

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. This question of increasing the subsidy must be carefully considered by the Government, because we cannot allow the fox menace to continue. Already the pest is doing a great deal of damage. Then we have the native dog bonus. I have been told that those dogs are increasing tenfold because of the very small price that is paid for their scalps. I will support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

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

*House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 17th August, 1937.*

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

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK, REVERTED PROPERTIES.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is the prospective purchaser from the Agricultural Bank of a reverted property provided with the mortgage document at the time when he enters into the contract of sale? 2, If not, does the contract of sale specify the interest and other conditions? 3, If not, is the purchaser supplied with information as to the probability of variation in the rate of interest, or in the conditions of the mortgage, and if so, at what stage in the negotiations?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. 2, Specifies usual conditions only. 3, Full information is available on inquiry.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from 12th August.

MR. NULSEN (Kanowna) [4.37]: I congratulate the Premier upon his safe return from England and upon the fact that he is looking so well. Undoubtedly the trip has done him a great deal of good. It would be better for everyone concerned if many of our leaders were to make these trips. They are very educational. Those who go abroad see different systems and come into contact with people of a different psychology. I regret the Premier had not time in which to visit foreign countries such as Germany, Russia, Italy, America and so on. I was also sorry to learn from the newspaper of the accident which befell the Minister for Agriculture. I feel sure he would be more hurt by reason of being unable to carry out his duties than from the injuries he received, as he is a very hard worker and very sincere in all that he does. I was glad the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) struck a new note. We hear so much that is merely traditional, and we are glad when somebody steps out in a new path, although we may not always agree with what is said. The hon. member certainly opened up a new track. I have said before I would like to see the Address-in-reply cut out altogether, but, after giving the matter further consideration, I feel it would perhaps be better if the duration of speeches were limited to 20 minutes. It is necessary that some time should be devoted to private members' business, and it is also necessary that too much time should not be devoted to that purpose. The Leader of the Opposition made many allegations against the Government. I suppose it is his job to do that. The Premier, however, in a very truthful and logical manner replied effectively to those allegations. Although when members criticise the Government they do not always say those things that are absolutely correct, nevertheless it is sometimes necessary for opposition to be offered so that the Government may have a chance to reply. I have much for which to thank the Government, and I appreciate what they have done in my electorate, the largest electorate in the State. Many other things, however, have not yet been done. That may be put down to the fact that money is not available to do everything that every member requires. The water

scheme at Norseman was a wonderful undertaking. Without it it would not have been possible for Norseman to carry on. The reticulation has been partly completed. It is a pity it was not finished. The cost would have been only about £3,000, but owing to the shortness of money it was not possible to finish the work. The Minister has, however, promised that it will be completed before next summer. I am glad that a fire brigade will be established there. The old brigade was a great credit to the district and did very well. A new brigade will be helpful to the young people, and will bring down the insurance rates. I am always in favour of volunteer fire brigades. Such brigades are a great asset to the State. I am fairly well satisfied with the roads. Between Coolgardie and Esperance the road is pretty well advanced, and will be a great help to the district. The road between Laverton and Beria is as good as most of the metropolitan roads, and is also very useful to the district. I am grateful to the Government for doing that work. I travel on the trans-Australian railway every year, and find that things are not as satisfactory there as they should be. I am not satisfied with what is being done for the pastoral and agricultural industries. I find there is over-capitalisation in the mallee where it is a question of sheep versus wheat. Neither am I satisfied with the irregularities in the re-pricing of the land by the Lands Department. The dangerous deviations in some of our main roads are not conducive to the safety of the public. This matter should be inquired into. I will deal with these questions later on in the session. Members know my opinion of monetary reform. I congratulate the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Curtin, upon his policy. Until we have monetary reform of a definite nature we shall never get back to true prosperity. On this point I admire the member for Claremont (Mr. North). He always strikes an individual note, or, as he puts it, brings out some dark horse. Eventually that dark horse will come to the front. Too often we speak in traditional terms, and do not give sufficient consideration to future development. Until we do so, we will not get anywhere. In my remarks this afternoon I intend to concentrate upon the disabilities that arise from centralisation. Western Australia has really

been developed on the foundations of centralisation to the detriment of the back country. The policy of the Labour Party is decentralisation. From what I can learn the first plank in the platform of the Country Party also is decentralisation. There should not be too much bother about meting out justice to every port of the State. Each port is entitled to its natural traffic. If the country were developed on those lines costs would be reduced and the hinterland behind the ports would have a chance to develop. Vested interests, however, and selfishness have stood out against decentralisation. We have a fine port at Esperance. The Government have spent a lot of money in giving Esperance the necessary facilities. They have built a jetty which runs out into 37½ feet of water, and there is a Customs House having a big storage capacity of not less than 2,000 tons. There is also a railway from the port to nearly every part of the hinterland. The port itself controls the second greatest hinterland in Western Australia. A good deal of Government money has been spent there. The only fly in the ointment is that as yet we have no regular service. For a boat to call now and then is of little avail. To ensure cargoes there must be a continuity of service and a regular time-table. Arrangements cannot be made for mere casual calls by shippers, because business people and the mines cannot tolerate anything that is not regular and permanent. Such a service would be a very important factor to Esperance. Members representing the eastern goldfields in both Houses formed themselves into a committee, and have been working hard to bring about the utilisation of their natural port. All the local governing authorities and the Chamber of Mines have been actively assisting. They realise the benefit it would be to all concerned to have the port opened. In haulage, compared with Fremantle, there would be a saving in railage of 347 miles to Norseman, 131 miles to Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, or any of the other places to the east including Laverton, Leonora and Lawlers, and, in addition, a saving of 568 miles of water way. The Lake View and Star Co., by establishing oil tanks at Esperance, have effected savings at the rate of £1 per ton. I learn that the company use about 5,000 gallons of oil a day, so that they are saving £25 a day in respect of oil alone, which represents an enormous figure for the

