

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1928.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill No. 1 (£1,910,500).

QUESTION—UPPER CANNING BRIDGE, RECONDITIONING.

Mr. NORTH asked the Acting Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that tenders have been called for the reconditioning of the Upper Canning bridge at Gosnells? 2, Is it a fact that specifications provide for the widening of the bridge to the extent of two feet, and that no provision has been made for a footbridge? 3, Is he aware that the danger to pedestrians on the bridge will be increased by the extension proposed, owing to the greater facility given for motor vehicles passing each other? 4, What would be the estimated cost of a footbridge to provide security for pedestrians?

The ACTING MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, No. 4, £500.

QUESTION—GROUP SETTLEMENTS, OVERHEAD CHARGES.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The question that I was to ask the Minister for Lands regarding overhead charges in connection with group holdings appears on the Notice Paper as follows:—

Is it a fact that overhead charges, plus capital and interest, represent 25 per cent. of the total charges against group holdings?

There appears to be a slight error, although I do not know that it makes much difference. Instead of the words "plus capital and interest," the question should have included the words "plus capitalised interest."

The Minister for Lands: That does not make any difference.

The Premier: The answer to that question would be obvious.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In the circumstances, I ask leave to withdraw the question.

Question by leave withdrawn.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [4.37]: As the representative of a constituency entirely devoted to farming operations, and as a practical farmer myself, it may not be out of place if my opening remarks are confined to a review of the early part of the season, which, to a large extent, had a depressing effect upon most of the agricultural districts of the State. While I will not suggest that our conditions approximated that of a drought, the season to the end of June was the driest experienced for many years in this State. I have prepared a few figures that will be of interest. I intend to make use of them, not with a view to interesting hon. members here so much as to indicate the practical lesson to be learnt from the experiences of the season so far. I trust it will prove of benefit to new settlers who may be expected to come here in such large numbers in the future. For the eight months from the 1st November to the 30th June last, 468 points of rain fell throughout the greater portion of the wheat-growing areas. I refer more particularly to the central, or older settled districts. Then, during the month of July following, 469 points of rain fell, or one point more than was recorded during the preceding eight months. In 1912 we had a similar experience. Only 315 points of rain fell during the eight months from November to June, but during the following July, 575 points were recorded, or a total of 890 points for the nine months. I particularly refer to the total for the nine months in the hope that we will experience similar conditions this year, because, despite the records I have quoted, we had a splendid season. With a decent carry-on from now, I see no reason why the State cannot exceed very considerably the previous record production of 35,000,000 bushels of wheat. On the law of averages, and with similar falls of rain, I think we have every justification for being optimistic in that respect. We

have quite three months yet to go and the appearances of the agricultural districts have never been better than at present. Any hon. member who is familiar with those districts will agree with me when I say that, from the point of view of the growing crops, the outlook has never been better than it is to-day. I trust the desire of the Minister for Agriculture, that the centenary crop will prove a record one for the State, will be fulfilled. Recently I travelled throughout my electorate and adjoining electorates as well, and I can vouch for the statement that the farmers are doing all they can towards that end, and I know that the farmers in other districts are adopting a similar course. I believe we shall have a much larger area under crop for the centenary year. Reverting to my opening remarks regarding the season, I wish to emphasise the fact that, from a sheep man's point of view, it has been the most disastrous for many years. In many parts hand-feeding has had to be resorted to. There is an old axiom that tells us that adversity teaches its lesson. From that point of view, it is to be hoped that the experience of the mixed farmers will be such that they will make ample provision for fodder, so as to be prepared to cope with extraordinary seasons. It would be of great interest if the Minister for Agriculture and his officers were to induce the farmers to place on record their experiences during the season, and particulars regarding the steps taken by them to tide over the dry period. If those experiences were embodied in a pamphlet, the publication would serve a useful purpose if made available to the farmers throughout the various districts. It is indeed regrettable that, while we have had such a splendid season from the standpoint of the wheatgrower, it has been so disastrous to the sheep men. It is unquestionable that meat prices have been considerably affected by the shortage of lamb mutton in particular. The result of the lambing in most districts will not exceed 50 per cent., and many of them will not reach that percentage. I believe I am safe in forecasting that the actual results will demonstrate that there will not be a 50 per cent. lambing earmarked throughout the mixed farming areas of Western Australia. Coming on top of the adverse season in the North, particularly in the Murchison area, it seems to me that meat prices must remain fairly high for a considerable time to come. Another matter I wish to

refer to relates to the Bush Fires Act. It is necessary to amend that legislation so as to make the opening and closing dates for burning-off more uniform. In my electorate there are several road board areas and it is common knowledge that, while the opening date for burning-off operations on one side of the road may be the 1st February, on the other side it is the 15th February. Those dates should be made uniform and a general opening date for burning off fixed by law. The fixing of that date should not be left so much in the hands of local governing authorities as it has been in the past. As an old road board member, I have taken part in many discussions regarding recommendations to be made to the department as to the exact date when burning off might be permitted. That time has gone by. There has been and always will be in the minds of farmers a distinct dread of fire, but that feeling should not be allowed to interfere with the progress of the State. I say without fear of contradiction that the opening date, particularly in some districts, is too late, as farmers are losing quite a fortnight of the best burning period of the year. Seeing that the rainy season sets in within about six weeks of the opening date, the period for burning is not by any means sufficient. I hope the Minister will bring about an alteration that will be more in conformity with the requirements of the districts. The risk of damage being done by fire will be no greater at the 1st February than at the 15th February, which are the dates usually prescribed, except that the value of feed may be greater at the beginning of the month. For all practical purposes, harvesting operations should be well over by the 1st February. Any man who has not got his crop off by that date would have been delayed by exceptional circumstances, such as an accident to his machinery, and the risk of crop being burnt through fires getting beyond control of the clearers is slight indeed. Let me refer to the question of local water supplies and particularly the effect of the dry summer on the agricultural supplies. The season has been a trying one, even in the oldest districts. Dams and even wells that have never before been known to fail have failed this year. I congratulate the Minister on having met the difficulty in a practical manner in the eastern or newer areas, particularly in my electorate,

and on having relieved much distress in certain areas. So far as he was able, he made ample provision there. That has also been done in older areas, and the Minister's assistance has proved extremely helpful. There is a matter that comes within the purview of the Minister for Water Supply on which I have spoken previously, and that is the salinity of the Avon River. I thank the Minister for having made available officers to take levels and acquire the necessary data for damming the lakes which, in my opinion, are the chief contaminating influence. I hope that this year the Minister will be able to provide a small sum of money for the erection of flood gates so that the difficulty can be tackled in an effective manner. At the present time the flow from the lakes is easterly, and the river is banked up for a distance of eight or nine miles. In the course of a week or two the water will turn in the opposite direction, the flow from the lakes will be released and the thousands of gallons of water as salt as the sea impounded therein will be set free. It is such water that contaminates the Avon River and is responsible for contamination below the lake entrances. I hope the Minister will use his best endeavours to get the Treasurer to provide the money necessary for flood gates, which will prove the key to the position. I wish to direct the attention of members to the statistical data being collected by the police. I daresay some members are aware that when the police officials were gathering the information last year they demanded that the farmer should show the unimproved capital value of his holding, a demand that had never previously been made. I am anxious to know for what reason that information is required. If it is required for taxation purposes, then it is a violation of the principle on which the returns are supplied, because it is clearly set out that the returns are required for statistical purposes only. If the information is required for taxation purposes, why should it not be obtained from the Taxation Department, which has it in the proper form? That would save the time of the farmers and spare them unnecessary harassing. Most of the forms are handed out by the constables in the town, or are given to the farmer in his paddock, and the particulars of the unimproved capital value supplied on the spur of the moment might not be cor-

rect. Yet the farmer is committing a breach of the law if he supplies incorrect information. This may appear to be a very small matter, but I assure the Government that it is causing a lot of unnecessary harassing. I hope the Minister will explain why it is necessary to ask for such information in the statistical returns.

Mr. Angelo: Is not that a Commonwealth matter?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I do not know. It is being collected by the police, together with the information usually supplied in the annual returns.

Mr. Angelo: On behalf of the Commonwealth.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Another matter to which I wish to direct attention is the adoption of Federal values by road boards for the purposes of local taxation. I believe that Federal values have also been adopted by the State; of that I am not sure, but I have been so informed. Let me direct attention to the injustice of accepting those values *holus bolus*. No practical allowance whatever is made for the class of land, because none of the holdings has been valued block by block or acre by acre. The holdings are valued on their situation. No allowance is made for areas carrying poison or for anything else. I have had experience of the effect of adopting the Federal values. Recently I acquired land a few miles out of a certain town. It contains poison, but it is valued as high for local rating purposes as is the land of my neighbour over the road which has not a bush of poison on it. I have to incur considerable expense to fence the land and eradicate the poison, and I am unable to carry sheep on it. A number of years will elapse before I can bring that land into full production, but meanwhile willy nilly I have to pay the same rates as the man who has no poison at all on his land. Increases in values up to 400 per cent. have taken place under the Commonwealth valuations, and those valuations have been adopted by some of the local bodies. I understand that efforts are being made by the Minister to compel other local bodies to do likewise. So long as the valuation is fair, I have no objection to offer, but I have quoted my own experience to show that it is not fair. The Premier gave us a lot of information the other evening of the Govern-

ment's intentions regarding the 3,000 farms scheme. I am in agreement with the proposition, but I wish to sound a note of warning regarding the lay out of roads in the areas in which the farms are being established. I hope that care will be exercised, and that blocks will not be unnecessarily divided by roads, whether main or developmental roads. Some of the blocks are being indiscriminately cut up by roads not in conformity with the lay of the country, but because a siding or water supply happens to be in the vicinity the surveyor cuts a road through a surveyed block. In many instances, the blocks were located long ago. One man has 500 acres of crop on a 1,000-acre block, and recently the surveyors put a road through it from corner to corner, which means that the holder must incur additional expense to fence the road on both sides. That sort of thing unnecessarily hampers a settler. The surveyors should be more careful when they carry a road through a block, and should certainly go through on the square instead of cutting the block into triangular shapes. Let me now refer to that hardy annual, the Brookton-Armadale railway. Much that I might have said has been cut away as a result of the deputation that waited on the Premier last week, but I wish to tell him candidly that as soon as the three months have elapsed he will be deluged with another deputation much bigger than the one last week. I hope that the Brookton-Dale railway will not be left in the same position as the Yarramony railway, the construction of which has been held up for a number of years. I hope that our persistent advocacy of the Dale railway will not result in its construction being postponed from time to time. The through line from Brookton to Armadale can remain in abeyance for a time, though I believe the Government and the Engineer-in-Chief are imbued with the need for constructing the through line. For the moment, however, the most important consideration is the construction of the section already authorised from Brookton to the Dale. It is time a move was made to put that work in hand seeing that four years have elapsed since the railway was authorised. The survey has been completed, and all the necessary data is available to permit of the work being started. I hope that provision will be made this year for the building of the first

section of that line. Last week I asked a question regarding the tariff charged at the State Hotels and I received a reply from the Minister which was not at all satisfactory, and which in one respect was absolutely incorrect. I asked the Minister what justification there was for increasing the tariff, and was told that the tariff had been increased to meet the increased expenses. Further, the Minister said that private hotels had already increased their tariff to a similar extent. I maintain that in the country districts that is not so. There has been no increase in the tariff of the country hotels. It is a misuse of a monopoly for the Government to increase the tariff of State hotels when private institutions are providing just as good accommodation at a 20 per cent. lower tariff and, so far as I can see, have to bear just the same expenses. I feel it incumbent upon me to deal with this matter because the information supplied to the Minister was evidently incorrect. I was pleased to hear the Premier's remarks regarding the application of money for workers' homes to the country districts. I understand that in future the State money will be used in the country districts, and the Federal money will be used in the metropolitan area. That is a step in the right direction and it is one that will be appreciated by the country people. Another matter to which I wish to refer concerns the Minister for Railways, and that is the carrying out of a promise made by the Commissioner of Railways two or three years ago for the lighting of country railway stations. More particularly do I refer to the lighting of the Corrigin railway station by electricity. The reply given in the first case was that as soon as the night service was established in that centre the department would supply the station with electric light. The night service has been in existence for some time, but despite the letters I have written to the Commissioner of Railways, nothing has been done. I hope that provision will be made on the Estimates for the work to be put in hand. The department should come into line with private enterprise in these districts, where citizens have already shown their faith by investing their capital. I now wish to refer to the Vermin Act and its incidence. I am pleased to know the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) intends to bring down a Bill

with the idea of putting the Act into shape. I do not know what provisions it will contain, but I do know that the squatters in the North are getting a distinct benefit at the expense of agriculturists in the south and central districts. I hope the Minister will see that the Act is amended and made more equitable to all concerned.

