quote extensively from the Agent General's report, as it has considerable bearing on the question. We know that when the Premier was in England an Act was passed dealing with migration, and the Agent General, referring to the new measure, remarks—

This is the first time that a sustained effort has been attempted between the British Government and the Dominion Governments to keep the people within the Empire.

It is a laudable thing to keep the people within the Empire. We have our White Australia policy, and I do not know that we can do anything better so far as Australia is concerned, and Western Australia too, than to people our State with our own kith and kin from the home land. The Agent General goes on to point out that the Imperial Government, under the Overseas Settlement Scheme, were paying the full passage money, which was then £40, for all ex-service men and women to Australia, and that the Premier (Sir James Mitchell) under the migration scheme arranged with the Commonwealth, was to introduce 25,000 people annually for three years, to Western Australia, the Commonwealth Government undertaking to contribute one-third of the money expended for their settlement for the first five years; that is to say, of the money that was loaned and expended on behalf of the settlers for thirty years, half the interest for the first five years was to be refunded to the State by the Commonwealth Government. The Agent General also states—

You were advised from London that if you could get the scheme endorsed as above by the Commonwealth Government, you would be well advised to come to London, as the Colonial Office had informed the Agent General they would be willing to assist to the same extent as the Commonwealth.

The Imperial Government suggested that they were willing to assist this State. I made that statement last year, and here is evidence that it was suggested the Premier should go Home. It shows that the Home authorities are quite alive to the importance of fostering immigration within the Empire. Statements have been made that we are not getting men of the right type. If that is so, it shows negligence on the part of the two officers appointed by the State to see that suitable people were selected. The Agent General's office too, is evidently not taking very much interest in the matter. Let me give an illustration of the attitude at Savoy House. Most members will admit that if 500 or 600 young women capable of undertaking household duties were sent to Western Australia, every

one of them would be placed in 24 hours. When I was in London I visited Savoy House. There were two women who looked like domestic servants inquiring regarding the prospects in Western Australia, and the porter told them, "Go to Australia House. We have nothing whatever to do with migration." I brought the matter under the notice of the Agent General, and he undertook to see that such a thing did not occur again. It should be the province of the Agent General's officers to give any information required, and such information should be available at Savoy House, so that people calling there may be given some idea of the opportunities existing in Western Australia. The officials of Australia House are not permitted to discriminate between the States. Those employed there are Australians or alleged to be Australians, but doubtless officers from other States may be biased in favour of their particular States. When I discussed this matter with Mr. Barnes he replied, "We are Australians." I said, "So am I, but I am a West Australian first." Perhaps that is one of the reasons why we may not be getting as good a type of migrant as we desire.

Capt. Carter: Are the Eastern States getting better?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I shall come to that later. I read with a good deal of interest the statement of the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson). I believe the Government are sincere in their desire to get the right class of migrant. The Agent-General says—

After your arrival and after several conferences, it was agreed with Colonel Amery, Chairman of the Overseas Settlement Committee, that a Bill should be introduced in the House of Commons (which was subsequently done and passed) . . . . The contribution of two-thirds interest for five years was to cover the initial outlay, surveying, training settlers etc., to which the State was to be put. Interest would, of course, be payable from the settlers to the State Government from the day the money was advanced to them. To reimburse the State for the expenses of handling these migrants, the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments have agreed to pay portion of the interest for a period. When I was about to leave for England, I approached the Premier and said "If you allocate a section of land, I will bring out one of the finest groups of Scottish settlers who ever set foot in Western Australia." I received from him a reply stating that it was impossible to do so. I cannot understand that attitude. It is essential to have community of interest among the settlers. If we brought out batches of settlers from particular districts, they would be very much happier in their new environment and would work together more harmoniously even that is the case in our group settlements. I see no reason why the Premier could not have acceded to my request. The Agent General stated that he had visited

the north of Scotland and found that the Scottish Board of Agriculture in Edinburgh had approved of 6,453 persons, all young ex-service men under 30 years of age.

Mr. Wilson: Edinburgh in the north of Scotland!

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is near it.

Mr. Wilson: And you claim to know something about it!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have been there. The Agent-General adds—

They admit that they cannot settle more than 2,000 of these during the next two or three years, and they are very doubtful about even that number. I have reason to believe that the authorities would very much like us to take at least 4,000 of these men.

The Agent-General also deals with the question of national and country reception associations. He does the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) the honour of mentioning him. He says—

I am writing to the Hon. W. C. Angwin, suggesting to him to take the initiative in the formation of the society mentioned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has been done.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am absolutely in favour of migration. No sane man could contend that this vast State is not urgently in need of increased population. The point to be decided is whether we are taking steps to get the right class of migrant. The Governor's Speech states—

The arrivals of passengers during the past 18 months, including paying third-class passengers, has been 10,654.

These people have cost the British and Commonwealth Governments in passage money approximately £117,194. I congratulate the New Settlers' League on their excellent work in meeting and advising migrants and placing them, but it is not the province of the New Settlers' League or any other voluntary body to have the care and responsibility of finding employment for our migrants.

Mr. Clydesdale: Will the Primary Producers' Association take it on?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I propose to state my views. The Government admit that it is an Empire and State matter, and yet we find them handing over to a voluntary body a duty which rightly belongs to the Government. If it is a Western Australian migration scheme, those who are responsible for it should carry it out in its entirety. In 1911 when the present Agent-General was Colonial Secretary, a scheme was organised in this State under which every town or hamlet had a representative. Many people are under the impression that the State is entailed in no cost as regards the work performed by the New Settlers' League. The Commonwealth Government are paying the league £1,500 a year. When we read in the Press of the drives through the various districts to find work for the newcomers, we are apt to conclude that the

expense is being borne by the New Settlers' League. That is the impression conveyed to the public.

Mr. Underwood: That is correct.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The whole of the cost of those drives is being borne by the State Government.

Mr. Pickering: It is not.

Mr. Mann: That statement is incorrect.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The expenses of the men so engaged are being paid by the State and so is the cost of the motor cars.

Mr. Clydesdale: The cost of the motor cars only.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Government are paying the expenses as well; I can prove my statement.

Mr. Clydesdale: No!

The Colonial Secretary: There is a large number of honorary workers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I admit that. I do not wish to detract from the excellent work done by the Ugly Men's Association and other honorary workers, but this is too big a scheme to be dealt with from Perth. Recently a member visited the Great Southern districts, because we had 260 or 300 newcomers landing at Albany. He went to the Great Southern to find employment for these people. What on earth is the use of sending a man from the metropolitan area to go through a district about which he knows absolutely nothing?

The Colonial Secretary: He is well accustomed to country districts.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am casting no reflection on the gentleman concerned. I am discussing the principle of the thing.

Mr. Pickering: He did his work.

Mr. Underwood: Was it worth while sending him?

Mr. Pickering: Certainly it was.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In every town and in every hamlet in the State where newcomers are going there should be a responsible Government agent to whom the newcomers should be able to go.

Mr. Mann: There are such officers now.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are not.

The Minister for Agriculture: The whole tenor of your remarks is in the direction of damning with faint praise.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with a principle, and I am talking about a subject that I know something of. I am afraid it is the Minister who does not know much of what is going on.

The Colonial Secretary: The work is being efficiently done.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I repeat it is not.

Mr. Mann: Do you think it could be done better by paid officials?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do.

Capt. Carter: What is the cost?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The cost does not matter.

Mr. Clydesdale: You complain about a few drives; what about the other cost?

Mr. Underwood: Why incur costs at all?

The Minister for Agriculture: Why do anything?

Mr. Underwood: Did anyone look after the member for Canning when he came to this country?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are dealing with men who have been induced to come to this State in order to find employment, and it is the duty of the Government to carry out all the functions in connection with the undertaking to find that employment. It has been said that in every hamlet and town there is a Government representative. In Katanning the representative is the secretary of the Road Board.

Mr. Mann: And an excellent worker.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am aware of that, but I would point out that he has a considerable amount of other work to do, and he cannot be expected to attend to this additional duty in a thorough manner. We should follow the practice adopted by the Wilson Government in 1911, and appoint agents in all the districts. The newcomers would then have someone to approach. In Katanning, the officer in charge of the Lands Department used to do that work and he was familiar with what was required from A to Z. In nine cases out of ten people go to him to-day, and he sends them to the road board secretary. Look at the position in Perth to-day. There is an officer in charge of immigration, Mr. Crawcour, and he is an excellent officer, too. I had the pleasure of coming out from England in a steamer which carried a number of migrants, all of whom, by the way, were an excellent type. On arrival at Fremantle I had an opportunity of seeing the manner in which they were handled by Mr. Crawcour. He showed efficiency and was courtesy itself. He displayed a thorough knowledge of the work he had to perform and the advice he gave to a number of the newcomers was sound. But let me quote what happens in Perth at the present time—and this is from personal experience. I have taken an individual to Mr. Crawcour in the hope of finding employment for him. Mr. Crawcour rings up the Ugly Men's Association and asks whether a position can be found for the individual. That is not what should take place, but it seems to be the policy of to-day to shelve our responsibility by placing it on the shoulders of the New Settlers' League. That kind of thing is not fair to the newcomer, and it is a dangerous principle to follow. It is also one of the reasons why men drift back to the city—there is no one in the country districts to assist or to advise the new arrivals. In my opinion the Government should carry out every one of the functions associated with the finding of employment for migrants.

Mr. Mann: What staff do you imagine would be required?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Not a very big staff. The Government should have a representative in every town. He could be given some little remuneration, and he could impose a small fee on finding employment for the individual.

The Colonial Secretary: What about the economy campaign?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We find very frequently that newcomers are placed in an

awkward position by being without means. I know of men who have landed in Katanning from a steamer without sixpence in their pockets.

Mr. Mann: Every man on leaving a steamer has at least £3 with him.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It was assumed that a man would get £3 landing money, but there have been instances of married men having landed with that sum of money and having to care not only for themselves, but for their wives and families. The sum of £3 in such cases would not go far.

Mr. Mann: On landing from a boat they would have a job to go to.

Mr. A. THOMSON: They have been known to arrive at their destinations without anyone to meet them. If we had accredited agents in the towns the newcomers could always be met.

The Colonial Secretary: Only in exceptional cases they have not been met.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Who meets them?

The Colonial Secretary: Officers representing the New Settlers' League.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The road board official whose duty it is to meet the new arrivals has a good deal more work to carry out than he can conveniently do. The new duty of meeting migrants is thrust upon him and he is obliged to do the work in an honorary capacity. How can we expect an honorary officer to meet trains at midnight or at 3.30 a.m.

Capt. Carter: Who forces him to take the position?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The members of the road board, if you want to know. The people of the State are under the impression that the services of the New Settlers' League are rendered without cost. I say they are not, and that payment is being made.

Mr. Clydesdale: Who is being paid?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The State provides motor cars and pays expenses.

Mr. Clydesdale: They are Government cars; no expenses are paid.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Why cannot we employ our own men. The work should be done by our own representative appointed in each town and then the newcomers would have someone to appeal to.

Mr. Clydesdale: Tell us how many drives there have been. You are making a terrible fuss about it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with a principle.

The Minister for Mines: I think the member for the district should be a little more active too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I wonder what this House would think if the Government were to ask for the authorisation of the expenditure of two or three millions for the construction of railways and buildings without being able to submit proper plans and specifications. We would expect mistakes to occur.

The Colonial Secretary: There are plans, and there are specifications.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am voicing my own opinion, and I declare that we were not prepared with either plans or specifications when we set out on our scheme for settling migrants. The result is that mistakes have been made. That is admitted. How many of these mistakes could have been avoided if proper plans had been laid down? The Association to which I have the honour to belong submitted a proposal to the Government that a board should be appointed composed of practical men to deal with the subject of land settlement.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you say that practical men are not now dealing with it?

Mr. A. THOMSON: It was suggested that a board of practical men should deal with the subject.

Hon. P. Collier: Do your association intend to do that, because if they do, it is settled; the board must be appointed.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you say the question is not being dealt with by practical men?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the recommendation of the association had been acted upon a great many of the mistakes which have been made would have been avoided. I also wish to stress the point that any mistakes which have been made are being placed upon the shoulders of men and women who probably are not in a position to bear an additional financial burden.

The Minister for Agriculture: Will you say there are not practical men dealing with that proposition to-day?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Will the Minister say that there are no mistakes being made?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will have an opportunity of addressing himself to the subject later.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have heard the Minister for Agriculture say, "Of course we have made mistakes; we must expect to make mistakes in such a huge scheme as this." If plans and specifications had been properly drawn up, many of the mistakes that have occurred would probably not have happened.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no scheme, really, prepared. The executive have not been able to get any.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not believe the hon. member interjecting has been able to get it either. He was inquiring for it the other evening.

Hon. P. Collier: That is quite right. I agree with Mr. Monger on that subject. We will have a coalition before long.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In my opinion, if we had had a practical man in control of the scheme, thousands of pounds which have been wasted would have been saved and the settlers relieved of a corresponding burden. I have heard of a settler on the Peel estate being burdened with a charge of £9 per acre for ploughing and putting in seed.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Peel estate is not a group settlement.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is boosted as one of the group settlements.

The Minister for Mines: I doubt if you have ever seen the Peel estate.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Has the Minister for Mines seen it?

The Minister for Mines: I am not criticising it; you are.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am criticising the principle. Migration is essential to the advancement of Western Australia, and the policy of group settlements is also essential, particularly in the South-West. If the group settlements have been properly designed, I agree that they must succeed. First of all, we must see that the State gets adequate results for its expenditure. Secondly, we have to bear in mind that we are dealing with the lives of men and women. Unfortunately in portions of my district there are men who, on the recommendation of the Government, have spent 10 years of their lives on land which has not proved productive. They have had to leave their holdings after 10 years' hard work—heart-broken, broken in pocket, and, more serious still, broken in spirit as well. A man may be given some monetary recompense for wasted labour, but he cannot be given back 10 years of his life. In connection with our land settlement, therefore, the first thing is to see that adequate results are obtained from the public money expended, and the second thing is to see that the settlers whom we are placing on the land will not be called upon to carry a burden beyond their strength. That is the position as regards the Industries Assistance Board. There are men on the board who have for years been receiving sustenance from the Government, with the result that the charges for sustenance have piled up until to-day it is impossible for those men to make a living. In all earnestness I commend to the House and to Cabinet the suggestion that a board of practical men be appointed in this connection. I will show the House directly where, in my opinion, the Government have been lacking in their duty. I will quote a speech by the Premier from "Hansard," and I will quote letters I have received from the departments, clearly proving that there is no plan, and that there is not that co-ordination we are entitled to look for from the Public Service.

Hon. P. Collier: You will be classified with Beaumont-street if you don't look out.

Capt. Carter: He is tending that way.