year. Norseman, being so much closer to Esperance, would save more than twice as much. Lancefield saves about 10s. on charges, which is worthy of consideration too. Despite the surcharge of 10s. per ton levied against boats calling at Esperance, a saving can be effected in respect of most freight, although the distance is 568 miles shorter to Esperance than to Fremantle. I will give the House a few examples of the savings recorded, despite the fact that there is an additional charge of 10s. a ton at Esperance compared with the charges at Fremantle, which is 568 miles further on. I will instance goods under classes B and C, and first and second classes and second class plus 10 per cent. I will give an indication as to what the effect is in connection with Norseman, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Menzies, Leonora, and Laverton. The details of savings are as follows:—

	Class B.	Class C.	1st Class.	2nd Class	2nd Class plus 10 per cent.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Norseman	20 11	42 0	80 7	109 0	120 11
Coolgardie	4 3	8 10	23 2	33 6	38 2
Kalgoorlie	3 8	8 4	22 2	32 2	36 7
Boulder	3 6	8 1	21 0	31 9	35 11
Menzies	2 11	6 11	17 6	26 2	29 9
Leonora	2 11	6 9	15 1	22 11	26 3
Laverton	2 10	6 9	15 1	22 11	26 3

It will be noticed that the further the goods have to travel from Fremantle, the saving is not so marked, and the explanation of that is the shading off of charges with regard to rail-age distances. A still greater saving is registered as against the use of the trans-Australian railway. The Steamship Owners' Association are reluctant to open any port other than Fremantle, and obviously they are in favour of centralisation. When the Government completed the railway to Esperance, the local people thought that something great had been achieved; but then the representatives of the Steamship Owners' Association visited the port and said that the jetty was unsafe and dangerous, and refused to provide a regular service by sea. Since then the Government have spent a lot of money in providing Esperance with a deep water jetty, with which no fault can be found. All that we want at Esperance now is a regular shipping service. I view the attitude of the Steamship Owners' Association with suspicion. They apparently claim that although they might send their ships to Esperance, they would still have to send them on to Fremantle, and in consequence they realise that no greater volume of freight would be transported into Western Australia as the result of opening up another port.

They claim there is an advantage through being able to concentrate at one centre. They care not for the development of the State. They have no feelings where the local people are concerned, nor have they any regard for the fact that those people are doing their best under very adverse conditions. Nor are the members of the Steamship Owners' Association the only ones reluctant to open up the port. The same attitude is apparent with regard to the wholesale manufacturers and merchants generally. They do not desire to erect buildings in an additional port, seeing that they have their warehouses in Perth or Fremantle. Obviously those people, too, are in favour of centralisation. There is no question about that, because it suits their businesses better. I have given a lot of consideration to this question, and I am perfectly satisfied that no one can submit a legitimate argument against the opening up of ports that have an extensive hinterland. I know more about Esperance, and therefore quote that port as an example. I am positive that no one can submit a legitimate argument against opening up that port. Then again, goods that should be transported over our State-owned railways, and especially over the section between Esperance and Coolgardie, are conveyed over the trans-Australian line. Why is that? It is because we are not using the port of Esperance. The reason for that is not that we have not the trade available, or that the trade would not be sufficient to warrant the port being served with a regular service, but simply because those who have vested interests in the metropolitan area have no desire to see the port of Esperance opened. Some people argue that the mallee country has not been successful. Perhaps it is not. But we are not relying on the mallee country alone. Esperance would serve a population of not less than 50,000 people who are resident in the hinterland, and that is quite independent of the mallee country. If the imports averaged £22 per head, then there should be not less than £1,200,000 worth of goods to pass through the port. That would represent the minimum, because the goldfields imports are much more than the average per head for the whole State, owing to the extensive importations of machinery, spare parts, and so forth. I have remarked that some people claim that the mallee country is not quite satisfactory. I am perfectly satisfied that the area immediately surrounding Esperance and the Mallee will ultimately prove to be productive. The average rainfall at Esperance

is 25.99 inches, or 26 inches in round figures. The annual rainfall over the sandplain country is about 20 inches. When I spoke about the latter area years ago, I re-named it, and referred to it as the treeless plain; it is too good to be designated a sand plain. I am satisfied that we do not appreciate the value of that country at the present stage, and I am confident that some time in the future it will prove to be a great asset to the State. I am confident that we will be able to produce butter there and various other commodities of which the public generally have no conception at present. If a regular maritime service were established and the surcharge of 10s. per ton lifted—I regard that as a most iniquitous charge—I am satisfied that the necessary tonnage would be forthcoming at Esperance. If that regular service were provided the requirements of business men could be imported through Esperance, and those who did not pursue that course would, in view of the saving that would be effected, be compelled to fall into line in order to compete successfully with those who did. I have heard it said that if the port of Esperance were opened it would affect local production. I can assure the House that we do not desire anything of the sort. In a circular that I issued on the 8th June last I included the following paragraph:—

The committee is in no way desirous of discouraging local production, but a large quantity of supplies, chiefly mining supplies, are not produced in Western Australia. Much importation from the Eastern States is therefore inevitable.