The Minister for Lands: It could be abolished.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Yes, it is the most iniquitous measure on the statute-book and savours more of class legislation than anything else in existence. Whilst the agriculturists are providing the sinews of war to enable the squatters to fight the vermin they have to contend with, the squatters refuse to assist the farmers in combating the rabbit pest.

The Minister for Lands: The squatters have cleared thousands of acres of country out of their own resources.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Farmers, too, cleared thousands of dogs out of the country before the squatters did anything. We did that without asking the rest of the community to finance us, and by doing this work we have increased the value of our land and enabled the Government through taxation to provide more money for clearing the vermin out of the North. We have rabbits to fight. Provided we were allowed some reasonable exemptions, I should be satisfied with the Act as it is, but we have no hope of getting such exemptions until the Act is amended. We know the ridiculous view the departmental officers take as to what constitutes a vermin fence.

Mr. Lindsay: Blame the House for that.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: If the definition of a fence is ridiculous, the definition of a wild dog is still more so. I would sound a note of warning, and it is that it will not be long before all dogs in the country districts are brought within the definition of a wild dog. It is the idea of the departmental officers that any dog, irrespective of class or breeding, that is running at large, is a wild dog.

Mr. Lindsay: The Act says that.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Under that definition there will be very few kelpies or any other kind of dog left in the agricultural districts.

The Minister for Mines: They should not be allowed to run wild, but should be destroyed.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The Act is open to gross misuse and to the fleecing of the department. There are dogs in the agricultural districts that are no more wild than lap dogs in the city, but people can take their scalps and pelts and collect £2 a head on them.

Mr. Lindsay: Dogs that are running wild should be destroyed.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Although it is provided that the scalps shall be destroyed under the supervision of some officer or local authority, it is possible that the department may be rooked right and left. I agree with the remarks of the member for Albany (Mr. A. Wansbrough) on the subject of the Fremantle harbour extension. We have had experts' opinions before, and we shall have them again, but between them all we do not know where we are. To extend the harbour in any direction than up the river would seem to be a step in the wrong direction. It is a question upon which we should have the fullest possible information, irrespective of what it costs to get it, before we come to any decision upon it. I will await with interest such information as the Minister for Works may be able to afford. I hope no undue haste will be shown in the matter, and that whatever is done is done in the best interests of the State, both from the point of view of present and future requirements. With regard to the Main Roads Board, quite a change has occurred since the conference met and dealt with the question. From the formidable agenda that was placed before the conference, one would imagine that the Main Roads Board would have been out of existence before this, but the chairman of that board was able to satisfy the conference on many points, and the proceedings terminated in an amicable fashion. I believe the Act was the main cause of the trouble. I have had no difficulty with the board myself. I differ from the Premier in his statement that at the country conferences no regard was shown for the real trouble, and that resolutions were passed of a character unfriendly towards the Government. We had a conference at Beverley, which was attended by representatives of all the road boards in the district. A reso-

lution was carried acknowledging that the Act was at fault. The conference held in Perth was the outcome of the country conferences. I am glad to be in a position to refute the Premier's statement, though I believe he made it in good faith. The trouble is we are working under both State and Federal legislation, and between the two we do not know where we are. Apart from that there has been unnecessary political interference, which has placed the board in an invidious position. I refer, of course, to Federal political interference. Until Ministers of the State and Federal Governments sink their political differences and come together, and view the matter in a common-sense way, the administration is not likely to improve.

The Minister for Mines: At every conference the Federal Minister has agreed with the views of the local authorities, but when he has returned he has found he could not carry out his promises.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: A better state of affairs should be brought about between the two factions. When dealing with the matter in the public press, the Premier seemed to reflect upon the select committee which was appointed by another place to deal with the main roads question. Whilst such references may have been all right from the point of view of political propaganda they have not got us anywhere. The referees have not been altogether correct. I believe the select committee had only one object in view—the framing of a good measure. Members of the committee went to Victoria, on the Act passed in which State our own Act was based. Upon the information and evidence collected by the select committee, the members of it came to a certain decision, which I believe was honestly given. Whether it was eventually proved to be the undoing of the work of the board, I am not prepared to say. There is no doubt about the honesty of the intentions of the select committee. I do not agree with the idea of using those recommendations for political propaganda at this stage. With regard to the question of education, I feel I must refer to the cheese paring policy of the department in dealing with country schools. I refer particularly to the question of shelter sheds. I understand the department has decided that no more shelter sheds shall be provided for country schools. That decision is unfair to the scholars as well as

to the teachers. It is said that sufficient accommodation is already provided by the verandahs and the school when the weather is wet. Ample facilities are provided for children and teachers in the metropolitan area, and there seems no justification for depriving the country districts of similar facilities. If they are necessary in the metropolitan area, they are still more necessary in the country. This decision of the department is a step in the wrong direction, and country members should voice their protests against it. The driving allowances for country children have also been withdrawn. That is one of the greatest penalties imposed upon any section of the community. Ours is a policy of free education. Many of our farmers do not enjoy a gross income greater than £400 a year, and quite a number of them are being assisted by the Industries Assistance Board, and the cash they receive amounts to an allowance of only 9s. a day. It is distinctly wrong to deprive those people of the driving allowance. It should be restored at once, and the compulsory radius over which it operates should be extended from three miles to five. If the allowance were restored and the radius extended, some of the schools which are now rather close together, could be moved elsewhere. I hope the department will make some provision to meet the requirements of new settlements in a similar fashion. The educational facilities that are provided must have an important bearing upon the decision of migrants and others to take up new areas. If reasonable conditions are provided for them, they are much more likely to live contentedly in their new surroundings. Now I come to the Premier's utterance on unemployment. It may be remembered that at one stage of his speech, when he was referring to Southern Europeans, I interjected, "Who is going to do the work in country areas?" I repeat that question now. Without being a champion of Southern Europeans, I say without fear of contradiction that men coming from the Old Country and the average Australian of today will not do clearing work. That fact has been brought home to us in the country districts.

The Minister for Mines: Australians and Britishers will not do it while the others can be got to do it cheaper.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I speak from personal experience. I have Italians

working for me to-day. Had it not been for the rough handling I have received from Australians and Britishers, that would not be so. The average migrant cannot do clearing work, and the average Australian will not.

The Minister for Railways: Oh!

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I know what I am speaking about. The old Australian clearer is gone.

The Minister for Railways: Nonsense!

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The average migrant is being spoilt by the do'e which is given him in the South-West on the group settlements.

The Minister for Railways: All the migrants are not on the group settlements.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Italians would have cleared the land on the groups at one half the cost.

The Minister for Lands: Then your policy would be to introduce Italians, and not Britishers at all.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: How many of the men to be placed on the 3,000 farms will do their own clearing?

The Minister for Lands: Do you suggest that we should discontinue the introduction of Britishers and introduce Italians?

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members will have an opportunity to reply.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am sorry if I have raised the ire of members opposite, but I am speaking from practical knowledge. I would sooner dispense with the Italians, Albanians and other foreigners if I could. However, in my district alone, during this year, from 12,000 to 15,000 acres of land are being cropped which would not have been under crop at all but for the Italians. I will go further, and give my personal experience of a clearing contract. In the first place, I let it to Australians, and in the second place I let it to Britishers—not new arrivals, but men who had been here for some years. I gave the Australians and the Britishers their own price, and the work cost me 9s. per acre to clean up by Italians; and in addition I was left in the lurch. In bygone years one could get land cleared by Australians, but that has not been so latterly. If this question comes before the House in five years' time, my words will be acknowledged to be true. Unless we allow Italians to do the work, we shall not get it done at all; we shall not get Australians to do it. I go one better and say, if a success is to

be made of South-Western settlement, let the Italians do the work; it will not be done by the Britishers. I am stating facts which the Government will have to face in the near future. If the Government are going to debar Italians and other workers from participating in the work which is available—and let me say that the Italians do not work cheaply and do not live cheaply, as I can prove by store bills—

The Minister for Lands: I do not care about your store bills. I have proof in the Agricultural Bank that the Italians do the work at £1 per acre cheaper.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I would sooner pay a gang of Italians 3s. or 4s. per acre more than average Australians and Britishers, because the job would be completed, and with less trouble.

The Minister for Railways: You ought to be ashamed to say so.

The Minister for Lands: Is that the Country Party attitude?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: No. It is my own view.

Mr. Thomson: It is not the Country Party view.

Mr. Lindsay: No.

The Minister for Lands: It is the Country Party view all right.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Later it may be not only the Country Party view, but the view of the majority of men in this State, and more particularly the Government's view. I have not much more to say.

The Minister for Railways: You ought not to, after making such statements.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I have broad shoulders, and can bear it all. It is pleasing to see in the Governor's Speech a reference to the redistribution of seats. I am anxiously awaiting the introduction of the measure, which in my opinion is long overdue.

Mr. Sleeman: Soon you will have only Italians in your electorate.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: In that case it will be one of the best developed districts in the State. The Government will have my support if the Redistribution of Seats Bill is on an equitable basis; that is to say, on the basis of community of interests rather than the basis of population. In conclusion, I wish to refer to the disposal of the Drumcler Estate in the Beverley district, and I claim the attention of the Minister for Lands. The Drumcler Estate was sold recently by private treaty. I wish to know what was the

necessity for disposing of it by that method. I wish to be candid, and therefore I state that the Minister some time ago offered me the privilege of perusing the file dealing with the matter. However, owing to circumstances, I did not avail myself of the offer. Still, I wish to protest against the disposal of a property of such value and quality without public tenders being called. It was handed over to the department previously at a considerable loss to the State. First of all, it was purchased from Mr. Butcher. Thereupon it was disposed of to a returned soldier, at a loss to the State. Now it has been sold by private treaty to outside persons. Has any further loss resulted to the State from the last transaction? The estate is a fine one, lying close to the town of Beverley, with railway facilities right at the door, and possessing a river frontage. In fact, it is one of the most up-to-date properties in the Beverley district. Now it has reverted to private enterprise. Five years ago a returned soldier desired to sell the property, and did arrange to sell it, but had to retract because repatriation conditions forbid such a sale except after the lapse of five years. The soldier could have sold the estate at a profit to himself, and with satisfaction to the purchaser; but he was not allowed to do so. In the course of the five-years term he has put up a large debit, and I do not doubt in the least that the Soldier Settlement Board were glad to get rid of him. However, I should like to know just what were the terms and conditions under which the property was last sold. At a later stage I shall probably move that the papers be laid on the Table. As I said in opening, I trust the coming year will be a bumper one. Certainly, at the present moment the price of our chief commodity, wheat, is not glowing. The position is not at all cheering to the wheat grower when the value of siding wheat throughout Western Australia rules at about 3s. 10d. I believe, however, that much of the discussion which has been proceeding in the Press recently on this subject is merely propaganda, directed more particularly against the wheat pool.

Mr. Sleeman: You want to rake that up again, do you?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: No. I believe in letting sleeping dogs lie. I hold that ultimately the co-operative method of handling our wheat through the pool will be the means of considerably raising the value of that product. The immediate outlook, however, is not hopeful. I trust that before

the season matures a better average price will rule for wheat.