Mr. McCallum: According to the "West Australian," he is a traducer of the State. He said we had some land that is not good.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Unfortunately it is true. Now to deal with the complaints as to the type of our migrants. Australia House is not perfect. I went there and was shown the whole system, and I am bound to say that it is as nearly perfect as it is possible to make it. Men and women are medically examined by

the local physicians. Unfortunately it seems that some of the local physicians have not delivered the goods, but, on the contrary, have issued false certificates. In Major Morris we have an expert physician at Australia House, and he has the right to call upon any intending migrant to be examined by him. On the boat on which I returned I saw several migrants prevented from proceeding. There is a double examination; but, unfortunately, there have been cases of impersonation or dummying. A thing I regret to say in connection with the British Empire is that Major Morris informed me that large numbers of the men and women who came before him for examination were suffering from mal-nutrition. I do know that a few weeks on the boat effected an absolute transformation in many of the passengers, especially the children. We have problems to deal with. A member of the Overseas Delegation, Mr. Wignall, the Labour representative, said in a speech that he had been told there were 80 per cent. of successes under the scheme. He added that he was mostly concerned about the 20 per cent. of failures. I agree with the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) that perhaps too much attention is being paid to what may be termed prospective farm labourers. If we had an adequate board of practical men controlling the scheme, preparations would have been made to deal with men possessed of small capital, who would be able to go on to group settlements without requiring sustenance, but only supervision and instruction as to how to work under Australian conditions. Such settlers would be able to pay for their properties under the extended terms allowed by the Agricultural Bank. It was reported to me—and I think the Premier was the gentleman who made the statement—that inquiry had been made of the Government whether we in Western Australia could place 1,000 naval and army officers, whose average capital was £1,000 and who had average pensions of £100 to £150. If that statement is correct—and I make it believing it to be so—there was a capital of one million pounds offered to this State, and we could not avail ourselves of it because we had no practical scheme prepared for dealing with settlers of that fine type, who therefore were lost to the State.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you believe the statement was made?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I believe it was made.

The Minister for Agriculture: By the Premier?

Mr. A. THOMSON: By the Premier, and I regret that the hon. gentleman is not in his place to-night.

The Minister for Agriculture: So do I.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Will the Minister inform this House whether any provision has been made to deal with men possessed of a little capital, to place such settlers under the instruction of men who can advise them what to do? If there is such provision, I have no knowledge of it. I have questioned the Government on the point, but in vain. After

all, the Premier is only human. I give him every credit for doing his best, but he cannot do impossibilities.

The Minister for Agriculture: Your statement as to the 1,000 officers is nonsense, and an absolute lie.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I congratulate the Deputy Premier on the tone of his interjections.

The Minister for Agriculture: You will get it directly.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I shall not reciprocate.

The Minister for Agriculture: I would not expect it of you.

Hon. P. Collier: You two will have to call in the executive to adjust this.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I say a practical board should be appointed.

Mr. Mann: There is a practical board.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member interjecting should talk about what he understands. He probably knows something about the New Settlers' League, but he does not understand land settlement. Now I wish to quote from a speech made by the Premier in this House last year. He said—

In 1921 Britain imported raisins and currants aggregating £169,000, which represents five times the total production of Australia. Australian currants are most fashionable in London at the present time. Vine growing takes but a very little while to learn, and I propose that we shall increase our vine production by putting in straight away 10,000 acres of vines. I would like to see the area of vines much greater than that. It is estimated that last year vine production gave employment to 3,000 people, and if we increase our acreage to the extent I indicate, it will mean more employment still. I believe that we can possibly put as many acres under vines as they have in France. A vineyard is a cheaply made holding, and produces a good return.

I would like the Minister for Agriculture to state how many acres of land have been put under vines.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have given some evidence of activity.

Mr. A. THOMSON: So far as I am aware, the Government have done absolutely nothing as regards viticulture. When the Premier returned, he appealed to the people to assist the Government in every way to advance settlement. We have in Katanning practical men who, at their own expense, went through the district and put up a recommendation to the local vigilance committee that in their opinion viticulture could be successfully carried on in the Katanning district.

Mr. Johnston: That has been proved.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It has been proved by the fact that for years past the Trimming Brothers, who have six acres of vineyard within a few miles of Katanning, have been supplying the Katanning district and other portions of the Great Southern with the most satisfactory currants. If we had had a board

composed of practical men we should have today along the Great Southern, group settlements dealing with viticulture. Recommendations went to the Government from Pingelly, Williams, Narrogin, Wagin, and Katanning pointing out that there was to be had down there at £2 per acre land on which vineyards could be successfully established. Yet the Government have persisted in their policy of putting men into the Swan district, where the capital cost is £60 per acre. Those men could have been thoroughly established in the Katanning district at £20 an acre.

Mr. Johnston: Or less.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, or even less. Mine is a conservative estimate. There are other places besides the South-West which should be developed. I want to see the South-West grow and expand, but I want also to see the North-West develop, and more than all, I am convinced that we ought to be getting the best return for the money expended. When, over 12 months ago, I returned to the State, I took several gentlemen in to see the Premier, who informed them that if they took their wives and children with them I would put them on a group settlement designed for viticulture. Yet we have not group settlement for viticulture to-day. The Government have not carried out the promise which the Premier made 12 months ago. I will read correspondence showing how the matter has been dealt with. I admit that the Government purchased the Buckland estate subdivided it and then said, "If you are prepared to go on, you will find this land suited for viticulture." That is all they did. The great bulk of the men who are looking for opportunities to settle in Australia—emilitary and naval officers with no experience of land settlement—are going to Victoria to start a private company, and taking up 15 acres which will cost them between £2,000 and £3,000. In Western Australia we could give them 100 acres and establish them for less than £1,000. The figures quoted by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) showed that we could furnish them with homes, with acres of vines, and give them 100 acres for £750. Yet we have neglected this golden opportunity to get men with capital. The Premier realises the necessity for getting such men, but he has too much to do. If we had had a board composed of practical men we should have group settlements along the Great Southern to-day. Such settlements would give quicker results and be far more economical than the groups established elsewhere. I do not wish to stop group settlements in the South-West, but viticulture ought to be part and parcel of the scheme. On the 26th February I sent to the Minister for Lands, as Premier, this letter—

Herewith find letter and report which have received from the Katanning vigilance committee. Mr. Trimming is well known to you, I suppose, by repute as the one who is producing first class sultanias and currants in the Woodanilling district, and his recommendation would be worthy of con-



sideration. As you know, I am very keenly interested in the establishment of viticulture groups, and I would be pleased if you would have your officers inspect this property, which has the hall mark of Mr. Trimming's opinion upon it, with a view to establishing a viticulture group in this portion of the Great Southern.

On 6th March I wrote as follows—

On February 26th I forwarded to you a copy of a letter and report which I had received from the Katanning vigilance committee and I requested you, if possible, to have your officers inspect this property with a view to having a viticulture group established in this district. As the viticulture committee meets fortnightly, I would be extremely grateful if you could let me have a reply before next Monday, March 12th, so that I could put the matter before the committee, which is composed of gentlemen very keenly interested in the development of this State.

On 13th March I again wrote, this time to the Under Secretary for Lands—

On February 26th I forwarded for the consideration of the Premier a report and recommendation from the Katanning vigilance committee, who strongly recommend that a property in the district is eminently suitable for the establishment of viticulture groups in this district. It has the backing of Mr. Trimming, who personally inspected the property and has, by his own operations, proved that sultanas and currants can be grown profitably in these districts. They strongly recommended the purchase, and as others may be after the property I and the committee would like to have it inspected by your department as soon as possible, and if a favourable decision is come to, no time must be lost so as to ensure planting to be done this year. Mr. Shapcott advised me that the matter had been referred to you, and I would be extremely grateful if you would expedite the inspection of this property.

Then I came to Perth and interviewed Mr. Morris. He said the matter had been referred to the Lands Purchase Board. After he informed me of this, I received a letter stating that they did not propose to do anything. On 29th March I wrote to Mr. Morris as follows:—

Following on our interview on Friday the 23rd, when you promised that you would refer E. L. Holly's land at Katanning to the Lands Purchase Board to be inspected with a view to viticulture. This I duly reported to the Katanning vigilance committee which met on Monday night, and you can imagine my astonishment to receive the following, No. 4075/18, over Mr. O'Dell's signature. This places me in a very humiliated position after my interview. Am I to understand this is the decision of the Premier after my interview with you?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier cannot override the Lands Purchase Board.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But the board did not even inspect the property. I interviewed Mr. Morris, and on the 20th April I wrote him as follows—

On the 13th April letter No. 4057/18 was forwarded to me by Mr. O'Dell, stating, in reference to Mr. E. L. Holly's land, it had been decided to submit the matter to the viticulture experts' board. As to-day is the 20th, am I rushing things too much by asking whether it has reached the board and if it is their intention to make an inspection. If so, would it be unreasonable for me to ask that I be advised when they come to Katanning so that arrangements could be made to take them out to inspect Mr. Trimming's property, and, if possible, get Mr. Trimming to accompany them, not with the view of forcing his opinions upon them, but to give his reasons to them on the spot as to why he contends this property, from a viticulture point of view, would be an excellent proposition for the Government to acquire at a price, of course, to be decided. I would be extremely grateful to hear from you in the matter.

On the 27th April I received from Mr. O'Dell the following letter—

With reference to your letter of the 20th instant, on the subject of the land offered by Mr. E. L. Holly, I beg to inform you that I have not yet been able to call together a meeting of the viticultural experts' board, but as soon as I have, the necessary action will be taken.

The matter went on till the 22nd June. I do not wish to cast any reflection on the Premier, for he cannot do the impossible.

Mr. Johnston: He is trying to do too much.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so. I give him every credit for his desire for progress. On the 22nd June I received the following letter from the Under Secretary for Lands:—

With reference to previous correspondence on the subject of the land offered by Mr. E. L. Holly, I beg to inform you that, before the Lands Purchase Board would make any recommendation concerning this land, it is desired that certain information should be obtained from the Agricultural Department in regard to such matters as richness in sugar of grapes for drying in the Katanning district, as compared with the grapes grown on the Swan or the Avon, and the susceptibility of the currant and sultana grape vines to fungoid diseases; also regarding spring frost. It will be impossible to supply this information before the next season, and I therefore regret being unable to do anything further in the meantime.

Twelve months ago the Premier said he was going to plant 10,000 acres of vines. The people of Katanning spent their time and went around in motor cars to supply him with information for his assistance. He had appealed for that help, but between the 26th February and the 26th June nothing was done and it was then too late to do anything.

That is the reason the committee were so alive to the position. We wanted the land inspected and planted with vines this year. I leave the position at that. To show that we have a live committee in Katanning I would inform members that already two gentlemen have been down there. I am hopeful that we shall be able to arrange locally for the business to be done independently of the Government. I have here the report of these gentlemen. They state—

We first visited the vineyard of Mr. A. C. Masters, at Wagin, whose vines in spite of lack of skilled attention and necessary cultivation were looking well and had produced fruit—samples of which we saw—which compared favourably with that of the Swan, both in quality and quantity. The land in this area is of a little too light a composition, generally speaking, to warrant planting large areas when compared with climatic conditions. We believe that Mr. Masters would derive considerably more benefit by the application of more suitable manures and better cultivation.

The department want to find out whether the fruit grown in the Katanning district is suitable. It has been proved by practical demonstration that Trimming Bros' raisins and currants are the best in Western Australia. If we had a board of practical men they would have gone down to see the property for themselves. Twelve months have now been lost. This means a very serious loss to the State. Here was an opportunity of settling men in the viticultural industry; men who would be useful citizens and who could have been settled more cheaply than is now being done in other directions. The report continues—

We next saw the vineyard of Messrs. Trimming Bros., Woodanilling. The soil here is exceptionally good, both surface and subsoil, and remarkably well suited to viticulture. The vines here looked exceptionally well, having received much more skilled attention. Nevertheless, we believe that vines planted under somewhat similar conditions, and receiving better attention during the first three years, would show a decided improvement. Several large areas around this district impressed us with the possibility in currant and sultana growing. The samples of dried fruit we saw were mostly equal to any we have seen produced in other parts of the State, both in quality and quantity per acre. Mr. M. Trimmings kindly gave us rough estimates and returns of his vineyard which showed us that the return per acre in comparison with the "overhead" charge would enable a similar enterprise to be run on considerably more profitable lines than are usual in other parts of the State, thus also enabling a larger area to be planted on an equal amount of capital.

The Minister for Mines: Who made the report?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The two gentlemen who are at present negotiating with the own-

ers of the property which the Katanning committee recommended to the Government. These gentlemen propose to subdivide it. They are going to plant a certain number of vines themselves, and they consider they can get 30 or 40 men with a small amount of capital to form a co-operative undertaking.

Mr. Davies: The growers cannot sell their last year's fruit.

Mr. A. THOMSON: A newspaper report says—

The raisin is a comparatively new factor in the American export trade. It was only in 1898 that the quantity exported was of sufficient importance to obtain a place in the export records of the Government, and the total exports of that year amounted to only 3,000,000 lbs., advancing to 5,500,000 in 1908, 56,000,000 in 1918, and 110,000,000 in 1919. Great Britain is the largest single buyer of American raisins, the total American exports to that country in 1922 having been 44,000,000 lbs., against only 5,000,000 in 1921. Canada ranks next to Great Britain in the takings of American raisins in 1922, her total for that year being 29,000,000 lbs. Japan has suddenly developed a taste for American raisins, exports to that country in 1922 totalling something over 4,000,000 lbs., as against 2,000,000 in the preceding year. All the world seems to have developed a taste for American raisins.

Compared with the American production the Australian output becomes comparatively insignificant. In 1919-20 the total export of raisins from the Commonwealth was under 9,000,000 lbs., and was worth £359,000. The export from Western Australia in 1920-21 was under 100,000 lbs., valued at a little less than £3,000. Here we have an excellent opportunity for closer settlement, and of placing on the land the type of men to which I have referred. These are men with a limited capital of £1,000 and their pensions. If the Government would establish these groups I guarantee we could get men who would be only too glad of the opportunity to settle on the land.

Mr. Johnston: And who would not ask for assistance.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No.

Mr. Mann: A lot of soldiers have already been settled.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have shown the enormous trade that has been done in the Old Country with American raisins. We should deal with the matter systematically.

Mr. Mann: We have to consider freights.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Do we consider freights when we are dealing with our wool, wheat and other exportable commodities? We have to compete with American and Canadian wheats. Surely we can compete with other American products. I hope we shall at some future date have an inter-Empire trade, which will give a certain amount of preference to our own men. The duty devolves not only upon Western Australia and the Commonwealth but upon the Home land, to share portion of the burden with

us. I feel sure the authorities there would do so cheerfully. According to a statement made on the public platform recently 400,000 people are leaving Great Britain every year because there is no room for them. There is plenty of room in Western Australia. I hope the Government will take some notice of the matter and that the Premier will make an honest endeavour to carry out the pledge he made last session. The member for Tood-yay (Mr. Piesse) touched on the matter lightly, but it is one that affects me considerably. I put up the proposal in my own district. The member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) knows that currants and sultanas can be grown in these districts and the Government know it too, but have done nothing. It is criminal that such a splendid opportunity of settling people on the land should have been allowed to slip. We could have had a number of people with limited capital settled, but for the delay of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the product of the coalition.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is the product of one man attempting to do too much. No definite scheme for expansion has been laid down so that we can deal with all branches of land settlement. The only hope we have in Western Australia of developing the country is by land settlement. Surely we are not going to put all our eggs in one basket.

Hon. P. Collier: What can you do when you have all the brains in one head?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the Leader of the Opposition had had this proposal, that was made by the Vigilance Committee, put up to him, he would have attempted to do something.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, I would have done something.

Mr. Johnston: The inference is obvious.