Although we advocate the opening up of Esperance as being conducive to the interests of the goldfields and as a means to help prolong the life of the many industries in the hinterland of the port, we are not desirous of importing any goods that can be produced within Western Australia. As far back as 1903 the Eastern Goldfields Reform League of Western Australia complained bitterly because the goldfields people could not make use of their natural port at Esperance. Just to give members an idea of the strong feeling that existed at the time, I will quote a paragraph from the manifesto issued by the league under the heading of "Separation for Federation." The manifesto was adopted by a conference held at Kalgoorlie on the 3rd January, 1900. The paragraph I shall quote reads as follows:—

4.—Refusal of Natural Railway Facilities.

In addition to denying us fair representation, overtaxing us, and diverting revenue and loans for the benefit of the older settled districts, the dominant minority on the coast have refused to allow us our natural harbour at Esperance, and have frequently stated that they will never permit the construction of a railway to the south coast. In order to force all our commerce and traffic to pass through Perth and Fremantle, they thus compel all goods from the eastern colonies to travel an extra 368 miles by sea, and 163 miles by rail. The distance from Fremantle to Coolgardie is 363 miles, whereas from Esperance it is only 200 in a direct line.

The railway, when it was constructed, did not proceed in the direct line suggested, in consequence of which the distance from Esperance to Coolgardie is 232 miles, so the saving is only 131 miles as against 163 miles. It will be seen right from that time the feeling on the goldfields was that the port of Esperance has never been fairly treated and that it was the natural port for the fields. It has always been badly treated because of vested interests and has certainly been unfortunate in that respect. In 1895 when each port had its natural traffic and the railway from Fremantle to Coolgardie had not been constructed, Esperance had a population of 2,000, and there were 10 stores, two banks, four newspapers, one brewery and one timber yard. At that time Esperance was paying the second highest Customs revenue in the State. There were two small boats and three schooners regularly calling into Esperance in those days. They had the shipping, but no jetty and no harbour facilities, whereas today we have the harbour facilities but no shipping, which seems rather anomalous. It is beyond my understanding altogether that so much money should have been spent there and yet the people should not derive any benefit from it, as they should be entitled to do from their natural port. In those far-off days there were 60 horse teams and 2,000 camels hauling imports from Esperance to the Eastern Goldfields. That was before the railway was constructed from Fremantle to Coolgardie. Esperance has always been shamefully treated. It has never been given a fair deal, and I think there are other ports also that have not been justly dealt with, ports such as Albany and Geraldton. I have no desire to be insolent, but I should like the Government to wake up to a sense of responsibility and extend justice to Esperance, especially since they have spent a large sum of money in provid-

ing the necessary harbour facilities. I shall be quite satisfied if we can get a regular steamer service, but without the surcharge, which I think is iniquitous and unfair in every way. There will be no less than a thousand tons per month coming through the port of Esperance, exclusive of oil. It behoves us to do something tangible. We can all talk, but talking gets us nowhere, whereas actions speak louder than words. Twelve months ago I met the chairman of the Steamship Owners' Association, and I was promised that if the goldfields would guarantee 250 tons freight per month, the boats would call into Esperance, but with a surcharge of 10s. Seemingly, at that time a surcharge of £125 would have been sufficient to induce them to call, but now I have approached them again and they tell me definitely that the surcharge will be imposed, no matter how many tons might be carried. That seems anomalous for, surely, if the freight on a boat were 500 tons or 1,000 tons there should be some reduction in the surcharge or on a pro rata basis; instead of its being 10s. it should be only, say, 2s. 6d. per ton for 1,000 tons. Recently I had a talk with the manager of the Australian Glass Company about shipping their felspar through Esperance. The railways have conceded that company 2s. 6d. per ton freight to Fremantle, but the Shipping Owners' Association want that 10s. surcharge on exports as well as on imports. The curse of it all is centralisation. The whole State of Western Australia has been built up on a foundation of centralisation and, to an outpost, centralisation means isolation. That is where the port of Esperance has suffered. It is ridiculous that 47 per cent. of the population of Western Australia should be found within the metropolitan area. Queensland has been developed on a very different system, the zone system, and so there is only 31 per cent. of her population within the metropolitan area, which speaks well for the development of that State. Our Premier, being member for Geraldton, is in a position somewhat similar to my own, in that there has been much more money spent in Geraldton than in Esperance, and still the people of Geraldton are not getting the service to which they are entitled. From what I could learn when I was up there, most of the requirements of the district still come through Fremantle, which is a ridiculous state of

affairs. The Labour Party favours decentralisation and so, too, does the Country Party, but further consideration will have to be given to doing something in that regard. I am not altogether in favour of interference with private enterprise, but I do say that in the development of the State the Government have every justification for the running of State boats. We can well imagine what would have happened in the North but for the State steamers, and we can see what is happening in the South for want of State steamers. It will be difficult for the Country Party to implement their policy of decentralisation unless they can get competition in transport.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Before the railways were built, Esperance had its boats.