MR. J. MacCALLUM SMITH (North Perth) [5.25]: I desire to make a few remarks on several matters referred to in His Excellency's Speech, and also on some important items not mentioned therein. Most members who have spoken have dealt fully with the matters that are mentioned in the Speech, and so I shall make my remarks brief. In listening to the Governor's Speech, one would naturally come to the conclusion that everything in Western Australia is highly satisfactory; but there is no getting away from the fact that there is a fly in the ointment. We are faced with a serious unemployment problem. While this trouble is seasonal, I think I am right in saying that on the present occasion the unemployment question is more serious than ever it has been in Western Australia before.

Mr. Wilson: Too many have come from Italy.

Mr. Thomson: That is nonsense.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Unless some steps are taken to remedy the trouble, unemployment will increase to a considerable extent.

The Minister for Lands: Did you hear what the last speaker said?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I did. He spoke for himself, and I have my own opinions with regard to what he said.

The Minister for Lands: I hope your opinions are not similar.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The explanation given by the Premier as to our unemployment trouble to my mind is correct. Undoubtedly Western Australia has been attracting considerable numbers of Eastern States unemployed. Naturally, they have come here expecting to find plenty of work. Their numbers have been augmented by numerous migrants, who have come out also seeking work. On top of that, many group settlers have been thrown on the employment market. So that to-day we have a considerable number of people walking the streets of Perth, looking for work and not able to find it. There are many cases of hardship. Within my own knowledge are cases of married men with families going for considerable periods without a meal. It would be a great reflection on this country and its Government if something were not done to remedy the position. Whilst I admit that the Government have taken certain steps to meet the situation,

unfortunately those steps will not, I think, settle the trouble permanently. I have said that the problem is seasonal. That is generally admitted. Therefore we should prepare for these periods of depression instead of waiting until they are right on top of us and then taking panic steps to remedy the evil. We should realise that every year we are bound to have an unemployment problem, and we should prepare to meet it. Instead of spending money on fantastic projects, lending funds to road boards, municipalities and the City Council to be spent very often in ornamental works, the Government would do far better to assist in starting reproductive works, which would eventually become self-supporting. I have in mind that the Government might have started the South Swan railway, which I think everybody admits must be constructed. Every year it is becoming more necessary. I had hoped the Government would have taken that railway in hand, for it would provide work for a large number of unemployed. The South Swan railway must be built and, once built, it will save the country a considerable sum of money in the economical handling of the wheat harvest and in many other ways.

Mr. Brown: The Brookton railway will relieve that.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: There are other places besides Brookton. It is a pity the Government have not taken the South Swan railway in hand and set about its construction. Another reason for the drift to the city is that in country towns living accommodation is so scanty. We find men wasting time and energy and money in walking, in some instances, hundreds of miles to the city to look for work. Of course, on arrival they swell the numbers of the unemployed in the city. A good deal might be done to stop this drift to the city if there were more homes in country towns. I was pleased to hear the Premier say the Workers' Homes Board were to be provided with funds with which to erect homes in country towns. That is a step in the right direction, for once there is suitable accommodation for families in the country, there will be more inducement for the men to remain there instead of tramping hundreds of miles to Perth to look for work. The unemployment question is the most important we have to face at the present time. It is growing at a tremendous rate, and whilst we are able to find temporary work for all this army of men, yet they will be unemployed again

as soon as that temporary work is finished, and so we shall be faced once more with the problem, which will be greater than it is to-day. We ought to do our very best to permanently settle those men on the land, so that they will not again become members of the unemployed. In regard to my own electorate, North Perth, there is no immediate call for a railway or a tramline. We have sufficient tram tracks, but unfortunately we have insufficient tram cars. Everyone who sees the trams coming in to the city in the morning, going out again at lunch time, and going out again in the evening, must realise that the department has not risen to the occasion, has not provided sufficient trams for carrying all the people who have occasion to use that means of transportation. It is a disgrace to the Tramway Department that nothing like sufficient cars are provided.

The Minister for Railways: It is all right at lunch time, surely. I go home every day.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: If there is any diminution of the trouble during the lunch time traffic, it is because the people are so disgusted with the tram service that they prefer to have luncheon in town.

The Minister for Railways: If the hon. member will come with me at lunch time to-morrow, he will find the trams are not 70 per cent. filled. I go home to luncheon every day.

Mr. Mann: Is it the same in the morning?

The Minister for Railways: I am not talking about the morning traffic.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: During the busy hours the trams are packed in a way that would not be tolerated in any other community.

The Minister for Railways: It is not a question of toleration; it is the general practice throughout the world.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Can the Minister tell me how many new cars have been constructed for the tramway service during the past year?

The Minister for Railways: Twelve bogie cars.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: They have not been put into the service yet.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, they have.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Well, then, they have taken the place of all the derelict tramcars to be seen along the river down near the car barn. The Tramway Department has not risen to the occasion at all. To-day one can see almost as many people walking home as are using the trams. It is

no wonder that the motor buses are cutting the ground from under the feet of the Railway Department. The buses to Fremantle and Cottesloe and Claremont are being well patronised, whereas the railways and tramways are neglected, and have to be contented with reduced business. The Railway Department seems to be the only department in the State that does not realise that the population is increasing. That department is making no increased provision whatever. Take the sleeping accommodation on the express between Perth and Kalgoorlie. It is over a quarter of a century since any improvement has been made in the sleeping cars. We have had the same old type of coach for the last 30 years.

Mr. Kennedy: That is not correct.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I have frequently travelled up and down that line, but I have never seen a new coach on it.

Mr. Kennedy: There are new coaches.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Are they equal to the new coaches constructed for the Midland Railway Company?

Mr. Kennedy: No, I will not say they are.

The Minister for Railways: We are building new coaches.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: We have been told that for the last three years.

The Minister for Mines: The Government you supported did not build one.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The present Government and past Governments alike have entirely neglected the Railway Department. Proper up-to-date sleeping accommodation should be provided on the Kalgoorlie express.

The Minister for Railways: We are doing it.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: You told us that last year and the year before, and the year before that again. You have been busy building sleeping coaches for the Midland Railway Co. That company is to be congratulated on their enterprise in providing those new coaches.

The Minister for Railways: We shall be putting five new coaches on the Kalgoorlie line within the next two months, and shortly afterwards five more new coaches.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I hope it will come true. It is a bad advertisement for the State that visitors coming off the fine Trans-Australian train should have to step into the old-fashioned, cramped compartments provided for the run between Kalgoorlie and Perth. What the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) said the other day

about the Murchison railway is only too true. The service on that line is a disgrace to the department. The coaches are dirty, even filthy, and there is no decent travelling accommodation at all.

Hon. G. Taylor: Where is that?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: On the Wongan Hills line.

Mr. Kennedy: That is not correct. I come down that line every Monday.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The coaches are quite dirty.

Mr. Kennedy: They are not.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: And there is no water in the water bags, and no tumblers even if there was any water. In many other ways the service is far behind the times. The department is simply coddling the man in the city, who gets every accommodation on metropolitan-suburban trains, but the man in the back country has to look after himself. What the member for Murchison said the other day regarding that northern service is absolutely true. Again, the Railway Department does not seem to look after traffic, does not go out and seek to bring business to the service.

The Minister for Railways: Our revenue is increasing tremendously.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: All that the department aims at is to earn enough to pay interest, and stop at that.

The Minister for Railways: Would you like us to make big profits unnecessarily?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The Railway Department should realise that it is there for public convenience. There are many ways in which the department should serve the public. For instance, the department neglects the firewood industry. Motor trucks run out 30 miles into the bush and bring firewood into the city, thus beating the railways.

Mr. Lindsay: And cutting the roads to pieces.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: That is so. Surely the Railway Department could compete with motor trucks in carrying firewood to the city.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Firewood is carried on the railways at 1d. per ton per mile.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: That can be reduced, for the railways are carrying superphosphates at a farthing per ton per mile.

The Minister for Railways: And losing £150,000 per annum in so doing.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It seems to me inconceivable that motor trucks can com-

pete with the Railway Department in carrying firewood to the city.

The Minister for Mines: By the motor truck, about three handlings are saved.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Then there is another young industry, the carrying of granite from the hills into the city. The Railway Department, fast asleep, is losing all that traffic.

The Minister for Railways: In the carrying of stone by the railways there are about three extra handlings, whereas the motor trucks get it direct from the quarries.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: But the department has a large number of trucks running empty; surely they could be used for the purpose.

The Minister for Railways: Would that compensate three additional handlings?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I hope the Minister will see whether something cannot be done to foster that traffic.

The Minister for Railways: We have in the service a highly competent and highly paid official who looks after that sort of thing. I have every confidence in him.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I am pleased the Minister for Health is in his seat, for I wish to refer to an important matter that concerns his department. That is the proposed removal of the sanitary site at Mt. Lawley. For many years past has that deposit been an eyesore in that suburb.

Hon. G. Taylor: They are not going to remove it, are they?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: They are talking of removing it half a mile, and of putting it on a Government reserve. It ought to be removed from the locality altogether.

The Minister for Health: Where to?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It is the concern of the City Council. It is their depot. It is the garbage removed by the City Council, and they are depositing it on a Government reserve within the territory of the Perth Road Board. The City Council have thousands of acres of their own land on the seaboard between here and City Beach, where they should be asked to find a suitable site.

The Minister for Health: So long as they shift it from Mt. Lawley, they can dump it into anybody else's backyard.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: We have had it for 30 years now. Why should it be continued at Mt. Lawley?

The Minister for Health: I agree that it is an eyesore where it is and will have to be removed.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: But surely you will remove it further than half-a-mile?

The Minister for Health: No resident at Mt. Lawley will ever see it or know that it is there. It will be on a reserve, and nobody will be able to build any closer to it than are the existing buildings.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: But the wind will blow the odours back, and the flies will be as troublesome as ever. The Minister will be very foolish if he gives his consent to have the site moved away only half a mile. If it is to be shifted, why not remove it where it will not be a menace to health?

The Minister for Health: If you can get the principal health officer to say that it is a menace to health, it will be removed tomorrow. The officers go out frequently to inspect it and have nothing to say against it on the score of health. Therefore, I will not take your word as a layman against theirs.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: We permit bad odours to come from the river.

The Minister for Health: Who told you that?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Every year the department say it.

The Minister for Health: The department have never said that there was no smell from algæ.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: In any case, we are not discussing algæ; we are discussing the sanitary site at North Perth which, I contend, should be removed from its present position, not one mile but five or ten miles farther away.

The Minister for Health: Your place is sewered?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Yes.

The Minister for Health: And for those people whose premises are not sewered, you would make the position prohibitive and impossible. They could never pay the charges if the site were removed the distance you suggest.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It could be removed a few miles out. Why spoil that beautiful locality by removing it a distance of only half a mile?

The Minister for Health: The locality will not be spoiled.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I have entered my protest and I hope the Minister will look into the matter and not grant the City Council the right to create another eyesore

in North Perth by removing the site half a mile away. In connection with municipal matters, I hope the Government will introduce a town planning Bill that will give power to the authorities not only to suggest alterations, but to carry them out. Those of us who were there 20 or 30 years ago know that if there had been such legislation in existence at that time, the outlay of the city would be very different from what we find to-day. There would not be any narrow streets like Hay-street. Now is the time, even though it be late, to introduce a town planning Bill to permit of the carrying out of alterations and improvements that may be suggested by the Town Planning Commission.

Mr. Teesdale: Go for your life; there is no Minister yet for town planning.

The Minister for Railways: The Government have found the money for the commission to carry out investigations.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: An Important matter is the question of the removal of the railway station from the centre of the city. Most people are agreed that that should be done, and done quickly. There is no other city in the world that is bisected by a railway, and especially a railway that carries all the traffic from the country to the port. It is time, and in fact the time is long overdue, for the removal of the central station to permit of the proper expansion of the city. It would be a fine centenary move if the Government announced that it was their intention to remove the railway station and remodel that part of the city.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would not cost much.