Hon. P. Collier: The Press does not encourage the other Ministers. They are obliterated from the map.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That part of the State had a Minister of its own.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will now quote from the report of the Agent General:—

I obtained a report from a broker who has handled a considerable quantity this last year of Australian and West Australian dried fruit, and for the information of the people concerned in the trade, I append the following extract:—

Currants.—Western Australia seems to be the only Australian State which produces a very large currant with a rich bloom, and these sell here at fancy prices, particularly on account of the fact that there are usually a very small quantity available, and are much sought after by high-class grocery people. We had this year roughly 300 boxes of this class of currant from Western Australia which came over as 4-crown, and they brought approximately six to seven shillings more per cwt. than the next grade, viz., 3-crown.

Currants, of whatever grade, should be definitely kept separate as regards sizes. For some trades in this country a very small currant is required, particularly for confectionery purposes, whilst the larger and bold currants are used more for ordinary grocery trades.

The report also deals with raisins and other dried fruits. The Agent General says emphatically:—

There is ample room for the Western Australian product and that we are the only State in Australia turning out first-class currants.

He indicates that our currants are better and bring bigger prices than those from any part of Australia.

Mr. Clydesdale: The price at present does not give a living to those who are working on the Swan.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Those estates are overcapitalised.

Mr. Clydesdale: That is not the position.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The people cannot make a living because of that.

Mr. Clydesdale: The price is too low.

Mr. Davies: The price is all right, but there is no market.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It should be part and parcel of the immigration scheme to find markets for those who are settled on the land. Nothing has been attempted in that direction. We know what has happened to the apple growers. Quite a number have had to make up a deficit after growing and grading and packing their fruit and sending it to the Old Country. Will any member on the Government side of the House say that we should cease growing fruit because of that fact? The same thing applies to currants and raisins. The more we produce the better can we organise, and the better can our fruit be packed and graded and the easier can it be placed on the world's markets at a good price. When I was last in London, I noticed a case of apples exposed for sale in the street. Being interested in our orchards, I spoke to the shopkeeper who came out. I remarked on the fruit being Western Australian apples and I was pleased to receive the reply, "Yes, governor, they are the best on the market." I told the man that I was very pleased to hear him say that, because, although I was not a buyer, I came from Western Australia. I told him that I knew the grower, an orchardist, named Thomas, who has a property in the Albany electorate. When I told the shopkeeper that I knew the grower, he said, "You can tell him from me that when there is a shortage of fruit on the London market and his apples are for sale, I am always willing to give a shilling or half-a-crown more for his apples than for any others because I know they are always true to packing." That is a lesson we can learn in Western Australia generally. If we could only get our growers to go in for good types of fruit and grow the fruit in sufficient quantities, we could organise the export business on a proper basis, carry out proper packing and grading,

and our fruit could then be firmly established on the London market. If we can achieve that end, we will assuredly retain our buyers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about those fishermen who were going to bring out and who were to earn £10 or £12 a week out here.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will deal with that question later.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I saw something about it in the papers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member will agree that there is an ample market in Western Australia for dried or smoked fish.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And a great export trade, too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: At the Cape, some 60 tons of fillet were placed on board the steamer by which I returned to Western Australia from the old country.

The Minister for Mines: What did that brother Scotsman of yours say about the fishing industry?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not care about that. In any case, that man was not here long enough to judge.

The Minister for Mines: He was a beautiful liar, that is what I think about him.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. A. THOMSON: A man who has cool storage facilities at Albany asked me how the scheme regarding fishermen was progressing. He told me that he was landing, within a few days, 200 tons of smoked fillet from South Africa. When such things happen, the Government should take steps to encourage this industry. There is unlimited scope for work in that direction.

The Minister for Mines: And yet you are moving against the State trading concerns!

Member: That is a hard one to put over you!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I ask the Government what steps they have taken since the launching of the migration scheme, to bring in fishermen to this State. There are many possibilities ahead of that industry here.

The Minister for Mines: Where would you place the fishermen after you brought them here?

Mr. Mann: In New South Wales the Government are selling their trawlers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) should not make that statement. The New South Wales Government sold the trawlers because the trawling business was a State enterprise and, in addition to that, the State trawlers were over-capitalised.

Hon. P. Collier: They have an honest Government who do not believe in State enterprises, and sold some of the concerns. Here we have a Government elected because they were opposed to State enterprises and yet they are keeping them going.

The Minister for Mines: We had a trawler and we were carrying out investigations to ascertain what the possibilities ahead of the fishing industry were on our coast before proceeding further along those lines.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government were elected in opposition to State enterprises and yet they were going to develop them!

Mr. A. THOMSON: Provided we are ready at this end, we can get plenty of men with capital from the old country. We want practical men on the board I have advocated, who will be able to deal with all phases of agriculture. By means of such an appointment, we would avoid the mistakes that are now being made.

Hon. P. Collier: Do not you think the board should be selected by the Primary Producers' Association?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the Primary Producers' Association were to select the members of the board, there would not be the trouble that is apparent now. I do not wish to debar any man from coming to Western Australia if he is healthy and willing to work.

Hon. P. Collier: You are over-generous!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I wonder if the hon. member and his followers are sincere when they say they are strongly in favour of migration. If one can judge from his remarks—

Hon. P. Collier: You throw open your arms ready to receive them! You are too generous!

Mr. A. THOMSON: When I was in London, I painted Western Australia in the colours as I know them.

Hon. P. Collier: Drab, I suppose.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I told the truth about the State. It is not necessary to tell the people of England any more than the truth. I told them that if they were willing to work, there was ample scope for them here.

Hon. P. Collier: Is it not good to tell the truth when you speak about other things besides State concerns?

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are facilities here ready for people who are willing to work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You were going to tell us about those fishermen.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want to emphasise the fact that in dealing with production, what we want in Western Australia is profitable production. It is no use growing fodder or other things that cannot be sold. We have a market for butter and other products, but the main thing we have to bear in mind is that we must aim at production for export. Unless we do that, it will cost the State a considerable sum of money. I consider that the finding of markets is a very important matter, and I intend to stress that at the risk of wearying the House. After all we are speaking to those beyond the House—if only we can get our remarks published. In the course of his report the Agent-General, dealing with the question of markets and trade within the Empire, said—

It is very pleasant to be able to record the fact that there is a decided growth of public opinion who appreciate to the full the value of Dominion trade. I cannot exemplify this better than by quoting the utterances of two Ministers, namely,

the Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Parliamentary Secretary of the Overseas Trade Department. Mr. Amery said that the British Empire Union had done yeoman service in preaching, in times of no little difficulty, sound economics and practical commonsense against doctrines which would mean the ruin of the whole fabric of our industry and disaster above all for those whom those doctrines were professed to help. This island was the heart and core of a mighty Empire, and if they lifted their eyes and saw the immense possibilities before them, he held that no matter what difficulties confronted them at the present moment no Englishman had a right to be anything but an optimist. Mr. Clynes said the other day in the House of Commons: "What is the use of talking about Empire trade when the Dominions have only got a population of 15,000,000, whereas the population of Europe is 300,000,000, and how can the trade of 15,000,000 make up for what we are losing in the trade of 300,000,000?" From our point of view what mattered was not how many millions of people were willing to buy our goods, but how much of our goods they were willing to buy. In the last year before the war the whole of Europe bought from us £132,000,000 worth of goods, while the British Empire bought £195,000,000 worth. The United States, Germany, and Russia, with 330,000,000 of people, bought from us in 1913 £88,000,000 worth of goods, but the Dominions, with 15,000,000 population, bought £91,000,000 worth from us.

Mr. Davies: The small population of the Dominions bought more from England than the great population of Europe.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Their principal market was India.

Mr. Davies: The Australian purchasing power is so much higher than elsewhere.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Continuing, the Agent General said—

That meant that the 330,000,000 of population bought from us on an average 5s. worth per head, while the Dominions bought £5 worth per head. That was why the Empire trade was important.

I believe the people at Home are looking for Empire trade.

Mr. Lambert: Not they. They only look for it if it is economical.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I disagree with the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert). I consider that those in authority, and they are those who set the ball rolling—

Mr. Lambert: Are they? That is where you are wrong.

Mr. A. THOMSON: At any rate, it is only by propaganda, and what may be termed "peaceful penetration," that we will be able to encourage all concerned to purchase goods within the Empire. It is for this reason that I think Britain should help us more in this immigration scheme than she is doing.

Mr. Wilson: Britain is importing marble from Germany for the purpose of placing headstones on the graves of our fallen soldiers!

Mr. Lambert: And everything else they can purchase by procuring it in a cheaper market.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are some people like that, and we have them in Western Australia. They would far sooner pay extra for boots, for instance, brought from the Eastern States than they would purchase a similar article manufactured locally. What better example of that can we have than the City Council in dealing with the local cement company. That cement passed the whole of the requirements of the test, and yet the City Council purchased imported cement.

Mr. Lambert: We can always excuse humbles.

The Minister for Works: The Government are using local cement for our water works.

Mr. Wilson: It is the patriots who do not use the local article!

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are those who say that people should not leave Great Britain, but from what I saw when I was there, I felt many times that I wished we could place many of them in this sunny land of ours. We could not get better citizens than those to be found within the British Empire. If we are to advocate Empire preference, the importance of this could be most forcibly brought home to the people of Great Britain if they were brought here and made to bear a share in our problems. That would help to make the Mother Land understand that we form part and parcel of the British Empire.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. A. THOMSON: Before tea I was dealing with the migration scheme and I pointed out how essential it was for the new settlers to engage in the production of those commodities we can sell, particularly in overseas markets.

The Premier: Do not you want to feed our own people?

Mr. A. THOMSON: There is a local market for a considerable quantity of produce. I congratulate the Premier on his desire to supply our local requirements.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why congratulate the Premier now, after having called him a liar?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I hope I am too much of a gentleman to call the Premier a liar.

The Premier: If you did, you are one.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I congratulate the Government on the paragraph in the Governor's Speech which read—

The importance of immediate production of our own food requirements is recognised, and special efforts will continue to be directed to this end. Dairying shows a marked advance, and new factories are being established at Ravensthorpe, Manjimup, and Katanning.

Though I represent Katanning, I was not previously aware that the Government claimed credit for the establishment of a butter factory at Katanning.

The Premier: We did not claim credit for it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Well, that is how it appeared in the Speech. The next question on which I wish to touch is that of finance. We have reason to congratulate ourselves that the deficit of the past year was £326,784 less than in the previous year. Unfortunately, however, the deficit for the month of July somewhat discounted the good results shown for the financial year.

Hon. P. Collier: That was done by the simple process of holding over the payment of debts.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That method has been adopted by previous Governments.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, no!

Mr. Richardson: Anyhow, the result of the year's operations is better than that of the previous year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so.

The Minister for Agriculture: Be as fair as you can.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I certainly do not think the Minister can be fair. During the recess members of the Opposition offered some caustic criticism of the finances. The Leader of the Opposition addressed a public meeting at Bunbury. I have a copy of his speech showing he endeavoured to prove that the finances of the State were much worse now than when the Labour Government were in power. We must admit the correctness of that statement. When the Labour Government were in power, the present Premier and others then sitting in opposition urged that the State required men of business acumen and ability to manage affairs.

The Minister for Agriculture: We did not get you; that is the trouble.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We must concede that the Government have been confronted with extraordinary conditions.

Hon. P. Collier: Extraordinary men and extraordinary conditions.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The members for Hannans (Mr. Mansie) and Cue (Mr. Chesson) spoke at Katanning, and the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Cunningham) spoke at Tambellup and Albany, and they pointed out how the deficit had increased since the present Administration took office. Last night we were asked to be fair. I want to be fair to both sides. The members of the Opposition have not been altogether fair. Two years ago I moved that certain reductions be made to the Estimates, and I regret to say that I was not successful in getting even a seconder.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is what James Gardiner told you down the street and you came here and did it.

Mr. Underwood: The Country Party do not seem to be agreeing too well.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I made an honest endeavour to impress upon the House the necessity for economy. We have been told

that during the past 12 months various economies have been effected. I venture to assert that if the House had adopted my suggestion two years ago, we would have had a much smaller deficit, not only last year but in the year before. The Opposition should remember that they had an opportunity to support a measure of economy and did not accept it.

Hon. P. Collier: Forty-nine Ishmaels and one white man!

Mr. A. THOMSON: Last session the Premier, in dealing with interest and sinking fund charges, is reported in "Hansard," page 102, as having said—

The hon. member is incorrect, because this is not a general sinking fund but a sinking fund specially applied to each loan. I admit that the State is so much better off, because the taxpayers have been paying more than they should. I do not know that the sinking fund is of any advantage to us in London. . . . Our sinking fund at the 30th June, 1921, amounted to £7,641,564, and at the 30th June of this year it stood at £8,370,160. The increase for the year was £782,596. . . . A loan was raised for the purchase of the Great Southern railway amounting to £1,100,000. It was issued for a term of 40 years with a sinking fund contribution of 1½ per cent. This provides a fair illustration of what may happen with regard to other sinking funds. The annual contribution is £16,500 and this, invested at an average of 3½ per cent—not at current rates—would produce the total amount of the debt in 35 years without discounts. Yet, in the first place, we undertook to contribute sinking fund for a period of 40 years, so that we provided for a term of five years longer than was necessary when we set out to gather in the amount required to redeem this loan. Referring to the Coolgardie water scheme loan he said—

When this debt is paid and the fund is wound up we shall have, so far as I can see, a considerable sum, amounting to many thousands of pounds, over and above the £2,500,000 borrowed. . . . For years we have been writing to London endeavouring to get an abatement of this sinking fund, but we have always met with refusal. . . . Members will realise that the inquiry resolved itself into a very simple one, because it became a matter for the actuary. The actuary is working on it now, and I hope that the result of his investigations will be satisfactory to this State.

Last year I asked the Premier whether, in view of possible increased flotations, he would consider the advisableness of altering the present methods pertaining to our sinking fund. A statement has been made that we are paying our way if we take into consideration the enormous amount of money being raised for sinking fund. We have assets of considerable value. Our railways stand at approximately 19 million pounds. Then

we have our harbour works and water supplies. The Premier told us the other night that 61 per cent. of the money raised recently had been loaned for agricultural development and that interest is being paid on the whole of that money.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is that correct?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to disbelieve the statement of the Premier.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Does it include the purchase of estates?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Premier was speaking of agricultural development. Taking into consideration the fact that other States are raising money without making provision for a sinking fund, it seems to me that by continuing the course we have adopted in this State for so long, we are putting on the people of Western Australia an unnecessary burden. The present method of providing a sinking fund should be altered. I do not claim to be an expert in finance, but I do say that if I, as a private individual, went to my banker to borrow £1,000 and undertook to provide for a sinking fund and then went to someone else to borrow the money with which to provide that sinking fund, I would be doing something which could not by any means be considered sound finance.

Mr. Angelo: The Premier told us that he was acting on the advice of London financiers.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is complying with the provisions of the Act.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If we go on the market and purchase stock at a considerable discount, instead of putting that into a sinking fund and keeping it there, would it not be better to cancel that stock and so avoid paying double interest?

The Minister for Mines: That is a matter on which experts differ.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I know that what we are doing is provided for under the Act. The Act, however, should be amended. The statement has been made by the Premier that for years past we have been paying moneys into the Goldfields Water Supply Sinking Fund and that in that Fund there was today a surplus, and that the trustees in London had stated that it was not necessary to pay anything further into that fund. I am not suggesting that we should repudiate our obligations in any way. I am in the happy position of being able to say that when the present Minister for Mines was Premier, and he advocated an alteration in the sinking fund payments, I was one of those who supported him.