Mr. NULSEN: Yes, before the railways were built, but since every facility has been provided at Fremantle, the boats concentrate there. I am told that in a lesser degree centralisation of shipping obtains in England. I was speaking of this to Mr. Angwin, a former Agent General, and he said it was much the same in England, although to a lesser degree than obtains in Western Australia.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, at Liverpool.

Mr. NULSEN: Yes, that is what I was informed by one who knows.

Mr. Doney: He did not know too much about it.

Mr. NULSEN: I think he does know something about it, and I am sure he was right in what he said. If Esperance were opened as a port, innumerable benefits would follow. If we had a regular service of steamers there, we would never have less than 1,000 tons of cargo per month coming to Esperance. It would serve to develop the hinterland by cheapening costs. Also it would cheapen costs in the mining industry, and so permit of the working of low-grade ore. It would help the unemployed by prolonging the life of the mining industry. It would also make use of the utilities already established by the Government, such as our railways, which extend to every corner of that hinterland. I believe the railway to Laverton is either the second longest or the third longest line in Western Australia. Taxation would be helped, because on a per capita basis the goldfields pay more taxation than is paid elsewhere in the State. It would reduce the isolation of Esperance

and give the Esperance people a little encouragement. At present they are living under most adverse conditions. And it must not be forgotten that the port of Esperance serves the largest producing goldfields in Australia. Western Australia produces 80 per cent. of the gold won in the Commonwealth. We have quite a number of road boards in the hinterland of Esperance, one of which wrote a long letter to me—I am not going to read it—asking for the co-operation of the Esperance Road Board in getting a decent road put down between Ravensthorpe and Esperance; because Esperance is the natural port of Ravensthorpe, but unless the people of Ravensthorpe have a decent connecting road, they cannot use Esperance. They have been asking for this road for years. and to-morrow we are to take a deputation to the Minister on the subject. I hope he will give sympathetic consideration to our request. The Esperance district boasts eight road boards, some of them having a length of over 500 miles. They are: Phillips River, Esperance, Dundas, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Menzies, Mt. Margaret, and Leonora. Then there are also included in the area the municipalities of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. All members are aware of the attractions of Esperance as a health and pleasure resort. The climate is superb, and for sportsmen there are fishing, shooting, tennis and a scenic golf course the equal of which I have never seen. The first boat, the s.s. "Koomyia," is expected on the 24th inst. I hope her visit will be the start of a regular service to Esperance. Seeing that Esperance has such a huge and productive hinterland, I ask members for their sympathetic support of my plea, and trust that some day Esperance will be justly treated.

**MR. BROCKMAN** (Sussex) [5.13]: I do not wish to give offence in any way, but I certainly intend to refer to one or two of the Government departments. Before doing so I wish to join with other members in welcoming the Premier back home. I hope his trip has done him a great deal of good and that he will have renewed vigour to carry out his duties. Also I sympathise with the Minister for Agriculture in his painful accident, and I trust it will not be long before he, too, returns and will be found equal to taking up his duties again without delay. Coming to the Governor's Speech,

there was not a great deal of constructive matter in it, but at the same time we hope that after a week or so of sitting we shall have a better idea of what lies before us this session. The Education Department is the first to which I would refer. Mr. McLarty has experienced much the same difficulty as I have in regard to that department, and the other evening he said practically all that I wished to say myself. I want to thank the Minister for Education for having carried out a promise of long standing in providing a school at Augusta. True, the work was not carried out as we had hoped it would be. We had expected a new structure, but an old building was shifted there by the Group Settlement Department. We felt disturbed about it because the timber was very shaky, but eventually a satisfactory job was made of it. There are other small matters in connection with education that I hope the department will be able to attend to during the present year. A shelter shed is required at Forrest Grove. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) could support me in that. The children are compelled to have their meals in the open, and in a district of such heavy rainfall it is very distressing to the children. The settlers are prepared to erect the building if the department will provide the material. At Yongarilup the school requires lining, and a shelter shed is needed. I hope a few pounds will be made available for these small jobs. The parents are willing to undertake the work if the department supply the material. Busselton is a larger centre, having about 300 children. There a larger ground is needed and also additional accommodation. One class has to be taught in a building a mile away from the school, a very inconvenient arrangement both for teachers and for children. Now I wish to speak on the old subject of the Agricultural Bank. On this occasion I am pleased to be able to say that conditions have been greatly improved over the last year and a half, that settlers in my district are working hard and are satisfied that the outlook is better than it was. When travelling through the district I found that most of them were contented, and I believe they are meeting their obligations to the Bank. Still, I cannot see much hope of success ensuing from the present policy. To-day each settler is running two or three farms, which enables him to meet his obligations, but presently, when all are once

more confined to their individual blocks, I cannot see how they can possibly be successful. Having two or three blocks, they are able to carry sufficient stock, but it would not be possible to carry the same number on one block. If the development of the blocks could be greatly increased, they might be able to carry on successfully, but my opinion is that the holdings are definitely too small, and that steps will have to be taken to increase the area of pasture land. Under existing conditions, settlers have not the time requisite to develop their own holdings, and the money which should be spent on further development is being applied to the payment of interest. Thus the settlers are debarred from increasing their pastures to the extent necessary to carry sufficient cows to enable them to pay their way. When travelling through my district a week ago I attended a number of sales, and I noticed that far too many heifer stock were being sold as fats. For years we have been buying cattle at high prices in order to stock holdings. If every holding were settled to-day, far more cattle than are available on the settlements would be required.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Is not there a measure on the statute-book to prevent the slaughter of heifer calves?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I believe so.