The Minister for Railways: A million and a half.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: If the Government went about it in a businesslike way it could show a profit of a million and a half on the removal of the station. I would like to have the handling of it.

The Minister for Railways: If you can handle it, and you can make money out of it, you can take it on to-morrow.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: All right. I am glad to see that it is intended to bring in legislation to provide for the registration of land agents. That is very necessary, and I hope that the Bill will include a provision to deal with the methods adopted by some agents whereby they are able to take down people throughout the country. It is a scandal to find that so many people have

been deprived of their hard-earned money by unscrupulous land agents who are infesting the State at the present time.

Hon. G. Taylor: You want to catch the go-getters.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: We should try, though we might have a job to do so.

The Minister for Railways: We shall be dealing with them in a fortnight, and we hope to receive the hon. member's support.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: You will get it. I may quote an instance. Some of these go-getters bought land to the north of Perth.

Mr. Mann: Half way out to Wanneroo.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: They bought this land for about £250, and two or three months later they had sold it or portion of it for over £8,000. In order to effect sales, they committed deliberate fraud by taking people out to Mt. Lawley and saying, "There you are; there is the land. Look at it and all the buildings; now is your chance to buy before it is too late." After the unfortunate people had signed the contracts, they found that the land was miles further out than they had been led to believe. That sort of thing should not be allowed to take place in Western Australia. Unfortunately, it has been going on for a considerable time, and I am pleased that the Government realise the seriousness of it. While on this subject, the Government might also give a little attention to White City. We have not heard much about that eyesore lately, but it is still there, and if the Government have no wish to see it continued, they should wipe it out.

Mr. Withers: Would you like them to shift it to North Perth?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I would shift the sanitary site to White City. I would like to mention that very little attention has been paid to the report made by the Commissioner of Titles on the condition of the Titles Office.

Mr. Thomson: It is simply shocking.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It is really a dreadful state of affairs. As far back as 1926 the Commissioner wrote that he felt it his duty to stress the need for better accommodation being provided owing to the inadequate space available for the public, and the inconvenience to the officers, who were hampered in carrying out their duties. He went on to point out that the strong-room did not possess that quality of absolute security which was so essential for the

preservation of the documents contained in the building. I am sorry to say that nothing has been done in spite of the seriousness of the matter. I leave it to the Minister to imagine what state of affairs would exist if there happened to be a fire there.

The Minister for Railways: Our idea is to provide accommodation for the Titles Office in the savings bank building it is proposed to erect. That has been on the tapis for the last 12 months.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Too many of these things have been on the tapis for a long time. Let us get the work under way. Moreover, we would thus be providing work for the unemployed. Talking about alterations or improvements to Government buildings reminds me of the need for providing additional accommodation at Cave House. There we have a profit-earning concern, and yet nothing is done to add that extra accommodation that is so badly required. A sum of £2,000 or £3,000 would put the establishment in good order, but for some reason or other the Minister controlling that department announced the other day that no more money would be spent there. That is a foolish attitude to adopt.

The Minister for Railways: You said a little while ago that you desired to see every penny spent on reproductive works.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: This is a reproductive work. It is showing a profit, and a fine profit too. The public are paying for it. Many people go there, and if they were afforded proper accommodation, many more would go there.

The Minister for Railways: I would rather build railway rolling stock than spend money down there.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Has the Minister been to Yallingup to see the position for himself?

The Minister for Railways: I was there at Easter.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Did it not strike the Minister that something should be done?

The Minister for Railways: It struck me more forcibly that more rolling stock was required to convey produce to the Fremantle wharves.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: And not even that is provided. There is another matter to which I wish to refer, and I am sorry the Premier is not here, because he drew my attention

to it when, a little while ago, he bought a farming property and was very much surprised to find that he had to pay over £50 as stamp duty on the transfer of the farm. It is a very serious matter—the high stamp duties imposed in Western Australia. The charge is £1 per cent. on all transfers and it is having a detrimental effect on business. I would like to give the Minister who is representing the Premier just now, an instance of how the Government are losing revenue on account of the high stamp duties. In connection with the institution with which I am associated, within the past 12 months, on account of the high stamp duties, no less than about 50 per cent. of the shareholders registered in Western Australia have transferred to the Sydney register in order to escape the payment of the Western Australian duty. That meant a loss to the Government in one year of no less than £10,000, and it is an ever-recurring loss. As it has come home to the Premier that he had to pay excessive stamp duty when he purchased the farming property, I hope he will look into the matter and see whether it is possible to bring the position into line with that existing in the other States. In some of the States there is no stamp duty at all. In others it is perhaps 2s. 6d. per £100, in one it is 5s., and in another 7s. 6d. Western Australia charges £1 per £100. We are just driving capital out of the State. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [6.0]: I have little to add to the debate and would probably have saved the time of the House had it not been for the very unfair criticism levelled at the Wyndham Meat Works by the member for Perth (Mr. Mann). I fail to see why that hon. member should be so eager to criticise an institution respecting which he has demonstrated by his own statement, he knows nothing. I can draw one of two conclusions from his remarks: Either his information was supplied by an extremely biased individual, or the hon. member's sense of detection has failed him in his old age. Had the hon. member desired to be fair to the management of the Wyndham Meat Works, he would have admitted when speaking, that the works are competing with freezing works in the Eastern States, but have been responsible for sup-

plying beef at more reasonable and cheaper rates than the works in the Eastern States.

Mr. Mann: My complaint was that the management put in one price and after they had obtained orders, had increased the price.

Mr. COVERLEY: The hon. member did not even state the facts truthfully.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COVERLEY: It would have been much fairer had the hon. member quoted correct statements. I admit that in all probability he was misled. I do not think he would desire to mislead the House wilfully. Had he adopted that course, his appeal to the Premier might have been listened to with greater appreciation. He asked the Premier to accept his statement not as criticism but as a genuine complaint. In my opinion the hon. member was not genuine in his criticism.

Mr. Mann: We have it in evidence, so it is right.

Mr. COVERLEY: The hon. member misquoted the prices. He said that the price of crops had increased from 2½d. to 3½d., while the price of hindquarters had increased from 3½d. to 4½d. per lb. The facts are that the price of crops increased from 2½d. to 3d. and the price of hindquarters from 3½d. to 4d. per lb. That will satisfy hon. members that there was very little need for the grievance aired by the member for Perth.

Mr. Mann: We are quite satisfied with the evidence.

Mr. COVERLEY: When we realise that the Wyndham Meat Works have been able to undersell the Eastern States freezing works, and that they were recently successful in obtaining contracts from the Commonwealth Government, we must agree that that is evidence the works are supplying best quality products at the lowest price in Australia. That is what the hon. member has seen fit to regard as profiteering!

Mr. Mann: So it is, when we are asked to pay more in Perth than is paid elsewhere.

Mr. Lutey: You are doing that every day.

The Minister for Lands: You pay more for toothpicks here.

Mr. COVERLEY: The member for Perth should be fair in his criticism and give credit where it is due. He did not do that. Let me tell that hon. member one or two of the virtues of the Wyndham Meat Works. The increased price obtained—the profiteer-

ing that he referred to—is returned to the producer and is not placed to the credit of the Wyndham Meat Works.

Mr. Mann: But it has to be paid by the consumer.

Mr. COVERLEY: If the manager of the Wyndham Meat Works did not take advantage of the increased prices, I could understand the hon. member's criticism. He knows the position of the cattle industry in the North during the past eight or nine years.

Mr. Mann: But that does not say one price should be put in and that it should be increased after the works secured the order.

Mr. COVERLEY: The hon. member did the same thing with salt quite recently. The policy of the Wyndham Meat Works is to assist in every way possible, the cattle growers of the North. It has fostered development there in more ways than one. Not only do the works provide a market that assists the pastoralists in the North, but the management have been able to assist pastoralists financially to help them to redeem mortgages. Then again a stud herd has been established at Wyndham, and it is certainly of benefit to the pastoralists that they should be able to secure blood stock at reasonable terms over six years, at advantageous rates of interest. I am not well satisfied with the advantage that has been taken of that by the pastoralists themselves. In the majority of instances, while the pastoralists have been willing to avail themselves of the financial assistance, they have not rushed the opportunity to purchase stud bulls. Of the 76 stud bulls brought by the Wyndham Meat Works from Queensland, 39 only have been sold, thus leaving nearly 50 per cent. on the hands of the management.

Hon. W. J. George: Was there not considerable mortality among the bulls?

Mr. COVERLEY: No. One or two were destroyed by alligators, but no one could cavil at that. The apathy of the pastoralists and the unfair criticism such as that indulged in by the member for Perth—of course, it was due to his ignorance—are not calculated to encourage the manager, who is an extraordinarily capable man, to retain his position at the meat works. I would advise the member for Perth not to make use of the second-hand statements in this Chamber in future.

Mr. Mann: But that is the statement recorded in an official document.

Mr. COVERLEY: Not what you said.

Mr. Mann: Yes, it is.

Mr. COVERLEY: I have shown that the hon. member was wrong in his prices to the extent of $\frac{3}{8}$ d. per lb.

Mr. Mann: I have the evidence here.

Mr. COVERLEY: I wish to assure the hon. member that if he were to make inquiries at the office of the Wyndham Meat Works in Perth he would find the staff obliging and courteous. They would be willing to assist him in this, or in any other matter regarding Wyndham, about which he may be in a haze.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [6.8]: I desire to say a great deal on the Address-in-reply, not in respect of what appears in the Governor's Speech, but rather on what is left out of it. During last session and the session before, members on the Opposition side of the House, with perhaps one or two exceptions, commended every action taken by the Government. While I may not be successful, I shall endeavour to prove to the House and to the people throughout the State that the position of Western Australia at present is not too satisfactory. If I have to say nasty things during the course of my remarks, I want Ministers to accept my assurance that—

Hon. G. Taylor: You will say them in a nice way.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes: I ask them to accept what I may say in the spirit in which I make the statements. Dealing first of all with the timber industry and its effect upon the South-West, I do not say that the Government are to blame for the condition of that industry at present. On the other hand, I contend they are to blame for not introducing legislation to prevent the state of chaos that exists in the industry to-day. It is the function of the Government to see that the standard of living in Western Australia is maintained, and to see that wages are not cut down. Men who have worked in the industry for many years are now being scrapped in favour of Southern Europeans, including Jugo-Slavs, who work on a community basis for less than half the wages prescribed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Wilson: Can you prove that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will go further and do my best to prove my statements. I shall ask the Government to appoint a select committee, upon which I shall be prepared to work. I hope that if the select committee is appointed, it will not be done as in the past, when Royal Commissions or select committees have been chosen. I trust that men who take an interest in the subject will be appointed, and that the House will be given an opportunity to make the selection, not the party leaders.

The Minister for Railways: You are reflecting upon the House when you make such statements regarding the appointment of select committees.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They are appointed by the leaders of the parties, not by members generally.

The Minister for Railways: No, everyone has a vote.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Minister for Railways: Mr. Speaker, has not the hon. member reflected upon the House in the course of his statements?

Mr. SPEAKER: Anything reflecting upon a decision of the House is a reflection upon the House.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: With all due respect, I say that if hon. members choose to be honest with themselves, they will admit that when they are asked to appoint a select committee, they are notified by the party whips that they must vote for so and so. That is what happens when we appoint a Royal Commission or a select committee.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: We are not told that we must do so.

The Minister for Railways: You have the opportunity to deal with that yourself.

Mr. Teesdale: At any rate the hon. member is outspoken.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is time an end was put to that sort of thing. It is time that the House decided such things and selected the men best fitted to make the necessary inquiries, irrespective of what the leaders of the different parties might have decided when they issued their instructions.