The Minister for Mines: I did not suggest an alteration in the sinking fund.

Mr. A. THOMSON: You suggested it should be suspended for the period of the war. If the statement made by the Premier is correct, and I have no doubt it is, our contributions to the sinking fund are largely responsible for the position of our finances. In connection with future loans raised in this State we should have the right to sell our

bonds. Our railways are an asset worth 19 millions sterling, and that department has to find interest and sinking fund on the capital invested. Most of the renewals are paid for as far as possible from revenue.

The Minister for Mines: Maintenance.

Hon. P. Collier: But what is maintenance?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We have the railways and also the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme which the present generation has paid for, and remembering the burden carried by the present generation we might well say that posterity should pay something.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot do what you suggest with the existing stock.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am not dealing with present stock. We must honour the contracts made with those from whom we have borrowed. It would, however, be interesting to know what it is costing to administer our sinking fund in London. When I was there I was informed that practically the whole of the time of the accountant (Mr. Sadlier) was devoted to sinking fund work. Then we have the agents for the Crown Colony debts. They receive a considerable sum. In addition, we have the trustees of the fund in London. I presume they, too, are being paid. I have not been able to ascertain what the cost of administering the fund in London amounts to.

Mr. Richardson: Our sinking fund enables us to get better terms for our loans.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Victoria has no sinking fund, and yet her loans are obtained on favourable terms. Regarding soldier settlement, as we shall have an opportunity of discussing the report of the Royal Commission, there is no need to refer to the matter at length. The Commission are to be congratulated on having made so exhaustive an inquiry. Unfortunately there are instances of over-capitalisation. On this subject I wish to draw the attention of the Premier to what is happening in New Zealand. A recent telegram from Wellington published in the newspapers set out—

The Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Bill, which is designed to give relief to soldier settlers who have suffered hardships during the slump, was read a first time in the House of Representatives today. The Bill provides for the setting up of district revaluation committees, which will make recommendations to the central board regarding soldiers' applications for a re-valuation of their land, the board being empowered to make a readjustment of rent. There is a provision in the Bill for the relief of mortgagors to the Crown. Owners or occupiers who have received advances from the Crown may apply for a revaluation of the land, with a view to a reduction of their debt. A dominion board will determine by what amount, if any, such debt to the Crown shall be reduced. Provision is made for the postponement or remission by the Minister for Lands of rent or interest, instalments of principal or purchase money.

The recommendation of the Royal Commission is that each individual case should be dealt with on its merits and revaluations made. But we have to go beyond that. We have quite a large number of clients under the Industries Assistance Board who were placed on the land by the Government. Unfortunately for the settlers and the State the Government did not deliver the goods. The Government in all sincerity believed the land to be first class, but it has never produced a crop. A committee was appointed to investigate some cases and they have made certain recommendations. Our returned soldiers' lands seem to be over-capitalised, largely owing, perhaps, to the inexperience of the men themselves. Moreover, there are large numbers of men on the Industries Assistance Board who are considerably over-capitalised by reason of sustenance allowances, and who show no tangible assets.

The Minister for Agriculture: How can a man be over-capitalised by reason of sustenance?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I should have thought that the Minister for Agriculture would easily understand that.

Mr. Willecock: It is all charged up against the property.

The Minister for Agriculture: But how can the man be over-capitalised by reason of that?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was a member of the House when the Industries Assistance Act was first passed, and many a weary hour have I spent since then, trying to get the clients of the board justice.

The Minister for Agriculture: More sustenance? More over-capitalisation?

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are cases of men who have never received proper accounts. In a recent case, which is within my knowledge, a man was first of all notified by the board that he would receive no further assistance, whereupon he made private arrangements to get his fertiliser. He happened to meet the board's inspector in the street, and the inspector told him that arrangements had been made by the board to provide him with fertiliser. The man replied, "I am glad to hear that, but I have already ordered fertiliser and I want the board to understand clearly that I must buy it from the firm from whom I have ordered it: so will you kindly place the order with that firm, and then take payment from the crop?" The board undertook to do as asked. Fertiliser came from the firm with which the man had originally placed the order, and then, to his surprise, about a month later, another parcel of fertiliser came along consigned to him. I assure the Minister for Agriculture, though he is not administering that department, that had it not been for the man coming to me and my putting up a strenuous fight for him, the Industries Assistance Board would have made him pay for the loss on the second lot of fertiliser. No doubt plenty more cases

of the same sort exist. The Minister for Agriculture somewhat ridiculed my statement as to over-capitalisation through sustenance. We know that by the Industries Assistance Board men have been compelled against their own common sense and judgment, to put in, year after year, crops which they well knew would never grow, crops which the land could not produce. But the Act said that assistance could only be given for further crops. I frankly admit that the Government were up against a serious position, because the war was on and the price of wire had soared outrageously. We know that men have been receiving sustenance year after year at the rate of 9s. or 10s. per day. That sustenance has accumulated with interest, and is a charge against the properties. Therefore, when one adds to the debt owing to the Agricultural Bank the money received from the I.A.B. by way of sustenance and advances for tools and other requirements, one recognises that there is absolutely no hope for a number of those farmers. The Minister for Agriculture knows that.

The Minister for Agriculture: But the men did not become over-capitalised through the 9s. a day.

Mr. A. THOMSON: They became involved in debt through the sustenance allowance. We shall have to adopt the New Zealand method. The Dominion Government have appointed committees, consisting of two gentlemen of practical knowledge, to value assets in company with the inspectors. Where the Government have placed men upon land which has proved unproductive the Government must give the man who has put in years of his life on the land the same opportunity to acquire that land at a reduced price as they would give in the case of a man who had been forced off his holding. An amendment of the Industries Assistance Act is necessary.

Hon. P. Collier: Conference to-day carries a resolution instructing that the debits shall be written down. Therefore it will be done.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was not at conference to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: I can give you that information. I am in close touch with conference.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Would any man be insane enough to take over some of those farms—there are a few, I regret to say, in my district, but not many—on which the indebtedness to the Government, the Agricultural Bank and the I.A.B. totals over £2 per acre, where if the property were put on the market would not bring 30s. per acre?

Mr. Mann: It can hardly be a farm if it is not worth £2 per acre.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is why the men require financial assistance from the Government. The land will carry stock, provided it is written down to its proper value. The Commonwealth railway, for instance, is regarded as over-capitalised, and is to be written down. If a man is given the opportunity to farm land on what he knows to be the best lines—say, raising stock instead of growing



crops—he has a possibility of succeeding. We are asked to give constructive criticism.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister does not like it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In my speech to-night I have honestly endeavoured to give constructive criticism. I have not been a destructive critic, though I have endeavoured to point out mistakes. I do not propose to deal with the State trading concerns to-night. I presume there will be an opportunity of discussing them at a later stage of the session.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You to-night recommended the Government to start another State trading concern.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I did nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You very nearly did.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No; I cannot have the hon. member suggest that. Now let me deal with the Government's attitude as to public works. I should like to be in the same happy position as the Public Works Department occupy. Irrespective of the part of the State where a public work is to be constructed, the department specify that the bricks required shall be obtained from the State Brick Works, that sawn jarrah and karri, flooring boards, etc., shall be obtained from the State Sawmills, that metal and screenings required shall be obtained from the Boya quarry. I am reading these particulars from the Public Works Department's general specification. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker—

All moneys due for payment of materials, etc., from the State trading concerns shall be a direct charge against the contract, and shall be deducted from the amounts payable to the contractor as such moneys may become due.

Hon. P. Collier: The Public Works Department know something of you contractors.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Perhaps they do.

The Minister for Mines: It does not sound very nice to specify stone from another quarry. If you owned a quarry and were building a stone house, would you specify your own stone?

Mr. Pickering: It would all depend on where the house was to be built.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member would go to his rival for the stone.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I challenged the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), when he was Minister for Works in the Labour Government, with the fact that the Public Works Department specified that timber for a bridge at Denmark should be bought from the State Sawmills, whereas, in fact, there was at that time a timber mill within a mile of the site of the proposed bridge.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You can rest assured that if the member for North-East Fremantle had known of that, it would not have happened.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Tenders were called for the erection of a science room at the Katanning State school, and it was specified that State bricks, State timber, State joinery, and

bluestone from the State quarries should be used.

The Minister for Works: You cannot have too much of good things.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so but I propose to show what it has cost the State to foster State enterprises. There is another matter which, however, does not concern the Minister for Works. The Government are building a railway station at Mt. Barker at a cost of £7,000. I congratulate the Minister for Railways on his belief in the district.

Hon. P. Collier: Mt. Barker is lucky in having the Minister for Railways for its member.

The Minister for Mines: Katanning will never progress till I go there.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If a district is to progress by the giving of loaves and fishes, the Minister had better go to Katanning.

The Minister for Mines: You can do a bit of wire pulling when you get the chance.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I was dealing with the Mt. Barker railway station.

Mr. Munsie: Where did they get the bricks for the Mt. Barker railway station?

Mr. A. THOMSON: From the State Brick Works.

Mr. Munsie: No.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, they did. I will give the House the exact number obtained and what it cost the Railway Department.

Mr. Munsie: Even so, it was cheaper than getting bricks from Kendenup.

Mr. Pickering: What about the railway freight?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That does not count!

Mr. Munsie: Even including freight, that was the position.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In the case of Kendenup, bricks cost £3 15s. per thousand and the railway freight from Kendenup to Mt. Barker represented 13s., or a total of £4 8s. per thousand.

The Minister for Works: But are they really bricks at Kendenup?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, quite equal to the State bricks, judging by what I saw of them. There were, for this work, 55,000 State bricks at £3 16s. per thousand, and the railway freight cost £5 per thousand. Then there were 2,500 plinths, costing £12 per thousand and on these, seeing that they were somewhat heavier, the freight was £8 per thousand. There were 4,000 "special" State bricks, costing £8 10s. per thousand, and the freight on them was £5 per thousand. Lastly there were 500 "specials," which cost 1s. each at the kiln. I estimate the extra freight on these State bricks, delivered at Mt. Barker, cost the State £269 14s.

The Minister for Works: But look at the quality!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with quality bricks. The Government propose to erect a High School at Albany and are having bricks delivered on the site at £3 15s. per thousand. If those bricks are good enough for use in connection with the erection of the school at Albany, surely they should be

good enough for use in connection with the Mt. Barker railway station? Some of the bricks used in the buildings at Mt. Barker have been obtained from Albany, some from Kendenup, and some have been burnt on the spot. Surely if those bricks were good enough for the buildings I have named, they should be good enough for the railway station at that centre. The principle is wrong and we are fostering State enterprises at the expense of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But that does not foster the State enterprises very much. The Minister can get orders for any quantity of bricks.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then why are they specified, in the way I have indicated?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because the officers think the State bricks are better.

Capt. Carter: Does it not sound like a bit of bad administration?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister for Works has nothing to do with it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Approximately 100,000 feet of timber is required for the railway station, and it must come from the State mills. I am not dealing with the extra price, although I know the timber can be purchased cheaper many miles nearer Mt. Barker.

Mr. Pickering: But not from the combine.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Perhaps not. The freight on that timber represents about £100 extra and on those two items alone the extra freight which has to be paid by the Railway Department in order to foster the State enterprises represents about £400.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How do you arrive at the extra amount? Where is the extra freight from?

Mr. A. THOMSON: From Wilga and from Holyoake. It is a question of 176 miles as against 98 miles.

The Minister for Works: The thing is out of its swaddling clothes. It is all finished. I signed the papers yesterday.

Capt. Carter: Then you have seen the error of your ways?

The Minister for Works: It is not a child any longer, it is a full-grown man!

Capt. Carter: But has it the brains of a man?

Mr. McCallum: How does this foster State enterprises? The Government can sell more bricks than they can make.

Hon. P. Collier: It is bad administration, that is all.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I complain that the Government are endeavouring to foster these enterprises by means of specifications compelling the use of the State articles in the erection of various public buildings. That is not a sound, commonsense proposition. If the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) were to erect a building for himself at Mt. Barker, would he go to the expense of £400 extra railway freight if he could get the supplies locally?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What has the Public Works Department got to do with the con-

struction of a railway station at Mt. Barker?

Hon. P. Collier: It is a matter for the Railway Department.

Mr. McCallum: How does this affect State enterprises?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Government are keeping the business to themselves. They insist on the use of State bricks, State timber and so forth, irrespective of the cost.

Capt. Carter: You have gone further in making your point, for you have shown that no business concerns can be run profitably by the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has nothing to do with them.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is a ruling by the Government that the Railway Department must use State bricks, State timber, State stone and so on in connection with their operations. When we come to the Katanning school, the work only represents an expenditure of £700 odd, yet the State articles are specified.

Mr. Marshall: But you cannot get bricks at Katanning!

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member came to Katanning I could show him locally made bricks.

Mr. Marshall: Who owns the kiln?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not. We have public buildings in Katanning such as the public hospital, the court house, police quarters, and a railway station.

The Minister for Mines: Anyhow, you cannot boast of having a lunatic asylum!

Mr. A. THOMSON: All those buildings were built of local bricks. The foundations were put in with local gravel and the timber used was procured from the nearest mill, which was only common sense. Local bricks are supplied for Katanning buildings at £3 13s. per thousand. They are not pressed bricks, but wire-cuts, and I will guarantee them to stand as long as any State brick.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What about the church building that fell down?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member can show me any building that fell down there, I will re-erect it without charge. Local bricks run to £3 13s. per thousand delivered on the job, whereas State bricks, plus freight, run into £7 10s. or £3 17s. more. This is the action of an economical Government! By specifying the use of State supplies, the Government have added to the cost of the building in Katanning anything up to £200. Is that business-like? Is it common sense?

Hon. P. Collier: What about business acumen?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If this is what is to go on, I am sorry for the Government and for the State.

Mr. Munsie: Well, you said these were the only people who had business acumen.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I voice my protest against this procedure because it is not in the interests of the State. If bricks can be made satisfactorily locally, it is not in the interests of the State that the Government

should pay extra freight in order that the State articles may be used.

Hon. P. Collier: But it is not benefiting the State trading concerns.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is increasing the turnover.

Hon. P. Collier: They have more than they can do now.

Capt. Carter: It prevents private enterprise from progressing.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If this action on the part of the Government is not to assist State enterprises, why is it done?

The Minister for Works: Why don't you let the Government sell the State enterprises?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am willing to assist the Government in that direction.

Hon. P. Collier: How heroic of the Minister! He had an offer for the State Timber Mills but he would not submit it to the House.

Mr. A. THOMSON: While the Government insist that purchases of these supplies have to be made from State trading concerns, they also insist in the specifications that if the supplies are not up to the required standard, proper articles must be put in. In other words, the Government compel the contractor or the department concerned to purchase from the State trading concerns, but if those concerns do not deliver the goods, the Government condemn them. That has actually happened.

The Minister for Works: No, it has not.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It has.

The Minister for Works: I know the instances you refer to.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I can give still another instance. I will deal with the Public Works Department generally.

Hon. P. Collier: Now the Minister will have his battle.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Personally I have received every courtesy from the Minister for Works.