The Premier: They would be under six months.

Mr. BROCKMAN: No, I am talking of three-year-olds that should be culving now.

The Premier: Are they of milking strain?

Mr. BROCKMAN: Yes, bred from stock imported from the Eastern States, and very good stock, too. I do not want to see the Government placed in the position of having to buy additional stock at high prices. If that is done, the settlements will soon become over-capitalised again. I know the answer that will be given; it will be that this stock has aborted, but I point out that in another 12 months those heifers would be immune to the disease. Of course, they would have to be treated, but it is possible to treat stock satisfactorily and at low cost. It is to the interests of settlers to retain their own stock, because we know that any stockman becomes attached to his stock, and it is far better to raise our own cattle than to have to buy elsewhere at very high prices.

The Premier: What would be the average price of those heifers?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I bought eleven at prices ranging from £3 to £4 17s. 6d. I sold them again, and made a few pounds on my bargain, but it was open to any buyer to do that. What I wish to stress is that the policy is wrong. The question of linking up holdings is a most important one. I have pointed out that settlers are at present able to meet their liabilities because they are using two or three holdings, but the time is coming when they will have to go back to their own holdings. The linking-up of blocks should have been undertaken before this because settlers have not enough improvements of their own to enable them to run sufficient stock. If the linking-up were carried out, settlers would be able to proceed with the development of their farms, and later divide them when sons reached an age to take up land. This would be a better policy than bringing migrants from overseas or from the Eastern States. Why should we not settle our own people before thinking of others? I hope the Minister will give attention to this matter. One settler at Forrest Grove, a very able man, has 113 acres, and every acre is under pasture. He has been anxious to link his holding with a deserted block adjoining, but has not been permitted to do so. He has been told that he should be able to manage on 113 acres. When that settler is confined to his own block, he will probably have to leave, because he will not be able to meet the heavy commitments against his holding. I believe that his holding has not been written down at all. The member for North-East Fremantle is acquainted with that settler and knows what an asset men of that type are to the State. They are the type that should be given all possible consideration. During the last three or four years we have engaged in a system of land development by unemployed single men, and to this I wish to refer from a group settlement point of view. It is a waste of public money to employ men on clearing land and then allow the clearing to revert to nature. A few months ago I saw land that had been cleared three or four years before being re-cleared because the scrub had grown up. Had that land been treated with super and put under grass at the time, the State would have been reaping the benefit instead of having to find additional money for further development. Quite a lot has appeared in the Press during the last few months about the Agricultural Bank, but I do not intend to deal with those

matters to-day. A few settlers are not satisfied, but most of them can meet their obligations at present, although I am sure they will find this impossible when they are confined to their individual holdings. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) spoke of the need for workers' homes in the country, and I, too, hope that something will be done. For two or three years I have been trying to secure the erection of a few workers' homes in my electorate, but have not been able to get any satisfaction. I was told I would have to wait a full 12 months, but I have waited more than that period without results. I hope that money will be made available this year so that reasonable homes may be provided for workers in country districts. The subject of primary products I shall refer to when the Estimates come down. I again have on my notes that hardy annual, the Cave House. I do not know whether what is needed in that respect will be done this year, but I hope so. I feel bound to congratulate the Main Roads Board on their work in connection with roads in the South-West during the past 12 months. In the cave district they have provided access for tourists. The only thing now needed for an up-to-date tourist resort is a new building. The Government have renovated the old structure to such an extent as to make it habitable, but that is all I can say. I trust a new building will be erected in the near future. An amount for it was on last year's Estimates, and I hope that this year the money will be spent. I hope also that the Government will see their way to supply some of the other wants of my district. First of all, however, let them construct that long-needed edifice, a new Cave House.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [5.32]: Before proceeding to deal with the general position of the State and with two or three matters of importance to my electorate, I desire to refer to certain remarks which have been made on the continuance or the abolition of the debate on the Address-in-reply. This is my second session of Parliament, and I desire to state that I am quite indifferent whether the debate is continued or discontinued. However, while it remains the custom to have such a debate, I intend to avail myself of the opportunity it affords to discuss certain matters. I fail to see that speaking on the Address-in-reply unduly delays the House. While realising that much of what is said on the

Address-in-reply could be said on the Estimates, I hold that a member speaking on the former does not unduly delay the business of Parliament so long as he does not repeat himself on the Estimates. The first feature of the Governor's Speech to attract my attention by its absence was any reference to the re-introduction of a Fair Rents Bill. That matter is of vital importance to the goldfields. If there is any portion of Western Australia in which rack-renting takes place, it is the Eastern Goldfields. The representative of Wiluna will probably bear out the fact that on that goldfield also extortionate rents are being charged for dwelling houses. Therefore I hope the Government have not abandoned the idea of re-introducing that legislation, if not for the whole State, at any rate for goldfields areas. If the Government do not intend to re-introduce their Bill, I shall certainly bring down a private Fair Rents Bill to operate on goldfields only. One aspect of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition which attracted my attention was the manner in which he denied any right to an increase in the basic wage. It is remarkable that some prominent public men of this community cannot resist the urge to discountenance any proposal having for its objective the raising of the basic wage. I remember reading, long before I was a member of this House, in the public Press and in "Hansard" a historic speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition at York, in the course of which he is alleged to have advocated the reduction of the State basic wage to the level of the Federal basic wage.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am glad you said "alleged," because I have contradicted that statement so often and am sick of listening to it.