The Minister for Railways: If that is the position, you can take action in your own party.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister knows that what I say is correct.

The Minister for Railways: You have an opportunity to alter that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: However, I wish to deal with the timber industry. It is deplorable that our men who have been licensed to cut timber on Crown lands, have been squeezed out by the foreigners, and the only means by which I think the position can be properly dealt with is by the appointment of a select committee.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Are those foreigners cutting on Crown lands?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. Unfortunately foreigners not naturalised are cutting on Crown lands to-day. That is a straight-out statement and I am prepared to prove it. They are drifting in every day. There was a case proved at Bunbury the other day.

The Minister for Lands: But that man was found guilty of using another man's license.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Anyone who investigates the licenses issued since 1918 will appreciate the position. There are many who can bear out my statement.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was dealing with the timber industry and speaking of the under-cutting that is going on and of the unnaturalised subjects who had licenses to cut. The Minister asked whether I could prove my statement and I think I did so to his satisfaction. What I am chiefly concerned about is to see whether it is not possible by united effort to put the timber industry on a better footing than it occupies to-day. Regarding the Southern Europeans, I wish to say that we in Australia are not afraid of them, given equal conditions and provided they do not live below our standard or work for rates lower than the court has awarded. They find themselves in a strange country, and I suppose they are compelled to do certain things through force of circumstances. They have to do them or starve. I am concerned about the unscrupulous individuals who are utilising foreign labour. Let me hark back three or four years to the time when the industry was booming and when the high price of £10 15s. at ship's slings, Bunbury, was obtainable. The member for Murray-Wellington can correct me if I am wrong. Thousands of loads were put on board ship at prices of £10 10s., £10 5s., and £10, and everybody was dipping into the industry.

Apart from the old recognised firms, individuals from all over the place started to dip into the industry. Men without capital were tending principally to the South African Government and were getting orders. Although the union rate for the cutter was £2 8s. 9d., the rates paid ranged from £3 to £3 10s. The men who owned private timber were getting £1, 25s., and, in one instance I know of, 30s. per load for royalty. Such prices could not last. Gradually they receded, and the next tender was let for £8 a load. Meanwhile, the companies and others were cutting for stock. Thousands of loads of sleepers were cut for stock and in anticipation of further orders being received from overseas. One firm sent its manager away and booked up the whole of the orders obtainable, with the result that many people who had cut for stock had to sell at the best prices they could get. The position grew worse and worse. The Government must know that these things have been going on and they should have brought in legislation to meet the position. The difficulties have been continuing, not for a few months, but for many months. I know that sleepers are being put on the trucks to-day for little more than the union rate for cutting. I repeat that given equal conditions we are not afraid of the foreigner. Our old cutters, however, who have been in the industry hewing, have been forced out and are walking about the streets of Perth or waiting in the country districts in expectation of brighter days in the industry, but the brighter days will never come while unscrupulous people are free to exploit the foreigner and are able to put sleepers on trucks at £3 10s per load. Sixteen married men of Bridgetown, who are out of work, approached me and I asked the timber companies, from the largest to the smallest, to give me an order of some description for them. I approached the Conservator of Forests, who met me very fairly. There were Crown lands available at Bridgetown and the Conservator offered to throw the bush open under a marking system such as I have always advocated. We worked the costs out. The bush was in close proximity to the railway and a minimum royalty of 7s. 6d. was asked, whereas up to £1 is being paid for sleepers that are being put on the trucks at £3 10s. a load. Yet the cheapest that we could put sleepers on the trucks, allowing for award rates of pay, was £4 per load, and that did not include

anything for insurance. The men would have had to take the risk, and the carter was getting only 12s. a load for carting three to five miles. The industry is in a deplorable condition and there is something about it that is impossible to fathom. That is why I said I would be pleased if the Government would appoint a committee of inquiry to determine whether the industry cannot be put on a better footing. If we cannot provide decent conditions for the men employed in the industry, it would be better to leave the timber where it stands in the bush.

Hon. W. J. George: Who are the people that gave the cut price of £3 10s.? I do not want to know the names, but tell me who they were.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I could give the names if that would do any good.

Hon. W. J. George: Were they Australians or foreigners?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They were Australians. I wish to go further and say that since this foreign element has entered the industry, there has sprung up a sort of community and the shrewd head or the man of better education or knowledge of local conditions has been sub-contracting. I believe there has even been sub-contracting below the price of £3 10s. There are cutters galore at work, Southern Europeans, that cannot speak a word of English. I know one who drives about Perth in a big Chrysler car.

Hon. G. Taylor: He must be in the Labour Party.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know whether he is a farmer or not. It is said to be a fact that that man owes cutters and storekeepers the sum of £1,000. That sort of thing should not be allowed to continue.

Mr. Clydesdale: How can you stop it?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Not by sitting here and doing nothing, but by getting down to hard graft. The milling part of the industry is also in difficulties. Members may have read that Millars recently approached the Arbitration Court with a request for an amendment of the award to enable them to engage men for only a certain number of hours per week. I am glad to say that that does not affect my district. The State mills can continue on full time for another two or three months, but in three instances in my district, mills that were cutting jarrah only have had to close down. Unfortunately, too, the Jardee mill is out of commission owing to a break-

down, and it may be out of commission for a considerable time. The result is that a lot of men who have been engaged in the industry for years are out of work. I do not think better men can be found anywhere because they are real hard workers, and I am referring to mill hands as well as to bushmen. To relieve unemployment I understand the Premier has consented to put in hand the clearing of the railway route between Pemberton and Northcliffe. The railway has been promised long enough and if it is not soon built, the Northcliffe group settlements will have to close up. Let me impress upon the Government, while that route is being cleared, the advisableness of cutting sleepers for the railway along the route.

Hon. W. J. George: Is it not karri timber?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No, there is any quantity of jarrah amongst the karri. I ask the Government to go that far. There is one gang of 30 men just off the Denmark-Frankland River line who are out of employment. They are all licensed cutters and all Britishers except one. As to that one I cannot say whether he is naturalised. If the Premier agreed to my proposal, work would be provided for other men in the district at side falling, etc. To-night I had a conversation with the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. H. Kitson) who is in charge of the Labour Bureau. I have to meet him on a deputation to-morrow with representatives of the timber workers, so perhaps I had better not say anything further on the subject to-night. If the Government could see their way to approve of the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the timber industry, it would do an immense amount of good. At all events it would not do any harm.

The Minister for Railways: To inquire into what aspects of the industry?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: To inquire generally into it. I want the whole thing inquired into. The Government, through the Conservator of Forests, have practised the principle of exploitation. Group settlement areas, containing a certain amount of timber, have been thrown open. The upset price may have been 7s. 6d. a load. I have known of cases where that price has gone up to 35s. a load. When people have to go up to that figure there must be exploitation.

Mr. Chesson: Is it sold by competition?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: That was four years ago.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The same practice is followed to-day.

The Minister for Railways: The same royalty?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I did not refer to royalty. What has happened in the Denmark area? Tenders were called by the Conservator for the cutting of sleepers. One man secured the contract. The authorities afterwards found he could not do the work. He was not fit for it, although the officers thought he was. The contract was cancelled and tenders were again called. That was only 18 months ago. There are men in the industry known to the Government and trusted by the departmental officers. If half-a-dozen of these men put in a tender the Government should allow them each a sixth-part of the contract. I would not confine the select committee to any particular points. The inquiry should be into every aspect of the industry, from the shipping overseas to the cutting of the timber.

Hon. W. J. George: That would be a big job.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. Something should be done because of the precarious position in which the trade now is. That applies not only to the cutting but to the loading as well. At one of the sidings along the Busselton-Margaret River railway one can see gangs of Southern Europeans loading sleepers. I saw such a gang having tea. The men were sitting on the ramp with a big billy between them, and their meal consisted of lumps of bread dipped in the tea. Several railways should have been built in my district before now, or mentioned in the Speech, as was the case last year. I intend to refer to the Boyup-Cranbrook railway and the report of the advisory board, as well as the railway from Manjimup to Mt. Barker, and a railway through Pemberton to link up with Denmark. The Premier, through the Press, stated that he is putting men on to clear the line. I know, too, that in the case of the Boyup-Cranbrook railway the sleepers have been cut, and are lying along side the route. I was very interested in the Minister's remarks concerning the 3,000 farms scheme, and the fact that it will cost many millions of pounds.

The Minister for Lands: I did not refer to the cost of the 3,000 farms scheme; I

do not know what the cost will work out at.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am referring to the Press reports.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister has not contradicted it.

The Minister for Lands: I did the other night. One cannot go on contradicting everything that may appear in the Press.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The report has not been contradicted by the Minister. At any rate the 3,000 farms scheme was spoken of as costing eight millions of money, and as having received the approval of the Migration and Development Commission and of the Advisory Committee. I would point out to the Minister for Lands that the railway has been approved at a cost of approximately half a million. The Advisory Committee said—and it has never been contradicted—that from 2,000 to 2,500 farmers could be settled successfully within a radius of between 12½ and 15 miles of the railway. That line would serve a densely populated area in the first 15 miles from Boyup, and the next 15 miles from Cranbrook. I thought the member for Albany would have spoken on the subject. I know the route from end to end. The Press have referred to the possibility of a drop in the price of wheat next season. It would be a much sounder proposition for the Government to adopt if they would immediately build that railway in a district where mixed farming and dairying could be successfully carried on. The work would also absorb a number of unemployed.

Hon. G. Taylor: That would give another 2,500 farms.

The Minister for Lands: You are getting on.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Perhaps the Minister has overlooked this important aspect of the question. He may be so obsessed with the wheat-growing scheme that he has not noticed the recommendation of the advisory board and of Mr. Bankes Amery, who said it was a good proposition and that cheap money would be available for it. Why has this railway not been proceeded with?

Hon. W. J. George: You had better move a motion of want of confidence in the Government.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I might do that if I had a little assistance. The railway from Manjimup to Mt. Barker would also run through beautiful country that has been

settled for the last 60 or 70 years. The Railway Advisory Board were very emphatic that the line should be built, and yet we do not hear much about it. Since the survey was authorised there has been no mention of its construction, although many railways have since been built in the wheat areas. The delay may be due to the pessimistic view taken of the group settlement scheme, or because of the unsuitable locations which the Ministers had to abandon or link up with other areas. Apparently the Government have decided upon a go-slow policy in the South-West. There is something radically wrong with the situation. For the sake of the prosperity of the State these railways should be built immediately. I intend now to deal with group settlement generally, but to speak without any political bias. It is the duty of members, in the interests of this State, to tackle the question. I will not allow any individual to say that group settlement is a failure, as it has not yet been tried out.

Mr. Clydesdale: It has cost a fair amount of money.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, under direction. If the hon. member did not know his job, and asked me to do something I knew nothing about, and insisted on my doing it, it would cost a lot of money. I wish to compliment the Minister for Lands upon the way in which he has tackled this problem. No doubt he has done so in a manner that he considers is in the best interests of the State. During the last few months he has taken a great deal of trouble to understand the situation. All the settlers with whom I have come into contact say that he has tramped miles and miles on an inspection of the land. Perhaps even yet he is not acquainted with the peculiarities of the district. Much of the land which has been condemned will in a few years prove a success. I am not referring to the Peel estate, about which I know nothing, but to the Northcliffe country. A big blunder was made and the Government must accept responsibility for it.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear! That is so.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A big blunder was made at Northcliffe, as people were settled there without any drainage scheme.

The Minister for Lands: A drainage scheme there may cost anything.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But there was none. I went across some of the Northcliffe flats with the Minister, and over the areas that the officers of the department had put down in

pasture, the horses we rode were knee deep in water.

The Minister for Lands: That is correct.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister condemned that land, and I do not blame him for doing so. Eventually, with a proper drainage system, that will be fine country.