Mr. Clydesdale: That is about all he will give you now.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If every Minister in the Cabinet treated me as well as the Minister for Works, I would have no complaint.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think you should make invidious comparisons.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I take exception to some actions of the department. For several years we have been endeavouring to secure the erection of a hospital in Katanning. The Government admit that the present institution is inadequate and that it is not sound business to incur expenditure in effecting improvements. The present building is obsolete. The Works Department submitted a plan with an estimated cost of £7,500, which in the opinion of the people of Katanning put it clean out of court. A committee there got into negotiations with a private architect and eventually secured a plan which satisfied the requirements of the people, complied with the wishes of the two doctors and, in the opinion of the Principal Medical Officer in Perth, filled the bill. He said the design was absolutely perfect. We have at Katan-

ning a Government hospital, and so actually we could sit down and say to the department, "You must increase the hospital accommodation." But being desirous of accepting a share of the responsibility, the people said, "If you will provide us with the necessary hospital accommodation at a cost of approximately £8,000, we will find £3,000 of it. Here is the design we want." But we struck a snag; we were up against the Works Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I doubt you there, because the hospital has to be approved, not by the Works Department, but by the Principal Medical Officer.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member will come with me to-morrow, we will go to the Principal Medical Officer, who will admit that what I say is perfectly true.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then the system has altered of late.

Mr. A. THOMSON: These plans have the approval of the Principal Medical Officer. The people of Katanning, after having the plans prepared, offered to find half the money, borrowing the necessary amount from the Government.

The Minister for Works: Yes, the Government were to find half the money and Katanning the other half.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The department turned round and said, "No Government plans, no money." That is what the Minister for Works said.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is it true that you wanted £3,000 from the Government, and then wanted to borrow the other £3,000 from the Government?

The Minister for Works: It is not uncommon in that district.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We guaranteed to pay interest and sinking fund on half the total cost.

The Minister for Mines: How did you propose to meet the guarantee—personally?

Mr. A. THOMSON: On the responsibility of the ratepayers of Katanning. On the advice of the Works Department we had our health areas extended, and we proposed to rate the whole of the district for the hospital. The road board at Broomehill and the Kent road board were prepared to contribute their quotas. We offered to find half the cost, but the autocrats of the Works Department said, "Unless you use our plans, there will be no money." In the interests of the State it would be well if occasionally outside architects were allowed to submit plans and quotes. I guarantee the private architect would beat the Works Department every time. Our plans were fully approved. If I could influence the road board I would have them say to the Government, "Very well, build your own hospital. We will not contribute a penny towards it."

Mr. Clydesdale: Do the Government do anything right?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Would the hon. member be satisfied with the reply we got?

Mr. Hughes: No, I should cross the floor if I were you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I repeat, that it would be a good thing to exercise an occasional check on the departmental officers.

The Minister for Mines: But you say the private architects would beat them every time.

The Minister for Works: It is a fine thing to have a good imagination.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Minister knows that in a certain district where a dam was required, the estimate of the Works Department was approximately 4s. 6d. per cubic yard, although other dams in the vicinity were being sunk at 1s. 6d. One quote was accepted by the department at 2s. 6d., and another at 2s.

The Minister for Works: That 4s. 6d. per yard quote was for more than sinking the dam. It was for making contour drains and in other ways completing the work—a different thing altogether.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It would certainly be in the interests of the State if an occasional check were imposed on departmental estimates.

The Minister for Works: Who is to decide—your private architects?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not say the private architects would always furnish the lower quote.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, you said they would beat the departmental officers every time.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We know that public buildings are always more expensively constructed than others.

The Minister for Works: Since we provide the money, we have the right to say how the works shall be built.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But when the district is providing half the cost, the people of the district ought to be consulted.

Hon. P. Collier: Would it not be as well to discuss this Katanning hospital business with the Minister in his office? It is of no interest to us.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) the other night dealt with the shortage of houses and the question of high rents. As one with a knowledge of the value of buildings, I ask, at the present high cost how can private enterprise be expected to erect houses for cheap letting? A four-roomed house to-day, with bathroom and verandahs, will cost anything up to £750, due to the increased cost of materials and wages. Bricklayers and plasterers are being paid 25s. per day.

Mr. Hughes: What has been the increase in the cost of jarrah during the last 10 years?

Mr. A. THOMSON: There has been considerable increase in the price of all materials.

Mr. Hughes: In jarrah it has been over 100 per cent.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing simply with the value of houses.

Mr. O'Loughlen: As a building contractor you have been able to retire.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The increase in the price of jarrah is due to increased railway freights and increased wages. The State Sawmills are part and parcel of the combine, their rates being the same as those of all other sawmills. As far as I can see, the charges of all our State enterprises are the same as those of private enterprises.

Mr. Richardson: What about the rent of a house built 20 years ago?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member has a four-roomed house built 20 years ago, is he willing to let his place for 12s. per week when the owner of the place next door is getting 30s.? With the price of a four-roomed house at £750 and the land at £50, or a total of £800, it cannot be let at a low rental, because the owner must have a return of at least 10 per cent.

Mr. Richardson: There has not been 100 per cent. increase in the cost of building, but there has been an increase of 100 per cent. or more in rentals.

Mr. A. THOMSON: A house which, 10 years ago, could be built for £400 costs to-day from £650 to £700.

Mr. Pickering: The cost of soldiers' homes shows that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, what better illustration could we have? It is all very well for the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) to talk about exploitation.

Mr. Hughes: Do not you think the Baird's Arcade business was exploitation?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member's statement is correct, it was. No doubt there is some rack-renting, but I am speaking of the housing problem. The Government should increase from £550 to £750 the amount allowed for a worker's home. That is a reasonable increase considering the present high costs. I would defy any contractor to erect a decent four-roomed house for £550. If a man provides the block of land and puts up a small deposit, the Government have quite sufficient security to justify the higher advance.

Mr. Munsie: How is the worker going to pay for it?

Mr. A. THOMSON: To-day he cannot get a house at all, and if he is called upon to pay the rents mentioned by the member for East Perth, he is paying more than would be necessary to purchase a worker's home.

Mr. Johnston: And he is not buying the house at present.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so.

Mr. Munsie: Let him have one cheaper than £750.

Mr. A. THOMSON: How is it possible if he wants a brick house?

Mr. Hughes: Reduce the margin of profit to the contractor.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am quite willing to permit any member to examine my books for the last five years and see what my profits have been.

Mr. O'Loughlen: In country towns wooden houses are being built for £280.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But they are unlined. want men to have decent homes.

Mr. O'Loughlin: They can be improved by grees.

Mr. A. THOMSON: What is the use of advancing £550 for a worker's home if it cannot be built for the money? Wooden houses cannot be built in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Hughes: The brick area is only for the benefit of speculators.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I believe in the brick area. A wooden house properly finished costs almost as much as a brick house.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Only because the insurance companies have put their heads together in opposition to wooden places.

Mr. A. THOMSON: A weatherboard house involves a greater risk than a brick house. I am surprised that the Government have not brought down an amendment of the Workers' Homes Act to give people the option of converting leasehold into freehold. The policy of all members on the Government side is freehold tenure. The Government have occupied the Treasury benches for three and a half or four years and have made no attempt to bring in freehold tenure.

The Minister for Mines: Do you believe in leasehold tenure?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If any man has a worker's home under the leasehold system, he should be allowed to convert to freehold at a fair valuation if he so desires.

The Minister for Mines: You would not give freehold to the pastoralists of the North.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are dealing with suburban land and workers' homes.

The Minister for Mines: You go only so far as it suits you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are leasehold suburban blocks, and men have the opportunity to convert them into freehold if they so desire. The same should apply to those who have workers' homes.

The Minister for Mines: And they might then pop out and sell to people who are not workers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There is a regrettable lack of co-ordination between the various departments. We have the I.A.B. and the Agricultural Bank nominally under one head and the Lands Department and the Department of Agriculture under another head. A case was brought under my notice in which the Lands Department fixed the price for certain land at 8s. per acre. A man took it up and applied for an Agricultural Bank advance. The advance was refused on the ground that the land was of no value. In the name of Heaven, what is the use of inducing people to go on the land and then refusing them an advance? These departments should be under one official head.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why did this man take up the land?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Lands Department threw it open and said it was worth 8s. an acre. The man wanted a loan for fencing and the Agricultural Bank refused it. I do

not say that the Agricultural Bank was wrong but, if it was right, the land should never have been thrown open. The Government have announced through the Press their intention of spending three millions of money for metropolitan water supplies. I cannot understand why the metropolitan water supplies have not been brought under a board similar to that controlling the waterworks in Melbourne. In Melbourne there is a local control; the various municipalities appoint representatives to the board. The adoption of such a system here would probably lead to greater efficiency and to the cheaper construction of works, while the people vitally interested would have a say in the matter. To-day the Government bring down a scheme and the people of the metropolitan area have to accept it, just as they had to tolerate an unsatisfactory water supply for some years. Metropolitan public utilities should be vested in boards. It would be interesting to know the cost of collecting water rates in the metropolitan area as against the cost when such rates are collected by the municipalities. The Katanning water supply is vested in the local board and the charge for water is added to the rate notice. A considerable sum of money could be saved in the metropolitan area if water rates were collected through the municipalities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you had a board, a special rate notice would still be issued.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The board could arrange to work in conjunction with the municipalities. The board could borrow money and spend it as desired.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of the municipalities might want to use the money.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The apprenticeship question is causing a good deal of concern. It is unfortunate that the great majority of our boys are being driven into blind alleys as regards employment. For this I blame our friends opposite to a large extent. The restrictions they have imposed have so circumscribed the number of apprentices—

Mr. Marshall: No, it is because of the sweating of child labour which you have always admired. You would sweat infants.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep order.

Mr. Marshall: Keep order with him!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I claim to know a little about this subject.

Hon. P. Collier: In contradistinction to the other subjects.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The unions, in preventing the improver system, are not acting in the best interests of the State. The member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) stated last night that there is a shortage of work, and that he had led a deputation to the Premier to show that 80 per cent. of the artisans in the building trade in the metropolitan area were out of work. There have never been 80 per cent. out of work since Perth has been in existence.

Mr. Hughes: Who supplied you with the information?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have been connected with the building trade all my life and know as much about it as the hon. member. It would be a distinct advantage if a boy were allotted to each plasterer, bricklayer and carpenter to learn the trade. The tradesman would take an interest in the boy and see that he did learn. At present, the boy gets in amongst a number of men and is of no interest to any of them.

Mr. Munsie: Who is going to employ the boy?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Members opposite insist upon apprenticeship rates and upon a boy being apprenticed for a certain period.

Mr. Munsie: There is no boulder in the State who would take an apprentice and yet you blame us.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are some builders who would take them. The hon. member should be fair.

Mr. Hughes: Who will take them? I know of 10 or 12 boys.

Mr. Munsie: I know of some, too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Members opposite are supporting my argument. If they would permit these boys to go with tradesmen and work—

Mr. Munsie: How can they, when the employer will not have them?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The employer will not apprentice them because he has no guarantee of continuity of work. There are only a few large firms, such as Millar's and Bunning's, who can afford to take apprentices. Other contractors have no continuity of work.

Mr. Hughes: Is not there building work in Perth for ten years ahead?

Mr. A. THOMSON: There is no guarantee that contractors will have 10 years' continuous work.

Mr. Clydesdale: And what would become of the apprentice then?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The improver system ought to be adopted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has been turned down all over the world.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not know whether the hon. member has served his time. I did not.

Mr. Clydesdale: You should have done so.

The Minister for Mines: He must have been let out under the First Offenders' Act.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I take second place to no man for a knowledge of my work, although I was not apprenticed. By going through the hands of different men I learned my trade. It does not take anyone five years to learn brick-laying or plastering. Those who are suffering to-day are the sons of men who are preventing their boys from learning a trade. Labour says, "We insist on having apprentices." No contractor who has no guarantee of continuity of work will make himself responsible for apprentices. The system is unfair to the boys. They should not be tied down to five years of work at a nominal wage, with small increases from time to time. One of the great difficulties in regard to unemployment is

that most of the men are unskilled and have no trade.

Mr. Hughes: Would you extend that to the professions?

Mr. A. THOMSON: To anything. We have no right to debar our boys from learning a trade, or to say they shall not learn this or that unless they comply with the conditions. Members of the Opposition are driving boys into a blind alley, because they will not permit them to learn a trade.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We want them to learn trades.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But you will not permit them to do so.

Mr. Munsie: That is an incorrect statement.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is not. I speak from knowledge. I have boys with me who are learning their trade. They are not apprenticed to me and I am paying them more than they would otherwise be getting.

Mr. Hughes: All employers are not like you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Many employers are doing even better than I am in that respect. They are willing to give the boys an opportunity if members opposite will do their part.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I notice you are driving out your own supporters.

Mr. Marshall: He wants a few apprentices there.

Mr. A. THOMSON: An astounding statement was made by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes).

Capt. Carter: He drove nearly all his side out of the House. There were only three here at one time.

Mr. Lutey: We sat here all the time.

Mr. A. THOMSON: He was speaking of the great concessions the farmers had received from the Railway Department. I have the figures here. If we include, hay, straw, chaff, wheat, wool, vegetables, fertilisers, water, livestock, and other things connected purely with agricultural products, we find that 36.20 per cent. of the revenue of the department was provided by the farmers.

Mr. Hughes: And what did they get in return?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Turning to Classes A to C, and first class, second and third, we find that 29.23 per cent. of the revenue of the department came from the agricultural industry. Thus we find that the country districts and country residents paid at least 70 per cent. of the railway freights of Western Australia.

Mr. Hughes: Oh!

Mr. Clydesdale: What about the metropolitan area?

Mr. A. THOMSON: They cannot pay.

Mr. Clydesdale: They are paying in other ways.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If chaff is sent to Perth from Katanning it is sold less railway freight, which the farmer pays. The city merchant does not pay the freight on the wire that is sent to the settler. If the country resident wants the ordinary requirements for his home, he has to pay freight upon them.

Notwithstanding this, the hon. member talks about the need for greater concessions for the metropolitan area. He cannot realise the burden the producer is carrying.

Mr. Hughes: Is not the worker in the city as important as the farmer?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He certainly performs a useful function in carrying on the affairs of State. It is, however, the farmer who produces that which creates employment for the railway man. He creates work for the lumpers at Fremantle by growing wheat that is exported and brings other commodities into the State.

Mr. Hughes: And the farmer gets £10 a week in return.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I wish that was true.

Mr. Hughes: Statistics show it to be so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are some men earning £3 a week, but that is not the average wage. Some men do not get enough to keep body and soul together. We all know the golden rule, "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves." If the Government take care of the country, the hon. member can be assured he will have very little need to worry about the metropolitan area.

Mr. Hughes: You had better leave that to members opposite.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet) [9.7]: I had hoped when the member for Kataning (Mr. A. Thomson), who has spoken for three hours, concluded his remarks he would have moved an amendment to the Address-in-reply showing his want of confidence in the Government. His whole speech constituted an attack upon Ministers. I am surprised, after the criticism we have heard from him, that he is still supporting the Government. The complaint he made was fair, just and sound. If there is ground for all his grievances, and he is correct in regard to the acts of mal-administration he has set out, his place is on this side of the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We do not want him.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If he were true to his principles he would be sitting on this side of the House. The Leader of the Opposition said the Speech delivered by the Governor did not possess that literary excellence that has characterised previous Governors' Speeches. To my mind its chief defect is that it is made up of bald statements and vague references to work the Government have accomplished or purpose to accomplish. An investigation into the activities of the Government shows in the main a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. The people are heavily burdened, and the finances are in a remarkably bad way. The deficit amounts to about six million pounds, and the Government have gone to the bad another £405,000 during the last financial year. A few years ago a deficit of a million was regarded as a serious matter, so serious that the Country Party and the Nationalist Party had to amalgamate to put the Labour Government out of office. To-day, however, a deficit of six million pounds is apparently of no importance.