Mr. STYANTS: That may be so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not, however, believe in giving to those already provided for, expensive part-time employment.

Mr. STYANTS: It seems to have become almost traditional with the hon. gentleman to oppose any raising of the workers' standard of living.

Mr. Hughes: Did not you vote against reduction of taxation for the man on £4 a week?

Mr. STYANTS: The next subject I wish to deal with is the gold mining industry, the chief industry in my electorate and



the surrounding districts. It is gratifying to note that there has been a general increase not only in the number of men employed, but also in the amount of gold produced. Whilst we can congratulate ourselves upon the substantial increase in gold production over the last four or five years, still it is interesting to recall that during the decade 1850 to 1860 Australia produced 40½ per cent. of the world's gold yield. In 1929 Australia's percentage of the world's gold output had dropped from 40½ to 2.18. Though during the next five years, to 1934, it increased to 3.22 per cent., still the fact remains that during recent years our gold production has not kept pace with our former average of the world's gold production. The average annual production of gold in Australia from 1850 to 1920, a period of 70 years, was 2,000,000 ounces. So that the Australian production of 886,609 ounces during last year still leaves us considerably below the average obtaining during the 70 years from 1850 to 1920. That result, however, is only natural, because gold is not a commodity like wheat or wool, reproducing itself. Once gold has been taken out of a mine, the mine is so much poorer, and the reserve wealth of the State becomes so much less. The chief producers of gold during 1934, it is interesting to note, were the Union of South Africa with 10,500,000 ounces, Canada with 3,000,000 ounces, the Soviet Union of Russia with 4,250,000 ounces, the United States of America with 2,750,000 ounces, and Australia with 886,609 ounces. It has been stated both publicly and privately that nowadays the average miner will not work as industriously as he did a few years ago. From the report of the Mines Department, however, I find that the average tonnage of ore raised per man on our various goldfields, comprising 17 districts, during 1935 was 259.74 tons per man working underground, or an average of 133.37 tons taking an average of the men employed on the surface and underground; whereas in 1936, despite the assertion that our miners do not now work as industriously as they did previously, the tonnage per man underground had increased from 259 to 307, and the tonnage of the average number of men employed both above and below ground had increased from 133 to 158. It will be said, and with a certain amount of justification, that improved machinery and improved methods of mining

would be responsible for a portion of the increase. As an offset to that, however, it must be borne in mind that the mines are constantly getting deeper. If ore is being hauled from 3,000 feet, it takes correspondingly longer to get that ore to the surface as compared with ore hauled from 1,500 or 1,000 feet. Again, it is interesting to note the amount of gold produced per man. In 1935 the average production per man underground was 87.88 ounces, and taking the average of the men both above and below ground the production was 45.26 ounces. In 1936 that production increased from 87.88 to 105.15 ounces per man underground. Taking the men above and below ground, it had increased from 45 ounces to 54 ounces per man. Thus it will be seen that the insinuation made against the Australian gold miner, that to-day he will not work as he previously did, is quite unfounded. The number of men employed in the gold industry increased from 14,708 in 1935 to 15,696 in 1936, an increase of 988. Another feature of mining I wish to deal with is the continued high percentage of accidents, fatal and serious, that are taking place. In 1935 there were 30 fatal accidents, and in 1936 the number had risen to 38. In 1935 there were 953 serious accidents, and in 1936 there were 1,405. No doubt it will be said that there is a certain amount of explanation for the greater number of accidents in view of the 988 additional men employed, who would be conducive towards increasing the number of accidents, both fatal and serious, on a percentage basis; but when we look at the percentage of accidents for the total of men employed both in 1935 and in 1936, we find that the average of 1.96 per thousand in 1935 increased to 2.28 per thousand in 1936. It is to be noted that 2.28 per thousand is the highest percentage of accidents on record in our gold mining industry. Looking at the causes of accidents we find that it appears to be much more dangerous underground than on the surface. Out of a total number of 30 deaths in the industry in 1935, 27 occurred underground. In 1936 out of 38 fatalities, 35 occurred underground. Out of 953 men injured in 1935 795 were injured underground. In 1936, 1,174 out of 1,405 injured received their injuries underground. It is also interesting to read, as set out in the reports of the Mines Department, the circumstances sur-