The Minister for Lands: But what do you think of the administration that put settlers on the land and cultivated it without drainage?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Government must accept the responsibility, because the Northcliffe country was settled only a month or two after they assumed office. Of the officers and the administration that controlled the undertaking for the previous three years I do not think much. There must be a sincere writing-down. I have thought out a method of writing-down; I do not know whether the Minister will approve of it. We cannot have capitalisations of £2,000, £3,000 or £4,000 on those holdings. The Minister in his recent speech, which I regret I was not present to hear, mentioned a man named Richmond, of Manjimup, and said he had a very nice holding. I agree that the holding is very nice indeed. It compares favourably with farms 30 or 40 years old.

The Minister for Lands: It is a beautiful spot.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The man has, I believe, a capitalisation of £2,400 or £2,500. I may say that he anticipated a much higher capitalisation. He is one of the sincere men. After six years the group settler himself the man desiring to remain on his block, is beginning to wonder what will happen. He says, "If I have to carry a capitalisation of £3,000, it is no use my continuing." On the other hand, there is the fellow who does not care—there are a good many of that sort—who is there simply for the job. He is indifferent whether the scheme goes on forever, indifferent whether he is put on his own resources or not. The sooner we put the settlers on their own resources, the better it will be for the country. I claim there is only one way of doing that. To my mind the Minister did not outline such a method. The hon. gentleman said there must be a considerable writing-down. I contend that we must go further. The present Group Settlement Board are all right, although their appointment was belated; they ought to have been appointed before I approve of that board, although generally speaking, I do not believe in government by board after our experience

of the Main Roads Board, the Licenses Reduction Board, and one or two others. I acknowledge, however, that the Group Settlement Board are doing good and sincere work. The Minister has not expounded to this Chamber what the writing-down will consist of.

The Minister for Lands: That will come later.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It has to come, and the sooner we know, the better.

The Minister for Lands: It cannot come on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was expecting the Minister to tell us. The only way is to get a valuation made of the whole property. One cannot go on bald statements such as, "There is a capitalisation of £2,500 on this property, and we will write it down to £2,000." Writing down must be done according to results. A practical man must value buildings, fences, clearing, stock and pasture to arrive at a capitalisation. Then that capitalisation must in every instance be written down; otherwise the settler will not make a success. After such a process the good settler will be content to go on with his block; and if he does not make good under those conditions, another settler will come along and do so. The South-West warrants that assertion.

The Minister for Lands: From your knowledge of the South-West, what would you say the original properties were worth?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I should say Richmond ought to get out of the property at £1,500. I do not think the clearing, the fencing, the housing and the buildings could possibly be valued at more than £1,500. The land has always been free. Let us remember that we gave these people the land. Any man in Western Australia can get 160 acres of land to-day. No value is placed on the land.

Mr. Mann: If the man sells the land, surely there is a value on it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the man wants to sell to-morrow, the value of the property would be the improvements on the land.

The Minister for Railways: It would not be that, according to the results of soldier settlement.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I agree with that. I am not going to touch soldier settlement.

The Minister for Railways: The man would not get the value of the improvements.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No, because of accrued interest, interest on interest. Too much has been paid for land that is not suitable. I do not want to bring up only the case of Richmond. As the Minister knows, in that district are many other properties equally valuable.

The Minister for Lands: Yes. In your country there are some beautiful properties.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not see how those people can fail to make good.

Mr. Clydesdale: Of how many acres are these properties?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A hundred acres. If I went into figures I could quote people making £750 a year on land not as good as this.

The Minister for Lands: I know of such cases too.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not see how these people can possibly go wrong. Let me add that I have seen equally good land at Augusta. However, we have to tackle the problem of group settlement, and the way I have indicated is, in my opinion, the only way of doing it. Next there is the question of fruitgrowing, to which I desire to call the attention of the Government. This is a very serious matter. I refer to louvered trucks. Last year the same trouble occurred. Although the crop was light, no louvered trucks were available for fruit on account of the way the wheat was coming in. The old story was repeated of fruit being transported in open trucks from Bridgetown to Fremantle for shipment. One knows what the result would be upon the arrival of the fruit in the Old Country. Last year louvered vans were used for wheat. I hope the Minister for Railways will give that matter his attention.

The Minister for Railways: I certainly will.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I spoke about the same trouble the year before last. Last season the crop was only one-sixth of the usual quantity, and the service, which was not so bad the year before, resulted in a trainload of fruit being spoilt.

The Minister for Railways: A trainload of fruit spoilt?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Practically. The fruit came out of cool store, and then was conveyed in open trucks to Fremantle.

The Minister for Railways: What sort of trucks were used?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Open trucks with tarpaulins over the top of them.

The Minister for Railways: We are building 50 more louvered trucks.

Hon. W. J. George: The open trucks should have gone to the wheat, and the louvered trucks to the fruit.

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It was bad management. The fruit industry is important, and requires a fair amount of attention from the Railway Department. Now as to the Licenses Reduction Board. Do the Government intend to continue that board?

Mr. Mann: The board will lapse next month.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. I want to know whether the board is to be continued.

The Minister for Railways: We must deal with the matter this session. If the Act is not continued this session, the board will lapse.

Mr. Mann: By the Act the board will lapse next month.

The Minister for Railways: No; on the 31st December, 1928.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I wish to refer to the policy of the Licenses Reduction Board. In rising country towns the man who has the most pull, or can employ the finest architect or the best lawyer, gets the license. whoever puts up the best case gets the license. Then the Licenses Reduction Board come along and decide that the man who secured the license must build an elaborate place costing anything from £10,000 to £15,000.

Mr. Clydesdale: Tenders are called, are they not?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No.

Mr. Mann: Under one section of the Act, tenders are called, but not under the other section.

The Minister for Railways: A premium is fixed.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, in the same way as the premium for the re-opening of the Brighton Hotel was fixed. That hotel was delicensed, and the owner was kept out of it for three or four years. He went to all sorts of trouble and expense; the matter cost him thousands of pounds in litigation. The board re-granted the man his license, and charged him £3,000 for it.

Mr. Clydesdale: And he charged the other fellow five!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am only dealing with the principle of the thing.

The Minister for Railways: The owner must have run the hotel very badly, that it should be delicensed while a wine shop was continued.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister for Justice controls the police.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, the Minister did at that time, if he does not now.

The Minister for Railways: The hotel was shut up about six years ago.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hotel was closed by referendum, and the owner was charged £3,000 for permission to re-open it.

Hon. W. J. George: That is where the profiteering comes in. We must make the Licenses Reduction Board sit up.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: To my way of thinking, there should not be a town in this State without two or three licensed houses, including State hotels. The Minister may believe in the State hotels: I do not. State hotels are good business propositions where two or three hotels could make an excellent living and give a better service.

Hon. G. Taylor: And cater better for the public.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I refer not only to State hotels. We have instances of men controlling many licenses throughout Western Australia. In places where a monopoly exists, it is a compliment to get a meal; and so far as drink is concerned, one gets but rarely a decent-sized pot, and if one asks for whisky one does not know what sort of whisky one gets. All this because there is no competition.

Mr. Clydesdale: Be fair. Are not the conditions better to-day than ever they were?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. They are not in the same street as they were. Hotels will close themselves. It is all very well for the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) to say conditions are better than they were.

Mr. Clydesdale: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have had just as much experience in connection with hotels as the hon. member has had. To-day, conditions in many hotels are scandalous. The Weights and Measures Act should be applied to hotels. To-day the liquor trade is not as good as it used to be. We have the illustration of the Licenses Reduction Board going to Kalgoorlie and, against the wishes of the people, closing hotels there.

Mr. Clydesdale: Vested interests.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know whether it is vested interests. If it were, the hotels would close of their own account. If the department did its duty and saw to it that the hotels were properly conducted, and refrained from doing business after hours, the hotels would close themselves. But certainly there are vested interests where monopolies can be secured. I shall have something to say on this matter when the Minister brings down his Bill for the re-appointment of the Licensing Board. We should revert to the old system of the sergeant in charge of the police district, a leading justice of the peace, and a resident magistrate granting and renewing licenses. That system was much better than the present one.

Mr. Clydesdale: Do you think so?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do.

Mr. Clydesdale: You are about the only one in the State who thinks so.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know many others who think the same. In my own electorate there are monopolies where there should be two or three hotels. I know of one place at Greenbushes that was closed, while the board instructed another hotel-keeper to spend £1,400. One the question of unemployment, in my opinion the Government have fallen down on their job. During the last three years unemployment has not been a seasonal matter, but has spread right throughout the State. Every man has the right to work. Excuses are being made that unemployment is the result of an influx of foreign element. Never before have the Government had so much money to spend on developmental work, so there should be no unemployment in the State. The Government have not done their duty. Unmoved, they have seen hundreds of men walking about Perth looking for a meal. When those men, or some of them, went to the Premier, he refused to meet them. We have even had the spectacle of trade unions carrying resolutions against the Government and demanding that they should meet the unemployed.

The Minister for Railways: Put yourself in the place of the unemployed. When you go to the Premier's office do you get in without delay?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No, but the Premier does not barricade his doors against me. During the waitresses' strike, when men had to sell their property because revolutionists were breaking into those places, the police

were not brought out for their protection. The police were looking on, afraid to move. We even had the Minister for Railways threatened. He was going to be murdered. No police were brought out for his protection.

The Minister for Lands: Oh dear!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: More recently we had hundreds of men walking about Perth with their bellies empty, and because they looked for work we had the police tearing through them in the main street, without a word of protest being uttered by the Government. That is what we have had, and that from a Labour Government. Under the previous Government there was no unemployment of any description. I remember the occasion when the Governor came up to open Parliament, and a member of the House rushed around and got a number of unemployed to come along and hoot the Governor.

The Minister for Lands: Who was that member?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: You know, as well as I do. Before the change of Government we could speak from every platform and say that no man in Western Australia wanted work without being able to get it. We cannot say that to-day. The Premier declared in the Press that if any man came from the country to Perth, no employment would be found for him. Men out of work were to remain in the country districts. Yet when any of the unemployed in the country districts apply for public work in the country they cannot be employed unless they join up through the Labour Bureau in Perth.

The Minister for Railways: Oh yes, they can.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But they cannot. The Minister for Mines contradicted that statement the other night, but afterwards we had an officer of the department declaring that the statement was correct.

The Minister for Mines: I say it is not correct; and I go further and say you know it is not correct.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister knows it is correct. He knows that from his own officer.

The Minister for Mines: He is not my officer.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well you know it is correct.

The Minister for Mines: I know it is incorrect.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It was reported in the Press that the supervisor stated in regard to local employment that there was a misconception, as men could not be taken on by dribbling into town. He said that some had even walked out to Forrestania expecting to be given work, but that gangs were made up in Perth, and consequently written applications had to be made in Perth. He said that another contingent would leave Perth by the following Monday's train.

The Minister for Mines: Who said that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The supervisor.

The Minister for Mines: Which supervisor said it? That was wired from Southern Cross. It was not from an officer of the department. I know who sent the wire. The sender had nothing to do with the department.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, why does not the Minister take action against him?

The Minister for Mines: He is not employed by us.

Mr. Lindsay: All the country papers say the same thing.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know that men have made application for work in my district, and that they cannot get employment without first coming to Perth. Moreover before they can get employment they have to join a branch of the A.W.U.

Hon. G. Taylor: That's the way to whistle it.

The Minister for Mines: That has been said so often that it is of no use contradicting it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I may be able to answer the Minister in his own language. However, I am waiting for the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) to hold forth, when he may get a bit of whistling, too.

The Minister for Lands: Oh, we know him well.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Wherever possible I am prepared to assist the Ministers, but as for the unemployed of this country, Ministers are not doing too well.

The Minister for Railways: We often hear these remarks.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister ought to hear them even more often. He and his colleagues do not seem to care, and when we try to point out what is in the interests of Western Australia, it is like a voice crying in the wilderness.

The Minister for Railways: Yet the country goes ahead just the same.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The country cannot be going ahead when thousands of men are looking for work.