Mr. Munsie: Everything is all right now. Hon. M. F. TROY: No one is concerned about it. The most important newspaper in the State, from the circulation point of view, merely makes reference from month to month to the improvement in the financial position. It does not take the people into its confidence and dilate upon the full amount of the deficit, but if any other Government were in office the public would be kept aware of that fact. During the last five years the Government have had every opportunity from this side of the House of making good. But taxation has been increased enormously, and there has been a very large expenditure of loan moneys to the relief of general revenue. At the end of the last financial year the Premier anticipated a small deficit. The "West Australian," excusing the Premier's failure to realise his figures, said that if Parliament had passed the Bills to provide for increased taxation on hotel licenses, and the hospital tax, the Premier's figures would have been realised. We were told that the hospital tax was not a tax, and that the Bill was brought down in order to assist hospitals to raise further revenue for their upkeep. Members opposite said they voted for the Bill with that object in view. We on this side knew the Government intended to increase the burden of taxation upon the people, and that the hospital tax was merely a means of diving the hands of the Government deeper into the pockets of the people. That fact is now admitted. It is said that if the Government had obtained that revenue they would have been £100,000 better off. But the people would have been more heavily taxed than they are to-day, and goodness knows that is heavily enough. The Government are receiving no less than 2½ million pounds more in revenue than the Labour Government received. The sinking fund payments have been reduced, and Parliament, by taxing the people heavily, has given the Government every opportunity to make good. The Government have increased direct taxation from £407,000 to £987,000, that is to say, they have doubled the amount of taxation.

Mr. Munsie: What have they done with the money?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I shall ask that in a few moments. From other sources of revenue, apart from railways, from timber and mines, the Government are receiving £981,000 now, as against £486,000 in 1916-17. There the taxation has been doubled. In the shape of railway freights and fares the Government in 1917-18 received £1,917,000: to-day they receive £3,000,000. I know that in the Governor's Speech jubilation is expressed because the railways have shown a gross surplus of £675,000. This is hailed as an improvement in the finances, whereas the policy of increased railway freights has been responsible for the depopulation of the back country more than any other cause we can point to. It is largely responsible for the depopulation of the electorate which you represent, Mr. Speaker. The people leave be-

cause of the excessive railway freights they have to pay, and because the cost of living has increased beyond what they can meet.

The Colonial Secretary: That is the main reason.

Hon. P. Collier: But the railway rates are an important factor in the cost of living.

The Colonial Secretary: There is also the decrease in the gold yield.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The gold yield cannot increase if the cost of production is raised to such an extent that the mines will not pay. A chief factor in that is the heavily increased railway rates for which the Government profess jubilation in the Governor's Speech. The heavy burdens of taxation imposed upon the people unfortunately have not resulted in improvement of the finances: no one can suggest that. This is probably the most heavily taxed State in the Commonwealth. Despite all the heavy taxation and revenue, the Government have been spending enormous sums from loan funds, no less than £11,300,000 during the last four years. Last year's expenditure of loan funds, £3,644,000, was the biggest in the history of the State. We on this side of the House want to know where the money is going to, how it is being expended, and what are the results of the expenditure. On these important points, the most important to be discussed by this House, the Governor's Speech either is silent or contents itself with very vague references.

The Colonial Secretary: There have been increased wages.

Hon. M. F. TROY: There have been no increased wages during the last 12 months. Wages are declining. The Governor's Speech makes vague references to soldier settlement, the expenditure on which, we are told, amounts to five million pounds. We know now that that expenditure probably represents part of the eleven millions of loan money. But what the House wants to know is whether that money has been wisely expended, and how the soldier settlement proposition is getting on. Last night we were assured by Mr. Wilson, who is Chairman of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into soldier settlement, that the Government will have to wipe off £500,000 on soldier settlement alone. We know also that the Government will require a considerable amount of money to keep these settlers on the land until, in time, they make good or leave the land to somebody else. The soldier settlement business is not finished with this expenditure. The business is only beginning. Even amongst the soldier settlers there will be a large number of men who will leave the land and heap up burdens to be carried by the small population of this country. When repatriation was first discussed in this Chamber, I wanted to know why the whole business was not left to the Commonwealth Government. I told the Government on that occasion that they would be wise if they allowed the whole of this repatriation business to be carried by the Federal Government. I said, "Give the Federal Government the

land, and let them carry this proposition, which will mean a great deal of loss to the State in the end. You will be well advised if you leave the Commonwealth Government to accept the whole responsibility." But apparently the State desired to carry the burden. I have no doubt that before five years are over our heads the present Government will be reaping a great deal of loss from soldier settlement. Many of the men will not make good, inasmuch as all men do not make good on the land. The Federal Government can boast of a surplus of seven millions. They ought to be able to boast. They have taxed the States, and they have the control of the Customs. The foolish State Governments take on all the heavy responsibilities which ought to be borne by the Federal Government alone. We should have given the Federal Government the land; it is no good to us. We should have let the Federal Government carry the responsibility after that. All the Federal Government want is the advertisement. Who is going to carry the loss on this business? The State, because we have accepted the whole responsibility—foolishly in my opinion. We understand from the Governor's Speech that there has been heavy expenditure entailed by the group settlements. The Speech merely refers to the fact that a large number of settlers have been settled in group settlements. We want to know what is going to be the ultimate cost of the group settlements. Can the Government tell us the cost of one group settlement? Can the Government tell the House what has been the cost to date of the development of the Peel Estate? That is information which the House ought to secure, but we get none of it. We are no wiser than the man in the street, except that while he thinks he knows, we know that we do not know. The important things Parliament should know are withheld from Parliament. I do not think a Minister in this House knows those things, or that an officer in the departments knows them. All that is known is that the newspapers have approved of this policy, and that the people think it is going to do wonderful things for the country, and that the Premier says there are millions of money in London waiting to be invested in this connection. But we can be sure that a small population of 350,000 will have to carry the burden. We can borrow millions and throw them into the soil, but a time will come when these 350,000 people must be taxed to pay the cost of upkeep and to pay the interest on the loans. Unless there is the possibility of this settlement turning out a success in the next few years, this community can never carry the burden. We are taxed up to the hilt, and there is a deficit of six millions, and we are spending millions on group settlement without any idea of how the money is being spent. From our experience of soldier settlement we know that we shall have to write off a considerable amount of the money spent on group settlements.



We know that the experience in connection with group settlements will be worse, because the returned soldier in many cases had some knowledge of land settlement, and mostly was an Australian with a knowledge of Australian country conditions. The migrant from overseas, however, is a much harder man to settle on the land, and there will be heavier losses on his settlement. This country may, in a few years, be carrying a burden which the community will find to be intolerable. If one speaks against the group settlements, one is accused of having no faith in Western Australia. However, I am satisfied that a large number of group settlers will not make good. We have already had the experience on the Peel Estate. A little while ago we noted in the "Government Gazette" that a great number of settlers had been removed from the Peel Estate because they were not making good, so we understand. The same thing is going to happen in all the group settlements. I have little doubt that 50 per cent. of the men now on the group settlements will leave those settlements. My objection to the settlements is that apparently there is no concern regarding the amount of money spent in bringing them to the stage of cultivation. In my opinion, that system is wrong. I would never permit the Government to employ men to improve my property. That ought to be my own responsibility. The settlement which has taken place on the wheat belt would not have been so successful if the Government had had the clearing of the land and had utilised the methods adopted at the group settlements.

Mr. Money: That principle applies to other things besides settlements.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It applies to settlements, anyhow, inasmuch as the settlers have to produce a commodity at a profit in order to carry on at all. If their properties are over-capitalised, the settlement is going to be a hopeless failure. I personally do not agree with the system which sends men down to a settlement and there puts them under a supervisor, who may or may not possess the necessary experience, and then disposes of the whole proposition to the burdening of the cost of development. The whole trouble is that the person owning the land has not been given the initial responsibility. It would have been far better if the Government had formed the group settlements and allowed the settlers themselves to carry the full responsibility of developing the property from advances made by the State. In that case I have no doubt the group settlers would have had more chances of success than under the present system.

Mr. Underwood: What would be the principle of selection?

Hon. M. F. TROY: There would be a principle of rejection if a man could not look after himself. The Premier is not to be congratulated on having made economies. No one has thought of giving him a word of congratulation on that, simply because he

has made no economies. The Press of this country which professes to represent public opinion, does not congratulate the Premier on the fact of his Government having been economical or having secured efficiency. The Press merely congratulates the Government on the fact that the Governor's Speech discloses an expenditure of millions of money by the State. On what the money has been spent is no concern of the Press. Newspapers have no responsibility, and they approve of the Premier's policy willy-nilly. In a few years' time they will turn round and blame Parliament for the blunders which they will say have been made; blame Parliament, not the Premier or themselves. It reminds me of the Versailles Treaty, which everybody now condemns. The other day the "Daily News" attacked Lloyd George for the fearful mistake he had made in that respect. It took Lloyd George over its knee and slapped him for the blunders he had committed. We all know they applauded it to the very skies. They said that at last the ends of justice had been secured and now they blame the politician! It is well known that public opinion demanded the terms of the treaty. The same men who are now applauding the expenditure of millions here without any proper supervision, will condemn Parliament when the waste is apparent later on. As a matter of fact, the Press is largely responsible because it is grossly misleading the people. I have a copy of the speech delivered by the outside official leader of the Country Party, Mr. Monger. It is his policy speech.

Hon. P. Collier: It contains a lot of very solid matter.

Mr. Underwood: These Country Party members here only carry out his views.

Hon. P. Collier: They are his rubber stamps.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I have much in common with some of Mr. Monger's views.

Mr. Underwood: So have I.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I believe, with him, that the future will see the State in a very bad way and that because of the Premier's schemes, an intolerable burden will be foisted upon the people, a burden they will not be able to carry. In contradistinction to Mr. Monger, however, I am giving my opinions here, and if I see an opportunity of putting Parliament right, I do so. In the course of his speech, Mr. Monger made some important remarks.

Mr. Underwood: Some impudent, impertinent remarks.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger said—

Even now the weight of taxation is seriously retarding the development of this State and is forcing some people with large estates to realise their assets and migrate to the Eastern States, where taxation is less heavy and conditions generally more congenial than they are here. Under the State's present system of immigration, our methods are entirely different to those which obtained in the past. Consequently,

the percentage of failures will, I fear, be larger and our financial responsibilities greater than those incurred under the old conditions of settlement.

He goes on to point out that the group settlement scheme will possibly turn out badly for Western Australia.

Mr. Underwood: It would be worse if Monger were in charge.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Probably that is so, but Mr. Monger is not in charge.

Hon. P. Collier: Not officially.

Hon. M. F. TROY: He went on to say—

I am more concerned about the future than I was this time last year. After an interval of 12 months, I stand by what I then said, with this addition, that whereas then I feared trouble might arise owing principally to lack of efficient supervision and organisation, both locally and in London, I consider the period of doubt is now passed, and that we have well and truly entered upon the road of certainty. It is impossible for me or any other man at this stage to even venture an opinion as to what the actual outcome will be, but we can make up our minds that present methods are heaping up financial burdens for the future. It is wrong for the Government to embark upon a scheme involving the expenditure of millions without having first created an efficient body to administer the same on a properly defined policy.

Hon. P. Collier: That is all I have said.

Mr. Underwood: And I said it before you did.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Continuing. Mr. Monger said—

This State presents great opportunities to migrants, probably greater on the whole than the Eastern States, but even under favourable conditions success will only be obtained by hard work and the wise application of knowledge instilled into them since their arrival here. As the majority of our new settlers will be men without previous land experience, or business training, naturally their chances of making good are lessened, even assuming all other conditions are favourable. I am sorry to say I cannot subscribe to what appears to be a fairly general opinion that the group settlement scheme is progressing satisfactorily, and that most of the settlers thereon will eventually make good. As a matter of fact, I have a very uneasy feeling and consider that when these men cease to draw wages and are thrown on their own resources, besides having to meet their interest and capital payments and provide for the keep of themselves and families, then will their troubles start.

Mr. Monger is fully seized with the dangers of the scheme.

Mr. Underwood: You admit Monger is an impostor?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I not only admit that, but will prove it as we go on. Here is the chief leader of the Country Party and

the State to-day—he directs the policy of the State—who views with the gravest apprehension the future of the State in view of the Premier's policy but still directs the Country Party to support the Government!

Mr. Underwood: My oath, and he will tell them how to vote too!

Hon. P. Collier: He says, "All is bad, but continue on."

Mr. Money: He had a still greater apprehension for another alternative.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger sees there is certain disaster ahead and yet directs the members of the Country Party to carry on to destruction. Let us be plain about this gentleman and study his attitude.

Mr. Underwood: His impertinence.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I do not know whether it is impertinence or what it is. I share with him the apprehension he expresses, but if I were serious do hon. members think I would, realising the position, accept no responsibility and take no action? The man who does that is a coward and is not fit to be the leader of any party. I would repudiate such a man utterly. Just imagine a man addressing a gathering of primary producers; men who help to shoulder the burden of taxation, and who never learn the truth until they come to the city, inasmuch as they are misled by the "West Australian." He tells them that the position is such that the country can hardly bear the burden. He shows what is responsible for the position and then directs them to carry on and support the Government. If I had a leader of that character, I would have the utmost contempt for him. As a matter of fact, what is wrong with the gentleman is that he is not honest. He knows what is wrong but he is afraid of the Labour Party, as another alternative. What would the advent of a Labour Government mean to him?

Member: Ruin.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No, but it would mean that the Labour Government might attack some of the special interests with which Mr. Monger is concerned in the city—not the farmers' interests.

Hon. P. Collier: Trustee companies and that sort of thing.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger had the impudence to say that in view of the charges made by the Press against the Country Party, it would do the Press good to have a dose of Labour Government.

Mr. Willcock: But he would not like it himself.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger would not like to see Labour in office because he would have to share in the effect of that change. Mr. Monger is not afraid of what would happen to the primary producers. He knows that the Premier's schemes spell disaster because no one knows what they are costing the State and no one seems to care. The Premier does not know what his work is costing and will not tell us anything about it.

Hon. P. Collier: He merely waves his hands about.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger draws attention to the seeming prosperity of the present day and points out that it is due to the expenditure of *been moneys which cannot last*. The fact is that Mr. Monger is one of those astute gentlemen who saw the tendency of the farmers towards Labour and by carrying on propaganda in the Press, drew them away from Labour. All the schemes we hear referred to so often in connection with the agricultural industry such as the L.A.B., the extensions of the operations of the Agricultural Bank, the wheat pool and land reclamation—all emanated from the Labour Government. Strange to say, although the credit for that rests with the Labour Government and that we have been out of office for six years, the Country Party have initiated nothing. Country Party members have been content to merely work along the lines laid down by Labour.

Hon. P. Collier: They have carried on all the things we initiated.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger and other big land holders and those having large vested interests in the city with land as a hobby, want to *scare the farmers from the Labour Party*. In order to achieve that they organised and swung the farmers round to the belief that they were safeguarding the farmers' interests from the exploitation of vested interests in the city. What Mr. Monger is concerned about is not the farmers, but vested interests in the city.