rounding the various accidents. Some appear to be due to neglect in regard to ordinary precautions, such as using the cartridge system. Others appear to be due to just bad luck and misadventure, while some appear to be due to gross negligence in allowing regulations to be flouted, and uncertificated men to do highly dangerous work. I hope there will be substantial improvement so far as this phase of mine work is concerned in the future. The number of deaths and serious accidents in the goldmining industry constitute the highest toll of human life for any one cause in this State, except those killed and maimed by motor traffic on our roads, and I hope that there will not be a continuance of the present high percentage of both fatal and serious accidents which have been taking place in the gold mines in Western Australia during the last four or five years. It is interesting to look at the statistics regarding gold production from 1932 to 1936, to compare the output and the value of it and the dividends received by the shareholders of the various companies. In 1932 we produced 606,000 fine ozs., and that gradually rose to 846,000 ozs. in 1936. The value increased from £4,404,000 in 1932, to £7,374,000 in 1936. The dividends increased from £321,000 in 1932 to £1,102,000 in 1936. The various percentages were as follows:—Production increased 40 per cent. from 1932 to 1936; the value increased 66 per cent., while the dividends increased 350 per cent. It was the people who were getting those dividends who told the representatives of the Chamber of Mines in another place that they were unable to provide fair and decent working conditions as far as ventilation was concerned in the mines of this State. I want to deal with the matter of ventilation of mines. We must all of us realise the position of the industry immediately before the increase in the price of gold. The industry was in the doldrums, and the money which should have been spent in a wise development of the mines had been paid out in dividends and gone outside the State. The Government in some instances were being called upon to go to the assistance of the companies, and it is an established fact that when conditions are bad in any industry the opportunity of employees to get decent conditions or improvements in conditions is practically nil. As a matter of fact, the condition of the employees when an in-

dustry is depressed is considerably worsened, and that was the case with the miners in the Eastern Goldfields. Ventilation is an important factor as far as work underground is concerned. Prior to 1931 and for a number of years the following clause operated in agreements covering the wages and conditions in the goldmining industry:

No persons shall be allowed to work for a longer period than six hours on any part of the underground workings of a mine when the temperature in that part ascertained by the reading of the wet bulb thermometer exceeds 76 degrees fahrenheit for a period of four consecutive hours. The reading of the thermometer shall be ascertained at intervals of one half hour over four hours, and the average of such readings shall be taken as the temperature during that period. The Inspector of Mines shall take readings when required to do so by any worker or by the secretary of the union. The manager of the mine shall provide a wet bulb thermometer.

The Chamber of Mines drove a very hard bargain in the matter of temperatures and the six-hour shift. It will be remembered that the basic wage dropped from £4 6s. to £3 18s. about 1931 in Kalgoorlie, and the bargain driven by the Chamber of Mines was that if the men were prepared to forgo the provisions of the particular clause relating to temperatures, their wages would not be reduced. To my mind it is in this connection that the miners made a mistake. They were prepared to sell their working conditions for a monetary consideration, and it is my opinion, and the opinion of many of those working in the industry now, that no amount of money can compensate a man for the loss of his working conditions and the consequent effect it has upon his health. This clause did operate for many years prior to 1931, but the miners decided that they were prepared to barter their working conditions for the sake of keeping up their monetary payments. It was stated at that time that the clause would affect some 40 or 50 places. That was in 1931. Just how many it would affect now it is possible to surmise from the figures which were supplied to the representatives of the Chamber of Mines in another place when the clause demanding a variation of 3 degrees between the wet and dry bulb was introduced in this Chamber last session. The figures supplied showed the temperature in 17 places from the 1,800-ft. level in the Lake View and Star mine down to the 3,000-ft. level. Had it been still in force, in

ten out of 17 of those places the men would not have been allowed to work for more than 6-hour shifts. One might ask why was that clause put in the mine workers' regulations and why it operated prior to 1931. Of course it was put there because experts considered that when the wet bulb registered more than 76 degrees it was unhealthy for a man to work there for a greater period than six hours, and in addition it caused the companies to pay strict attention to temperatures. Immediately that clause was abolished a jump took place as far as temperatures were concerned.

Mr. Marshall: They would not bother about ventilation if they could work the men a full eight hours.

Mr. STYANTS: Last session the Government introduced a measure which, had it passed another place, would have had the effect of compelling a variation of three degrees between the wet and dry bulb when the wet bulb exceeded 76 degrees. I think everyone knows that the wet bulb registers the amount of moisture and the humidity in any given place, while the dry bulb registers temperature. There is no great difficulty attached to getting that variation. All that is required is a circulation of air in any particular place to get a variation between the two bulbs, and three degrees is regarded by experts as being a very moderate variation. In South African mines where most of the men employed underground are coloured, it is demanded that so many cubic feet per minutes must pass through every working place underground, but the regulations in the Mines in Western Australia consider sufficient air is passing through the working place if the flame of a candle is deflected from the perpendicular. Anyone who has tried to keep a candle alight out of doors will realise what a slight breeze is required to deflect a flame from the perpendicular. The mining companies and their representatives state that the conditions of ventilation have improved and are improving. They cannot have it both ways. They claimed in the first place that the industry could not carry on if the temperature clause introduced last year had been carried. That is an admission that the ventilation in the mines had not been improved. Had the ventilation been improved there would have been no need to make threats of direct action to the effect that the mines would close down—in other words, declare a lock-out against the men working below the 1,800 feet level.

There would have been no need to take that course had there been a distinct improvement, and had the temperature clause designed to make conditions more favourable and bearable for their employees been passed. If a man is continually inhaling volumes of dust, he cannot do justice to his employer, and in a very short time instead of being a producing unit, he becomes a charge on the community. We all know that if we are well, or have that Kruschen feeling, we are able to do more and better work than if we were in a condition of being run down. It is a public duty which should be performed, and it is also a good investment for the employer to see that his employees are in a good state of health. I desire to read some comments by Mr. Phoenix, who was senior inspector of mines for a number of years. On the subject of the ventilation of mines, this is what he says:—

It is not right that any manager should be allowed to employ men under bad conditions . . . All practicable measures should be taken to obviate the incidence of miners' phthisis by preventing inhalation of dust, the contamination of mine air by fumes of explosives and other impurities, and controlling the risk of infection among miners. Where, in spite of all precautions, a miner contracts this disease his employer should be called upon to answer for it.