The Minister for Lands: But it is.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the country were going ahead, there would be no unemployment.

The Minister for Railways: But if 10,000 men from the Eastern States come in next week, how is unemployment to be avoided?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They would require to have money to get here.

The Minister for Railways: Plenty of them jump the trains.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Is the Minister asking us to believe that thousands of men are jumping the trains to get over here? I want to get back to the subject of Southern Europeans and Jugo-Slavs. The Southern Europeans have delved in our mines, and I know that some of them in my district are splendid men, as fine as one could meet. But is the Minister for Lands justified in saying when those people are in the country that we shall not allow farmers under the Agricultural Bank to employ them?

The Minister for Lands: In your opening remarks you said those men cut wages.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But I also said that, all things being equal, the Australian is not afraid of the foreigner.

The Minister for Lands: Are things not equal in your electorate?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Not when the foreigner is prepared to work for less than the standard wage.

The Minister for Lands: The same thing is to be found in the agricultural areas.

Mr. Lindsay: But that is not general.

The Minister for Lands: It occurs in quite too many cases.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not object to the Southern European. We have him in our country, we cannot have him starved, and we cannot deport him. So let us face the facts.

The Minister for Lands: We must discourage them from coming here in numbers that cannot be absorbed.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. I want to see our own coming here. But when the Southern Europeans are already in the country, we must not debar them from employment.

The Minister for Lands: I know of 50 timber workers ready to undertake clear-

ing. Yet the farmer will employ the foreigners and pretend that he cannot get Britishers.

MR. J. H. SMITH: If the Minister had 50 good timber workers for clearing, they should be able to get work.

The SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member to address the Chair. He has been addressing other hon. members and answering their questions.

MR. J. H. SMITH: I am sorry, Sir; I will not transgress again. At any rate, I was about to conclude my remarks. I hope the Government will take notice of what I have said on the subject of unemployment. I admit it is a difficult subject, but the Government should tackle it in a proper manner and not refuse to meet the men when they are crying out for bread. That is all I have to say on the Address-in-reply.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [8.31]: A lot has been said about the question of unemployment and as it is State-wide, I would be failing in my duty if I did not refer to the subject. I regret that some provision has not been made for the expenditure of money on public works during the winter months, so as to absorb those people who are able to get employment only at certain seasons of the year. We all know that quite a number find their way to the city at certain times of the year after having worked in the country. Take the pastoral areas, and the shearers who are employed during fixed months on various stations. Most of these people have their homes in the metropolitan area and when they have finished their work in the country they drift back to the city. The same thing may be said of agricultural workers. After the harvest has been taken off they too, return to the metropolitan area, and the consequence is that in the winter months when they congregate in the city, it is difficult for them to find employment. This trouble has been with us for as long a period as I can remember. I admit that this year the unemployment question has been worse than we have known it to be for some time past. This state of affairs can easily be accounted for. We had a bumper harvest last season and that fact was well advertised in the East. There were failures in the harvests of most of the other States and that, together with

the dismissals from the Railway Department of South Australia, was responsible for the influx from the Eastern States to Western Australia. I have come into contact with a good many of these people and found them all to be a good class of men. I am sorry that it has not been possible to find work for all of them. We realise that in the period of the gold boom, many of us drifted over here and made good. Therefore, if the people who are coming to this State now, could find employment, no doubt many, like ourselves, would also make good. But it is hardly to be expected that Western Australia can make provision for all the unemployed of Australia. We have also had an influx of people from Southern Europe. From statistics that have been published we gather that the majority of the Southern Europeans have been going either to Queensland or coming to this State. Whilst I have nothing to say against these men, our first duty is to our own people.

Mr. Mann: There would not be as many in your district, to-day as there were 10 or 20 years ago.

MR. CHESSON: No, we have not the Great Fingal working now.

Mr. Heron: They have drifted into the farming areas.

MR. CHESSON: I have had a good deal of experience in connection with the employment of Southern Europeans, and I know that most of them have always been exploited by their own countrymen. The more experienced of them take contracts, but not at a cut price. The contractor gets the price he asks, but he does not pay his countrymen what he should pay them. That kind of thing happened in the mining days. On the Great Fingal mine there was an Italian contractor named Ceruti who always employed new chum Italians. Then when these Italians understood enough English and found they were being exploited, Ceruti got rid of them and filled their places with later arrivals who, in turn, were unable to speak a word of English. All that they could say was "Day Dawn" and they boarded the trains and were dumped off at Day Dawn when the train got there. These men worked in rises and no provision was made for them in the way of ventilation or anything else. Most of these men died as a

result of the bad mining conditions of those days.

Mr. Lindsay: Is Ceruti still living?

Mr. CHESON: No, he too has passed out. We know that this class of labour is exploited even to-day. At the present time if we go to the wood lines we see this class of labour engaged there. Now as for the difference between the Southern European and the Australian worker, I do not hesitate to say that there is any comparison; the Australian is head and shoulders above the Southern European in work associated with mining or sleeper cutting. Have not all the champion axemen been Australians? I admit that Southern Europeans are also good workers, but when it comes to a question of capable and efficient labour, the Southern European is not in it with the Australian. When I hear men say that they are not able to get Australians to clear their land, I come to the conclusion that there is something wrong. My experience is that if an Australian is treated decently he will always work well for his employer. We should, of course, provide him with a decent house to live in.

Mr. Lindsay: You would not expect a house to be provided when he is clearing the land?

Mr. CHESON: I do not say that, but in these days of motor transport there should not be any difficulty in providing him with all his supplies and reasonable comfort.

Mr. Lindsay: That is always done.

Mr. CHESON: Then there must be something wrong if farmers cannot get a decent class of Australian to do the work of clearing. Of course we would not expect a man born and bred in the city and having done clerical work, to take on the laborious task of clearing land and making good. There has been a good deal of criticism about the incidence of the vermin tax, and a lot has been said about this tax affecting one section of the community more than another. The pastoralist is concerned more about the destruction of the dingo, the fox and the eagle-hawk. If members knew what a big sum was paid in the pastoral areas, they would realise that in those parts of the State these pests were being destroyed in great numbers. We know that the dingo is migratory and if it had not been for the pastoralist acting as a buffer between his

areas and the agricultural districts, the dingo would have worked his way down in greater numbers and infested the agricultural areas. At one time the foxes were no further north than Mullewa. Now they have worked their way further north than Cue.

Mr. Lindsay: Foxes are now working their way down.

Mr. CHESON: Squatters never move from their districts; they are always laying baits. If it had not been for the squatters in the back country, there would be more dingoes in the agricultural areas. Around Cue at the present time there are practically no dingoes. Station owners have gone out further than other people in their efforts to destroy this pest, and they make no noise about their success in this direction.

Mr. Lindsay: I should not think they would.

Mr. CHESON: In the agricultural areas the settlers have to contend with the rabbit pest.

Mr. Lindsay: We are not asking the pastoralist to destroy rabbits.

Mr. CHESON: Rabbits will not live in the pastoral areas, at any rate, not for any length of time. They die out rapidly as soon as a dry spell sets in. One can travel for miles in the pastoral areas without seeing any sign of a rabbit, though in the good seasons one might come across a few occasionally. I do not consider the rabbit will ever become a menace to the pastoralist. I wish to thank the Government for the assistance they are rendering through the Agricultural Bank to the young pastoralist who is starting out on his own account. There are cases in which young people, the sons of squatters, have acquired small holdings of perhaps 100,000 acres. These people appreciate very much the help that is being rendered them. There has been a good deal said by way of criticism about the train service through Wongan Hills to Meekatharra. I travel over that line as often as most people, and I have very little fault to find with the service. When one arrives at Mullewa there is a change of train. Then the journey to Meekatharra starts from Geraldton. The biggest fault, perhaps, is in connection with the change over. In the change over, adequate provision is not made for the passengers who have to travel over the longer distances. The result is that many people have to get into compartments that are practically full. At

one time the corridor cars were taken as far as Meekatharra, but subsequently it was decided they would not run beyond Mullewa. A deputation waited upon the Commissioner of Railways to discuss the matter and Colonel Pope informed us that the reason for the alteration was to enable an extra load of stock trucks to be taken up. We were promised that in the change over, clean carriages would be provided, but that promise has not been fulfilled. The carriages come through from Geraldton and there is no opportunity to clean them en route. On the return journey from Meekatharra, after changing over to the corridor cars, there is not much complaint to be made. It has been urged that the carriages in use are leaky ones. When we consider the heat in the summer, it is not to be wondered at that when the rains come, the carriages prove leaky, especially when we realise how timber shrinks in the heat. Reference is made in the Governor's Speech to legislation dealing with hospitals, and I believe a hospital tax is on the tapis. We should endeavour to provide more revenue for our hospitals and to that end, we should not fail to introduce a lottery Bill. Huge sums of money are sent out of Western Australia each year to Tattersalls in Tasmania, and the Golden Casket in Queensland. There is no chance of stopping that sort of thing, and if we were to run a lottery in Western Australia, we could divert much of that money and make it available for hospitals and charities within our own borders. When legislation with that object in view was passed by a large majority in this House, it was rejected in the Legislative Council. Since then some of the members of the Upper House have visited Queensland and they have changed their minds. In view of that, I believe that we could now secure the passage of legislation such as I have indicated. If we can keep that money within the State, we will have achieved something of advantage. Dealing with the stock traffic of the Murchison, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the large number of stock that pass through the Cue yards. The following extract from the "Murchison Times" is of interest:—

The following very interesting figures were courteously supplied by the stationmaster, Cue, in regard to railage of stock and wool from Cue railway station for the 12 months ending June 30:—Cattle, 2,333; sheep, 20,735; wool, 4,071 bales. A careful estimate made of these

figures gives the following values:—Cattle, £27,996; sheep, £20,735; wool, £101,775; total, £150,806.

Those figures indicate the number of stock passing through Cue from the Murchison. They do not take into account the stock shifted from Meekatharra, Tuckanarra, Mt. Magnet and other centres.

The Minister for Railways: Did not the lighting of the yards prove of great assistance?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes. The Government came to the assistance of the local road board and enabled the railway yards to be lighted at night. As a result, all stock is loaded in the yards at about 3 a.m., where previously that work had to be undertaken during the day time. From a humanitarian standpoint alone the Government are to be commended for their action. Coming to the mining industry, hon. members will realise what an important part that industry has played, and is still playing, in the development of the State. Over £1,700,000 worth of gold has been taken from the mines during the past 12 months. In 1890 the population of this State was very small; now it exceeds 400,000 people. When we realise those figures, we also appreciate what mining has meant for the State. Had it not been for that industry, in all probability railway lines would not have been constructed for perhaps another 20 years to the Murchison and other outlying parts, where the pastoral and agricultural industries have grown up in addition to mining operations. In the Murchison to-day the agricultural areas have extended to Mullewa, and the railways that were built for mining purposes are now available to serve the interests of agriculture in the outlying parts. The same thing applies in the Eastern Goldfields districts where agriculture has extended to beyond Southern Cross. In addition, it has to be remembered that the goldfields provided markets for the produce of pastoralists in earlier days. I want to refer to a little history to show how the prosperity of the State was foretold in very early days. It was in 1854 that Austin, the explorer, led the so-called North-Eastern Expedition, which began at Northam and ended at the Geraldine mining settlement. On his way through what is now the Murchison, he named Mt. Magnet and found evidence of auriferous wealth sufficient to draw from him in his report in 1855 the prophetic

words, "The country around Lake Austin is probably one of the finest goldfields in the world." How true was his forecast, subsequent years served to verify. Had his words been taken seriously in 1855, what a wonderful thing it would have meant to the progress of the State! Representatives of mining constituencies can have no complaints to urge against the Government when we take into consideration the money that has been provided for developing those areas and for the encouragement of prospecting. The Government have shown their practical sympathy in connection with the mining industry by encouragement wherever possible. The activity that has been going on at Wiluna has resulted in the mines at that centre becoming the best developed propositions in the State. Very little more can be done until the line from Meekatharra to Wiluna is constructed. We hope we shall not have to wait very long for the completion of that work. Then, again, we are interested in the construction of the Geraldton harbour, which is the natural port for the Murehison district. With adequate provisions to meet the requirements of the district, there will be a far better railway service. In order to fully avail ourselves of the manganese deposits, we have to await the construction of a line from the Horse-shoe and from Wiluna.