Hon. P. Collier: He advised the farmers not to bother about politics but to leave it to the executive and to him.

Mr. Underwood: It stampeded a lot of our members and they went over.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The farmers are discontented. I met one prominent settler from the Northam district. He said, "I have always opposed Labour but never again. The proper combination is between the Labour Party and the farmers. We have common interests subject to the same exploitation. In America it is Labour and farmers; so it should be here. I am trying to bring about a change at this conference. If I do not succeed I will get out." I know that many farmers hold the same view. Mr. Monger says: "Leave politics to the Executive, and don't discuss that subject." Mr. Monger advises the farmers to leave politics to such eminent primary producers as Shallerross, Monger, McGibbon, Murray, and Lloyd Bloxsome.

Hon. P. Collier: They all run farms on the terrace.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Or on the Golden Mile. Mr. Underwood: Who is the greater impostor, Monger or Hickson?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I will not discuss that. Mr. Monger issued a grave warning in his speech concerning the methods of the Government, but finally tells the farmers that they must have some arrangements for the next election, so that the Government may carry on. At the same time he said that they accepted no responsibility for the policy of the present Government. In another part of his speech

he blames the "West Australian" for giving all the credit to the Premier and says that as it is a coalition Government, the Country Party should have half the credit. When the disaster of the group settlement became apparent and the next succeeding election is held, members can let their lives. Mr. Monger will say, "I told you so." We will have the same experience as we had seven years ago when Sir James Mitchell was scolded upon by every member of the Country Party as being responsible for all the farmers' troubles. And they kept him out of the Government.

Mr. Underwood: They prevented his appointment as Minister for Lands.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That was a condition of the coalition. The same thing will occur next year. Monger will say to the farmers, "I told you so." In my opinion the man who takes refuge in a statement like that of Monger's is a coward.

Mr. Underwood: Mind you, Monger will die one of these days.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I want to know why that lofty gentleman does not enter this Chamber.

Mr. Underwood: He could not get here.

Mr. Richardson: Five minutes here would do for him.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, it would puncture him entirely.

Hon. P. Collier: He likes to stand aloof, and say who else shall come here.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, he will not accept any responsibility himself. His one purpose, and that of Shallerross, Lloyd Bloxsome, McGibbon and Murray is merely to exploit the farmers' movement. They desert the farmers' interest whenever it clashes with that of the city. The other day I asked a farmer why he did not belong to the Country Party. His reply was, "God Almighty! how could a man join that party!" Here is a movement purporting to be out to prevent the exploitation of the people. Yet we have on the executive men whose sole object is exploitation. They are natural exploiters. These are the men who say, "We must maintain the coalition." It is the same old game.

Hon. P. Collier: It is time Wayback woke up.

Mr. Richardson: Monger says he is responsible for keeping you people out of power.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We admit that he and the big land holders are keeping us out.

The Colonial Secretary: Is not that a godly act?

Hon. M. F. TROY: It may be, but it has had some ungodly results.

Hon. P. Collier: It has brought to the surface some queer flotsam and jetsam.

Hon. M. F. TROY: A number of organisations are anxious to get members of Parliament as directors. Mr. Colebatch was a director of the A.M.P. Another member is a director of another concern. The insurance companies appoint members of Parliament as directors because those members will be an influence against legislation affecting the

interests of the companies. So, too, with the Country Party executive. All those men are merely using the wheat farmer who develops his property to defend the farmer whose property lies undeveloped; they also use the farmer to protect the vested interests of their own friends in the city. The same game is being played in the Federal Parliament. Now, I will leave Monger—

Mr. Angelo: After half an hour of scandalmongering.

Hon. P. Collier: Yours was a marriage of convenience with them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been very disappointing in one way.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Press is not pointing to the ultimate effect upon the people of all this heavy expenditure. They expressed regret that the people were not more heavily burdened by the hospitals tax. The "West Australian" said that if the Premier had realised the amount estimated to be received under the hospitals tax, the deficit would have been less. The people of this country are taxed more heavily than those of any other State in the Commonwealth. Monger himself admits that. Yet the "West Australian" is not concerned about that. I should like to ask who made the "West Australian" an authority on politics. Do members realise who the fellows are who write those articles about the wonderful achievements of the Premier? They are men who do not know a spade from an axe. The men who set themselves up as authorities, telling the country and the world what is best, have had no experience whatever, and could not possibly make good themselves. Yet this country is in the lamentable position of having its destinies directed by such men.

Hon. P. Collier: They affirm to-day what they denied yesterday.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We are informed in the Speech that an agreement has been signed between the Imperial Government, the Commonwealth Government, and the State Government, providing that each of those authorities shall bear one third of the cost of £6,000,000 raised to promote immigration into this State. I am not opposed to immigration—this country cannot be settled without it—but the present system is a particularly muddled one. We are told in the Speech that 10,000 people have arrived during the last 18 months, and that 12,000 arrived during the last three and a-half years. Yet we know that during that time our population has increased by only 4,000. Either the migrants are leaving the State as fast as they come or, worse still, our own people are going. We are told that a redistribution of seats is necessary because the people have been drifting away from the back country. They have gone to the Eastern States, left Western Australia altogether, have been driven out by excessive railway freights. Industries are languishing. The Government have no policy, do not care a rap about it. Many of our men would go on the land if they had the opportunity. The Speech says the

repatriation of soldiers is concluded. It is not concluded. Scores of soldiers are still looking for land. If they cannot get it here, they must go elsewhere. Quite a number of our people are going to Queensland, where opportunities await them. Notwithstanding all this, we are asked to believe that the State is in a very satisfactory position, that migration is adding to our population. It is not. No other State in Australia presents so bad a record of population. Yet we have borrowed millions of money with a view to building up our population.

Hon. P. Collier: We have added 4,000 to our population and £11,000,000 to our debt.

Hon. M. F. TROY: In this morning's paper appears an account of the visit of the British Delegation to the Immigrants' Home, Fremantle. In it we are informed that the delegates thoroughly inspected the home, and spent some time conversing with the inmates, numbering about 200. We learn that 51 families are there awaiting draft to group settlements. But we understood that before these migrants went to group settlements they were given 12 months training in the farming areas. That is one of the conditions of the agreement. Now it seems that these new arrivals, the majority of whom have never seen a farm, are being drafted on to group settlements directly after arrival.

Hon. P. Collier: Straight from the ship, indeed.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Under such conditions, can we expect anything but a muddle? All these new arrivals without local knowledge are being sent to group settlements, to clear the land and bring it into production. It shows that country employment is not available for those migrants. The conditions of the agreement are not being observed. The migrant is being drafted to a group settlement as soon as he arrives. Under such conditions he has no chance of making good, and the cost must prove so excessive that the system will inevitably break down. Would the Minister for Works employ new chums on his farm?

The Minister for Works: I have been foolish enough to do it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: But you will not do it any more. I know I would not do it. A peculiar thing about this immigration is that the whole of the responsibility of training the migrant and finding work for him is being thrust on the farmers.

Hon. P. Collier: The policy of the Government is 12 months training for the migrant; but from the outset it is broken, and the migrant is being sent direct from the ship to the group settlements.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Because the farmer will not accept him. We are told that millions of pounds have been advanced by the Agricultural Bank for improvements. But it is unfair to ask any farmer to borrow money at 7 per cent. in order to employ and train men whom the Government should themselves train. Why should a man make improvements at heavy cost in order to accom-

moderate the Government? The training of the migrant is the Government's responsibility. A great many settlers will not take migrants, because the cost of improving the land in that way would be too heavy. Furthermore, he would not be justified in doing it if he wanted to remain solvent. I wish to say a few words regarding the policy of the Government. If the Government have any policy at all—and none has been enunciated so far, with the exception of the statements in the Press and by the Premier and his Ministers—it is a policy for the development of the agricultural industry. It is claimed that this season there is an additional 500,000 acres under crop. How did the Government obtain that information. Where did it come from?

Hon. P. Collier: An estimate.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Whose estimate was it? It was a pure guess.

The Minister for Works: Hardly that.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is the sort of statement put up in the Press and on which leading articles are written. The Government have had no opportunity as yet to arrive at that fact. The information is not available. The police are only now collecting the information. The statement is not one of fact; it was a guess—a bald statement to impress the people.

The Minister for Works: I think you are wrong.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am sure I am right. The police are now making their visits in order to ascertain the acreage under crop. I have met them; they were making their visits after the Governor's Speech was delivered. There is no such thing as 500,000 additional acres being under crop this season, and in making that statement the Government had no figures to go on. I have my own experience to prove it.

Mr. Willecock: They went on the super supplies.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If they calculated on the super sales, they are in error, because they have no opportunity to know what quantity a farmer puts on his land. Further, owing to the heavy rains early this year, a great quantity of super was not used at all. Ever since the present Government have been in office, and during the term of their predecessors also, attention has been directed to the large importations of dairy produce from the Eastern States. We have been told from time to time that the Government are doing their utmost to have these commodities produced within the State. Yet after all their endeavours the position to-day is worse than it was in 1917. In 1917 Western Australia imported £755,000 worth of dairy products, covering bacon, eggs, butter, potatoes, and onions, and last year the value of these commodities imported was £894,000, or £140,000 more than in 1917. We are not overtaking the demand; we are buying more than in previous years, in spite of the claims of the Government.

The Minister for Works: There are more mouths to eat it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: There are very few more mouths; the population has increased only very slightly during the last five years.

Mr. Davies: We are consuming more per head than formerly.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We have been spending millions of pounds in order to supply our own requirements and yet we are losing ground. We are told also that the Department of Agriculture have engaged practical demonstrators and that a practical demonstration is being given in the profitable utilisation of light lands. That is another bald statement. Where are the Government giving this practical demonstration, and who are giving it? Who are fit to give it? Who are the experts? I know that some of them have been failures as farmers. There are some experts in the Department of Agriculture who failed signally as farmers, and those failures are the teachers, the demonstrators. The same thing applies to the I.A.B. and Agricultural Bank inspectors. These inspectors go around advising the farmers what to do, how to sow their crops and what quantity of superphosphate to use, and in many cases these inspectors themselves have been utter failures as farmers.

Mr. Willecock: The successful farmer will not take on the job at £6 a week.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Apart from Mr. Sutton, there is not a practical man in the department. Some of the experts will prove good in time, but as yet they are too young. They have not the experience necessary to enable them to impart instruction to the farmers. The member for Kaituma (Mr. A. Thomson) complained of the manner in which the Department of Agriculture was dealing with the settlers under the I.A.B., and asked that the Government write down the liabilities. The Government have no right to do that without first making proper investigations. I know there have been appointed outside inspectors or advisers—they were selected by the farmers' organisation—to report on the properties held by farmers under the I.A.B. I believe these men were appointed at the instigation of the Farmers and Settlers' Association. I understand they are being paid one guinea a visit, or one guinea a day. To my great surprise, though they are appointed by the Government, they report first of all to the farmers and settlers' meeting as to what they propose to do. I learn that these advisers appointed by the Government have first reported to their own branch and then advised the Government to write down properties. Suppose the Labour Party had lent the Trades Hall £3,000 and appointed two members of the Trades Hall to advise them upon the liabilities, and those members had told the Trades and Labour Council that they intended to advise the Government to write down the liability to £1,000, what a row there would have been, what talk of political corruption!

Hon. P. Collier: And what would the Press have said?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yet these advisers informed the Farmers and Settlers' Association that they were advising the Government to write down certain liabilities.

Hon. P. Collier: They were elected by the branches. It was a scandal to select political agents to deal with Government securities.

Hon. M. F. TROY: As a matter of fact, it is a method of organisation. These advisers can go to the Farmers and Settlers' Association and say, "See what we have got for you." Could I go to the manager of the Bank and ask him to write down my liability?

Hon. P. Collier: It is a shocking scandal.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Apparently in the last few years this House has been prepared to tolerate anything. There has been no parallel for the happenings since the present party have been in power, and they are influenced by the organisation in Wellington-street.

Hon. P. Collier: The organisation demanded these appointments.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Did not we have evidence last year of Mr. Monger using his influence with the Council of Industrial Development to get a grant made to the Fremantle Freezing Works, of which he was a director?

Hon. P. Collier: That body recommended the grant and it was made.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Corruption! The country reeks with it as a result of the influence of one political party. I have a complaint to make regarding the way in which the Government are treating I.A.B. settlers, but it is a more genuine complaint than the one made by the member for Katanning. The Government informed a number of settlers that they were to be removed from the I.A.B. "We are going to carry you no longer," they were told, and the settlers looked around for some support. They begged the Government to give them superphosphates. The Government took them on again and, when they sent the superphosphate, it arrived too late in the season to put in the crop. The Government give these men no chance to carry on. Inspectors are sent out to advise these men how to grow crops and what quantity of superphosphate to use and the I.A.B. allow only 45lb. to 50lb. of superphosphate per acre. Every practical farmer knows that this is an unpractical proposition. A farmer has no hope of making good if he uses such a small quantity. It is absolute waste of time and money.

Mr. Stubbs: That is right.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I said to one of these men, "You will never grow a crop unless you use 100 lbs. of super." The reply was "They will give me only 45 to 50 lbs."

Hon. P. Collier: That is a waste of money.

Hon. M. F. TROY: This has the effect of putting the farmer still further into debt.

Mr. Davies: You complained of the farmers' organisation. What are they doing there?

Hon. M. F. TROY: They have failed signally. Here was a legitimate opportunity for

them to advise the farmers in order that the best results might be obtained, and they did not advise them. I am afraid under such conditions that many of these men have no hope of making good. Imagine a farmer compelled to sow a crop under conditions which he knows must beget failure! Although these men have appealed to the inspectors from time to time, they have been unable to secure redress. These men are getting into further difficulties because of the policy of the department controlled by their own Minister. We are told in the Governor's Speech that sheep farming is in a highly satisfactory state. If there is one industry in this country from which the primary producer may expect a profit, it is sheep farming. Wheat is going down in price, but wool is going up. The price to-day is very high. Yet the Government, while wasting millions of pounds in these alleged group settlements in the South-West that cannot possibly give a return to the country for years, are making no provision to help the settlers in the eastern wheat belt to carry sheep. Nearly all the settlers in the eastern belt will be faced with the problem of carrying on during the next year or two. They cannot carry on by growing wheat. They must go in for mixed farming. If they grow wool, there is a market and a price for it. Nearly all the wheat belt farmers carry no sheep at all. Yet the Government, while spending millions of money in the South-West, have no proposition regarding these settlers that would enable them to get returns in 12 months.

Mr. Davies: That is Mr. Monger's complaint.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is my complaint. I would not have Monger on my mind. If I were Premier, I would first of all make those lands productive which can be most quickly developed and which will give the quickest returns. That is our necessity to-day. Such lands would pay for the development of other lands from which the returns would be slower. The Government are pouring people into the south, which cannot give a return for many years to come. Why do they not assist those settlers who are already on the wheat belt?

The Minister for Agriculture: We have been doing so.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Let the Government give them abundant water supplies, help them to eradicate pests, and assist them to carry sheep. If they fail to do this the farmers will be in a bad way. They cannot depend upon wheat alone.

Mr. Davies: In America they are burning wheat now.

The Minister for Agriculture: We hear a lot of cock and bull yarns from America.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Wheat is decreasing in value, and next year we may expect a further reduction. The people who bought wheat from us on the Continent and in England can no longer afford to pay our prices. The condition of Europe is worse now than it was when the war terminated.

Hon. P. Collier: And the Argentine is being rapidly developed.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We have to develop our lands to the fullest extent. It speaks badly for the administration of the Lands Department that the thousands of settlers in the wheat belt are allowed to believe that they can carry on by wheat growing alone. There is an abundant source of revenue to be had from wool production. If I were Minister for Lands I would increase the production from those lands from which it is quickly and easily obtained.

The Minister for Agriculture: The growing of sheep will not increase the population of the State.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What is the good when the country has to borrow millions to maintain the people?

Hon. P. Collier: Sheep growing in the wheat belt will not deter people from coming here.

Hon. M. F. TROY: There is no co-ordination between the Agricultural Bank and the Lands Department. The department advertises blocks of land for sale at 8s., 10s., or 12s. an acre. When the settler takes up one of these blocks and applies to the Agricultural Bank, he is told by the bank officials they will not advance a penny on them. We are told that the policy of the country is to make advances through the Agricultural Bank for land settlement. If the land is no good, however, it is not worth a penny an acre. The policy is wrong. The Lands Department have no right to sell land at 8s. or 10s. an acre if it is of no value. That is unfair treatment to settlers. There are large areas of country which could be utilised if the Agricultural Bank would assist the settlers.

Mr. Davies: Were people advised to take up that land?

Hon. M. F. TROY: It was advertised for sale. Thousands of people are looking for land in this country. It is there for settlement and is classified as first or second class.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is definitely stated that no Agricultural Bank loan will be made on some of the land.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Not in all cases. I have in my possession a chart on which there is no specific statement that the Bank will not make advances.

Hon. P. Collier: Your point is that if the bank will not advance money the land ought to be given away.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is my contention. The bank trustees always pursue a conservative policy. At one time they would not advance money on Kellerberrin land. The bank ought to be influenced by legislation. It ought to be given to understand it is the policy of the Government to advance moneys for land improvement wherever in their opinion that land can be usefully developed. The Speech contains a bald statement in regard to the export of fruit. It says:—

The export of fruit for the year amounted to about 400,000 cases, which

constitutes a record, and the prices realised in the English market demonstrated its quality.

One would think that our fruit production was increasing, and that we were getting fine returns from the industry. I have here a letter from a friend of mine in the Bridgetown district. He lived in my electorate for years and made money there, and then bought a property at Bridgetown. He says—

I see at the opening of the House the Government congratulated themselves on exporting 400,000 cases of fruit. I wonder if the growers will get on all their cases a clear profit of one per cent. I doubt it. On my returns the apples sold very well, especially in Hull. I shall be out on my year's work in packing and expenses on 1,200 cases. I enclose statement showing expenses on my "Port Albany" shipment of 508 cases; 258 sold in London and 250 in Hull, same apples, same steamer, also one return for the lovely sum of 3d. Unless the Government get these double agency charges and costs and freights down and someone in London to look after our interests there the orchardists are down and out. After 12 years' work I am about broke. I also think the Government will have to help in advancing money to orchardists to help them keep going for a few more years.

He winds up by saying that if the Government do not assist there will be no more smiling orchards in the South-West. He backs up his letter with his account sales.

The Minister for Agriculture: He does not say there was anything wrong with the fruit.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The quality was good.

The Minister for Works: What did he get out of it?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Threepence.

The Minister for Works: Out of the 500 cases?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Apparently.

Mr. Angelo: He must have got an advance of some sort.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No. Paterson & Co. were the agents. Their charges amounted to £79 19s. 11d., and the charges in London to about £40. All these charges amounted to practically the value of the consignment, and this gentleman has put all his money into the property. Many of the orchardists are in a bad way.

Mr. Pickering: If they do not realise 5s. a case free of all charges, they cannot make it pay.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger says the fruit industry is in a bad way, but the Westralian Farmers have no policy in regard to it. Apparently the Government have no policy either. They are giving people to understand that the industry is in a prosperous condition. They would have been more honest if they had said they had shipped 400,000 cases, upon which there had been no satisfactory return to the growers, and also

if they had announced their intention to make better provision for the sale of the product.

The Minister for Agriculture: There may have been some cases such as you describe, but there have been plenty of others where profits have been made.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Mr. Monger does not say so.

The Minister for Agriculture: I admit the fruit industry is in a bad way.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is not fair to put a statement of that character into the Speech. The "West Australian" based a leading article upon that, showing the prosperity of the country.

Hon. P. Collier: The inference was that it was most prosperous.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is spoken of as a record sale. The Government ought to have said the fruit industry is in a parlous state.

The Minister for Agriculture: And cry stinking fish.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Let them face the position as it is, and do something to break down the heavy charges that are placed upon the growers. The middleman always gets the best of the deal. How can it be otherwise?

Mr. Pickering: The profits are eaten up in freights.

Hon. M. F. TROY: And the charges of the middleman. The middleman forms the other branch of the National Party which is represented by the Colonial Secretary.

Hon. P. Collier: There are no middlemen in our ranks. They must be somewhere over there.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Reference has been made to the development of the North-West. We are told that the development of the North and the North-West continues to receive special consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: It is proceeding apace.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Speech goes on to say:—

A tropical agricultural expert has been appointed. The Agent General Designate has made inquiries into cotton growing in Queensland. Private enterprise is endeavouring to organise the exploitation of the natural resources in power of this territory—

Hon. P. Collier: More exploitation.

Hon. M. F. TROY:—

—with the encouragement of the Government, which will if necessary submit to you legislation to enable the prosecution of various developmental projects.

The development of the North-West has been proceeding for the last 20 years, and the population is less than ever.

Hon. P. Collier: We are going back.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What has happened to the wonderful scheme propounded by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo)? The Government cut up certain lands in the Carnarvon district, and settled a certain number of people in connection with the hon. member's special scheme. The Governor's Speech is silent on that point. I wonder if this is one of the schemes of exploitation for which the

Government are going to introduce legislation. What is it they hint at in the Speech? What proposition has private enterprise in mind that the Government are going to legislate for? Why these vague references to the great North-West and what the Government are going to do? Mr. George Miles is understood to be coming back with a scheme.

Hon. P. Collier: And with thirteen million pounds.

The Minister for Agriculture: He has been congratulated on his success.

Hon. P. Collier: By whom?

Mr. Willecock: Success if the Government will guarantee 5 per cent.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I object to the waste of money at Carnarvon. That settlement at Carnarvon represents an absolute throwing away of money. There is only one definite scheme for Carnarvon—the breaking up of pastoral areas along the river. If the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) were the patriot he tells us he is, then instead of selecting unfortunate returned soldiers to waste their lives on little garden plots, he would have said, "These men fought for their country, and I will give them a chance."

Mr. Angelo: How many men went?

Hon. M. F. TROY: There are no successes, anyhow.

Mr. Angelo: They have not started yet. They are waiting for the tropical expert.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We were told Mr. Despeissis was the man for the North-West, and the Government allowed Mr. Despeissis to leave the country. I have listened to the same thing for 20 years regarding the North-West. The only sound things ever done for the development of the North-West were done by the Labour Government—I refer to the State Shipping Service and the Wyndham Meat Works. Comparing the achievements of the present Government in this connection with the achievements of the Labour Party, the people might well ask that that development should be continued by the party on this side of the House. The Commissioner for the North-West is the laughing stock of the community. What are his qualifications for the position? What is his knowledge of the North-West? What are his duties? Apart from the Wyndham Meat Works and the State Shipping Service, the North-West to-day is more backward than it was 20 years ago. Now a word regarding the mining industry. The Governor's Speech tells us—

Prospecting for gold and oil is proceeding actively. There are 82 parties searching for gold, 141 parties having been assisted during the past year, in addition to two Government parties. Boring for oil in the Kimberley district has been undertaken by two parties, traces of petroleum having been obtained.

Two parties are looking for oil in the Kimberleys, and that is active exploitation for oil! How many oil companies are there in this State? I believe 34, and only two are operating. What are the rest doing?



Hon. P. Collier: They are all endeavouring to raise capital. Even Bremer Bay has closed down.

Hon. M. F. TROY: As regards mining I admit that the Government are equipping and sending out a number of prospecting parties, but that is all. This morning's "West Australian" refers to the mining industry.

Hon. P. Collier: Very briefly.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It says—

It is right that the mining industry should receive in the Governor's Speech the reference that its importance merits. Where is the reference? It is a brief and paltry reference. There is no policy.

The Colonial Secretary: There is the policy of assistance to prospectors.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Let the Minister tell us, out of his remarkable knowledge, what is being done.

The Colonial Secretary: Assistance has been given to 147 parties during the past year.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What is wrong with the mining industry of Western Australia? In my opinion that industry has been destroyed by excessive railway freights on mining products and by the scandalous ramps which have occurred during the last few years. And the department propose to do nothing. Our mining to-day has the worst reputation that it has ever had in its history. Men who at one time could be induced to invest in mining, will not now put a penny into it; and they will not put a penny into it because of ramps like the Bullfinch, Hampton Plains, Sandstone, and another one recently at Laverton. If one approaches an honest man with a proposal to invest in mining, he immediately looks upon one as a spieker. And, indeed he is justified in doing so. There are certain men now in the mining industry who take down their own friends. They have not the ethics of a pickpocket. A pickpocket will take a chance by robbing a person, but these men will come and tell their victim to his face that the proposition is a good one, induce him to invest his every cent in it, and so calmly take him down. And what is done by the Mines Department? The department talk about the legitimate mining investor.

Mr. Pickering: What do you suggest?

Hon. M. F. TROY: That the Government should hold an inquiry. The strange thing is that all the men I refer to have, according to themselves, also lost money in mining. It is up to the Government to appoint a Royal Commission on that last ramp at Sandstone, and find out just who got the money, and also whether certain people were justified in giving out the statements they did to the Press, thereby inducing people to buy shares. If the Government want to restore faith in the mining industry, they will have to do that. The New South Wales Government, following up the wheat scandals there, traced out various private banking accounts. Here in Western Australia we have men who were prominent in mining

booms, and they all walk about with doleful faces telling us what they lost. The Government should appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the affair at Sandstone, where business men fell in very badly. A large number of men were induced to come into the town, and the business people bought large supplies of commodities in Perth and paid freight to Sandstone. The majority of the men could not pay. The place was left far more desolate than before. The prospectors themselves did not get a shilling out of the proposition. We are told that everyone connected with the ramp was ruined. What do the Government propose to do about it? If the industry is to be carried on upon such lines, very good; but faith in the mining industry of Western Australia will not be encouraged. There is really no reference in the Governor's Speech to the mining industry, simply because mining is not considered, because the Government have only one policy, which is to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on establishing group settlements in the South-West. Other things have to take their chance. The Government have had no real regard for the mining industry for years. They merely profess to have a regard for it. The whole of their eggs are in one basket to-day, and when the crash comes there will be trouble in Western Australia. Regret was expressed that the financial agreement between the Commonwealth and the States was not completed. My knowledge of the position, such as I gathered from the reports in the Press, makes me glad that the State did not reach any agreement with the Commonwealth. Such an arrangement would have been disastrous to Western Australia. Either Commonwealth Ministers possess more ability than do our Ministers, or else our Ministers are grateful to the Federal Ministers for their condescension in conference. When the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) was in Western Australia he made many promises which the Press acclaimed. The Press, too, referred to Mr. Bruce as "the friend of Western Australia." As is so often the case, the Press spoke too soon.

The Minister for Agriculture: He would have been a friend had his guarantee that we would be £100,000 better off under the scheme been given effect to.

Hon. M. F. TROY: If that guarantee had been given, what would it have meant? The Federal proposition was that the State should have the collection of the whole of the income tax in return for the Commonwealth retaining the whole of the surplus revenue payments. I believed it would only be a matter of time when the Federal Government would hand over to us the whole of the income taxation, because the Federal income tax was merely imposed to meet war conditions. The Federal authorities had to meet their war obligations and we expected that the time would come when Australia, becoming more prosperous, would pay off her war debts and our taxation would be reduced accordingly—not increased. As a matter of fact, the Federal Government have control over the whole

of the taxation of Australia and collect a huge revenue.

Mr. Pickering: T. cy exercise that control, too.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, to the fullest extent. Had we signed that financial agreement, Western Australia would have had only one large source of taxation—incomes. As we got further into difficulties, the income tax would have to be increased. Under such an arrangement the Federal Government would have been relieved of the distasteful work of imposing increased income taxation. Western Australia would have had recourse only to income taxation whenever we wanted more revenue, and that position would be intolerable. If ever a Government enter into an agreement whereby they accept the whole responsibility for collecting the income tax in return for the Commonwealth retaining the whole of the surplus revenue, it will be bad for Western Australia. The Federal Government should keep faith with the people so that with the wiping off of the war debts, income taxation will be reduced. The State cannot do that, because our obligations have been, and will continue to be, increased. I do not wish to be a pessimist, but I prefer to speak the truth. Any man can be a breezy optimist with other people's money. We know that unless the State repudiates its obligations we have to pay interest on all our debts and although we can borrow millions, we must pay the money back. If our only means of financing resolves itself into income taxation, the burden will be so intolerable that no Government will be able to stand up to it, for the people will not have it. I believe, had that agreement been endorsed by the Government, it would have been rejected by Parliament. This session may not last long, because apparently the Government do not contemplate bringing forward much legislation. I am surprised that a Hospitals Bill, which was said to be so necessary last session, is not to be re-introduced. I have a suspicion that the Government are prompted in their action in that regard by considerations arising out of the forthcoming elections. During the session I intend to take advantage of the opportunities I have in the House of criticising any act of mal-administration on the part of the Government. The people of the State, according to the Premier, are taking more active interest in politics than they have done for years past. That being so, I hope they will interest themselves in the migration scheme and in group settlement, and will demand from the Government, not merely bald, empty statements such as appeared in the Governor's Speech, but something concrete. They will want to know where it is all leading to and whether we are to get a decent return from the millions that have been spent in connection with group settlement under methods which I do not approve.

On motion by Mr. Angelo, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.47 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 9th August, 1923.

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

### QUESTION—SANDALWOOD TENDERS.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: In connection with the tenders for cutting and disposal of sandalwood—will he lay on the Table the correspondence between Mr. John Stewart and the Hon. the Premier?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes.

### QUESTION—ESPERANCE, MINISTERIAL VISIT.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, Whether, upon his return from abroad, the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker, M.L.A.) was made aware of the then pending visit of the Minister for Agriculture to the Esperance district? 2, If so, by whom, and what view, if any, did the said member express respecting his desired ability or inability to join in the proposed visit?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter was mentioned in conversation between the member for Kanowna and the Secretary, Premier's Department. As it was understood by the latter that the member was unable to make this trip, the Minister for Agriculture was so advised. No invitation was issued.

### QUESTION—R.S.P.C.A. FUNDS AND OFFICIALS.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Hon. J. Duffell in connection with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Amendment Bill, now on the Notice Paper (of which Bill Mr. Duffell is in charge) the following questions: 1, Is it a fact that a portion of the funds of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been tampered with by one or more of the officials of the Society? 2, If so, will he give particulars of such misfeasance and of the circumstances under which it arose? 3, Are the officials of the society under guarantee?

Hon. J. DUFFELL replied: 1, Yes. 2, The particulars asked for are contained in a copy of the minutes of a special sub-committee, which I am laying upon the Table. 3, No, but the matter is under consideration.