Mr. Lindsay: Have they done anything with the manganese yet?

Mr. CHESSON: Nothing further can be done pending the completion of the work at the Geraldton end. It is necessary to erect a bin capable of holding 10,000 tons, so that boats can be loaded as expeditiously and as economically as possible.

Hon. G. Taylor: The railway line has been completed.

Mr. CHESSON: But not ballasted.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will not ballast that line.

Mr. CHESSON: They will have to do so, in order that the heavy loads may be carried. The Government have extended great assistance to the mining industry in my electorate, particularly in connection with diamond drill boring. In the Cue district, three bores have been completed and the lode has been cut at depths ranging from 400 to 600 feet in the sulphide zone. The results have been very satisfactory. Without fear of contradiction, it can be said that those results are

better than those obtained elsewhere for long time past.

Hon. G. Taylor: Where are the bores being put down?

Mr. CHESSON: At Reidys. Three have been completed; another is about complete and the fifth is getting down.

Hon. G. Taylor: All on the same lode?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes. The lode has been cut for depths ranging from 12 feet to 5 feet.

Hon. G. Taylor: Good business!

Mr. CHESSON: It looks as if Reidys will develop into a decent mine. The fifth bore has yet to be put down. Boring is also to be undertaken at the Big Bell Mine. This is an enormous proposition.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is the biggest in the State, is it not?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes; it has been sampled on the surface over a big distance. It is such a big lode that the boring will take place in the lode practically from start to finish. A start will be made in lode and the bore will be prospecting in lode matter the whole way. I am very sanguine as to the results there. We have a fair number of men working on the Poon tin and on the emeralds. Probably there has been a bit of a ramp in connection with the market. A good deal of work has been done. I was talking to an expert, Mr. Bird, who said he had never seen a place where there were so many emeralds. He considered the place worth development. The emeralds being secured had a market value for decorative purposes in Japan, but he was of opinion that at depth a better class of stone would be obtained. I wish to thank the Government on behalf of the prospector of my district for the assistance granted to them. Every genuine prospector who has put in a claim has received assistance.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think you are right there.

Mr. CHESSON: We realise that when a man goes out prospecting he is likely to find something that will be beneficial not only to himself, but to the State, and everybody agrees to assistance being granted to that class of man.

Hon. G. Taylor: We ought to keep as many of them out as possible.

Mr. CHESSON: The Government have done really good work in assisting them. The Government assistance in the matter of crushing facilities has also been most useful. The carting subsidy has been a great

boon to the prospector. It means that everybody is placed on the basis of a 5-mile radius from the battery. Even if a man is working a show 20 miles from the battery, it costs him only 5s. to cart his ore. Consequently ore of comparatively low value can be treated. The Cue battery holds the record this year for tonnage put through. Some of the crushings have given low returns, but we must realise that the men engaged in such work have succeeded in living and paying their way. Every ounce of gold taken out of the ground represents new money.

Mr. Lindsay: Does not that apply to all primary production?

Mr. CHESSON: Gold has a standard value, and did not benefit during the war; in fact, Western Australia lost on its gold production during the war period. When we remember that three £1 notes are put into circulation for every sovereign coined, we can realise what a fine work the prospectors are doing for the State. The Federal grant to assist prospecting was utterly useless to Western Australia. The Federal Government set aside a sum of about £30,000 for the whole of the States, but the conditions attached to it were impossible. It was stipulated that the State had to spend the whole of its mines development vote before it could partake in the Federal grant. The only place that could benefit under the conditions imposed was the Northern Territory. If a further sum for the assistance of prospecting is made available by the Federal Government, I hope this State will be given an opportunity to take advantage of it. I am in the happy position of being able to say that I have no grievances to air in respect of my electorate.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are very fortunate.

Mr. CHESSON: Of course, we have the unemployed problem with us, but we make an effort to provide employment in the district. We do not advise our men who are out of work to go to Perth. People are only too apt to drift to the city. When I am in my electorate I make a practice of calling on the station people. Wool has been commanding a fair price and many of the station owners have work to be done. When I tell them that I have a couple of reliable men wanting work, station owners will often put work in hand earlier than they had intended. In this way the station owners work hand in hand with the other members of the community. The mining prospects are brighter than they have been

for some years. People are optimistic about the development of Wiluna and the eastern goldfields generally. It is now easier to get local assistance to equip and send out prospecting parties than it has been for some time past. With the parties that are out prospecting under Government assistance, the outlook is certainly more hopeful. A more optimistic view of mining is being taken by the general public, and I hope that the optimism will be justified and that we shall get some big development that will redound to the benefit of the State.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.7]: Every member who has spoken on this motion has stressed the importance of the unemployed question, and I desire to say a few words on the subject. Unfortunately Western Australia is not the only State that is experiencing this trouble. It appears to be general right through Australia. Last Thursday in Adelaide I saw a procession of 800 or 900 men. They seem to hold a procession twice a week in that city, just to keep before the public the fact that there are unemployed in Adelaide. I heard rather a funny motion discussed in the Legislative Assembly that evening. The Leader of the Opposition moved that the House should allow two members of the unemployed to come to the bar and put their case before members.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is that a fact?

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, and the debate occupied nearly the whole day. The Leader of the Opposition did not specify which bar he had in mind, but the Premier blew out the motion pretty quickly when he advised the House that one of the men suggested as spokesman was a recent arrival from Sydney and was a well-known communist agitator.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was a good stock phrase.

Mr. ANGELO: However, unemployment is a matter which we should consider, and on which we should give any advice that may prove of assistance. I should like to know whether the Premier and the Minister for Lands read the leading article that appeared in the "Daily News" on 26th July last, entitled "The Problem of Unemployment." Therein was given a suggestion that appealed to me as being well worthy of consideration, because I ser-

iously believe that, if it were carried into effect, it would solve the difficulty to a great extent. The suggestion would mean the employment, I believe, of 85 or 90 per cent. of the workless. It would speed up production considerably, it would cost practically nothing, so far as unemployment was concerned, and it might add considerably to the experience of men who had not done that class of work and perhaps create a class of worker, namely clearers, that would be welcomed by the farmers in preference to Southern Europeans. The suggestion, briefly stated, was that the Government should set aside some 300 or 400 of the 3,000 farms and offer clearing contracts to the unemployed, say to little sections of three or four men. Suppose they went out in lots of three and there were 300 blocks on which they could be given clearing contracts, it would mean the employment of 900 men. The men would be paid the usual contract price which, in my opinion, is the key of the suggestion, and when the lot was put up for sale, there would be no difficulty whatever in getting value for it. In the course of my business I meet numbers of people from the Eastern States who have come to Western Australia to buy farms, and I can safely say that nine out of ten of them would prefer to get a partly improved property. They do not seem desirous to go out into the virgin country and start to cut down the first tree. If they could go on to farms with 300 or 400 acres cleared—and most of them have the money to pay for the clearing—they would prefer properties of that kind. If the Government placed a proposition of the kind before men genuinely desirous of obtaining work, they would undertake it.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would be idle for them to take it on otherwise.

Mr. ANGELO: It is the function of government to find employment for men out of work. If the Government offered such men employment at the contract rate for clearing and they refused the work, the Government's responsibility to them would end. They could say to the men, "We offer you this work; thousands of men have been doing similar work at the same rate of contract, and if you do not choose to take it, we have done our best for you and you can go somewhere else."

Hon. G. Taylor: But that would not prevent agitation.

Mr. ANGELO: The Government could set aside blocks to the number of 300 or 400 and announce that they were prepared to let contracts for clearing 200 or 300 acres on each to teams of three or four men. The men could go out and earn good money, and the cost of the work could be met by an encumbrance against the particular blocks. The money might come out of the Agricultural Bank. I do not see much difference between a person who acquires a block through the Agricultural Bank, borrowing hundreds of pounds for clearing, and the Government borrowing through the bank, and making the money they have spent upon the block an encumbrance against the title. When the purchaser comes along, he can either pay the money which has been expended on clearing, or take up the encumbrance from the bank. Perhaps some special advance account might be created to cover such a procedure. I feel sure, provided only the present contract rate is paid and the work was properly done, and passed by a competent inspector, every one of those blocks would be sold and the money advanced for the clearing would be refunded to the Government. It would be only a temporary loan, because nine out of ten persons looking for land seem to prefer a partly improved property. This would mean a great deal in the way of speeding up our production. We want a 50,000 bushel yield next year to celebrate our centenary. What a fine thing it would be if on 300 farms we had an additional 300 acres cleared, representing 9,000 more acres of wheat towards our objective. I feel sure that every penny of the money advanced to carry out such a scheme would be repaid to the Government, except possibly the cost of a few supervisors, which would be very little compared with the cost of doing nothing for the unemployed. Lastly I feel certain that if these men were put out to do the work and became accustomed to it, having served their apprenticeship in it, if it were, they would find there was good money to be earned by clearing. We should thus create a new class of clearer, who would find ready employment amongst the farmers after these particular jobs had been done. Such a scheme has been carried out before. I think the late Mr. Hopkins, when Minister

for Lands, had a lot of clearing done in anticipation of the subsequent sale of the land.

Mr. LINDSAY: That was not too successful.

Mr. ANGELO: That may be so, because the work was done by day labour. I am not suggesting day labour in this case.

Mr. LINDSAY: That was for ringbarking and scrubbing. The timber grew up again before the settlers could make use of the land. The work was badly done.

Mr. ANGELO: Hundreds of men are ready to purchase blocks as soon as the clearing has been effected. I would ask the Government to give these suggestions some thought. If it relieved the situation and assisted 90 per cent. of the unemployed it might be followed up later by further clearing along the same lines. I have an idea the Government do not like contract work, but in times of stress we have to take exceptional measures to overcome difficulties. I hope the Government will see if the suggestion put forward by the "Daily News" cannot be gone into and perhaps given effect to, thereby not only relieving those who are unemployed, but speeding up production generally.

The Premier: You do not know what has been happening. You must have been out of the State for a few weeks.

Mr. ANGELO: If the Premier can tell me that something has already been done in this direction, I shall be only too glad to hear it.

The Premier: All that was done weeks ago. How long have you been away?

Mr. ANGELO: I am delighted to hear it. I have read numbers of speeches as well as the papers, but I have heard of no action being taken in this direction. I have heard that land has been cleared out from Southern Cross for roads only, but I understand the actual work of clearing lots has not yet been started.

The Premier: You have not been long enough back to make yourself acquainted with all the facts.

Mr. ANGELO: I am glad to hear that something in this direction is being done. It is the right way to set about such work. If, therefore, what I have been talking about cannot be taken as a suggestion, I am only too pleased to compliment the Government upon having already started this scheme.

On motion by Mr. Rowe, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1928.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—POLICE BENEFIT FUND.

Scale of Benefits.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Police: 1, Have the Government given effect to the recommendation of the select committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to inquire into the Police Benefit Fund, namely that the scale of benefits for officers who have joined the Police Force since 1917 be increased to the rate applicable to officers who joined prior to that date? 2, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied: 1, No. 2, It is not at present considered that the financial position of the fund is sufficiently strong to allow of the extension of benefits as mentioned in (1).

Superannuation Scheme.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Police: What action has been taken by the Government in regard to the recommendation of the select committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to inquire into the practicability of converting the Police Benefit Fund into a superannuation scheme:—"That the Police Benefit Fund be converted into a pension scheme similar in respect to pensions, gratuities, and allowances to that covering the Victorian police force"?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied: Similar requests have also been received