Although the gold mining industry has now a penalty clause to deal with employees who, without the consent of the management, cease work to attend the funeral of a workmate killed on the job, there is yet no penalty clause or regulation to deal with a management whose neglect in the matter of ventilation leads to the contraction of miners' phthisis. And this is an omission which must be rectified.

Mr. Phoenix also wrote:

"A great deal has been written about the dangers of dust inhalation, but much more should be spent in its prevention. The time has arrived when we must consider any management culpable and incompetent where those dangers exist in a marked degree."

In the latest award which has been issued for the gold mining industry there is a penalty clause to deal with any man who absents himself from duty without permission of the management whilst attending the funeral of a mate who perhaps was killed on shift with him; but there is no penalty provision for the management for neglecting to attend the ventilation clauses and so subjecting a man to the liability of contracting

miners' phthisis. That is an omission which should not be permitted to exist. I desire briefly to deal with the railways, although perhaps there may be a better opportunity to discuss that department when the Estimates are before us and when, perhaps, we shall have also more detailed information supplied by the department. I notice that we are still pursuing the suicidal policy with regard to the loan indebtedness capital account. The policy adopted many years ago is being continued to-day, in that no provision is made for sinking fund, and the lamentable position is created that the assets for the loans floated in the early history of the State have disappeared, Sleepers and very often rails have disappeared, and the department are being called upon to find interest on the money borrowed to put down the original lines in the State. It is a false policy that is being adopted. If a man in the road transport business buys a motor truck for the conveyance of goods, he spreads the cost of that truck over a period for which he thinks the effective life of that truck will be, and at the end of the period of its effective usefulness, he will have recouped himself for the outlay. That is the system that should be adopted by the railways. We find the earnings per train mile were 133d. and the working expenses, without interest, 100.84d. per mile. The increase for 1935 was from 95.42; but we find that the earnings show a profit over working expenses of 32½d. per train mile; we find also that the interest averages 38.82d., which leaves a deficit of something like 6d. per train mile. It works out roughly that the railways to-day are called upon to pay 38 per cent. interest. It is a wonderful business that can pay 38 per cent. and show a profit. The earnings over working expenses totalled £841,944, the interest was £1,008,554, leaving a deficit of £166,610. A matter that struck me as being peculiar, but which may reasonably be explained, is that while the amount debited to capital account has increased by over £1,000,000 in four years, we are paying something like £7,000 less in interest. Of course the explanation may be the conversion of the loans to a lower rate of interest. There is not the slightest doubt about it, however, that our capital account has increased by over a million in four years, and that is a serious position, when we take into consideration that the assets have decreased over those four years. It is pleasing to

know that the passenger journeys in the same period have increased from 12,421,527 to 12,709,583. It would be interesting to have those passenger journeys divided up to show the relative position of the first and second class totals. An alarming feature is the loss shown in the number of rolling stock and locomotives, whilst the capital account has increased by over a million. We find that the locomotives operating to-day number three less than was the case in 1933. In the same year we had 493 passenger vehicles and in 1937 the number was 485, a decrease of eight. As far as goods vehicles are concerned, we find that in 1933 there were 11,038 and in 1937 the number had dwindled to 10,878, a decrease of 160. Four-wheeled trucks decreased from 13,357 to 13,244, a difference of 113. This is a serious position in a young country like ours, and it should not be allowed to continue. There must be an end to it, otherwise we will find that immediately we get a good harvest, there will not be sufficient locomotive power or trucks to transport the wheat quickly to the seaboard so that advantage may be taken of good prices that may be prevalent at the time. There is another matter on which I did not intend to touch, but it was referred to by the member for Claremont (Mr. North) and later by the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty). This was the matter of the loss of population and the decline in the birth rate in Australia. This is a most serious problem which should receive the attention of the legislators throughout the Commonwealth. On looking up the statistics we find that in Western Australia the birth rate per thousand of the mean population for the year 1901 was 30.39, and it had dropped in 1934 to 17.66. In 1935 there was a slight increase, the figures being 18.23. Taking the whole of Australia for 1901, the birth rate per thousand of the mean population was 27.16. In 1934 it had decreased to 16.39, and in 1935, the latest statistics available, there was a slight increase to 16.55. From 1912 onwards, with the exception of the year 1920, there has been a continuous decline. I have been looking up the statistics of the nations of the world and I have taken out a few dealing with the years 1908 to 1913. We find that in that period Soviet Russia's figure was 45 and in 1935 it had dropped to 42. The decline in the figures of the other countries are—Japan 32 to 29, Italy 32 to

23, Ireland 23 to 19, Germany 29 to 18, Denmark 27 to 17, Scotland 26 to 17, Belgium 23 to 16, Switzerland 24 to 16, France 19 to 15, Great Britain and Ireland 24 to 15, Norway 26 to 14, Sweden 24 to 13. The United States figures were not available for 1908-1913 but the birth rate in 1935 was only 17 per thousand of the mean population. The Argentine's figures were 27 to 25, Australia 27 to 16, and Czechoslovakia 21 to 17. There is not the slightest doubt about it that the position is very serious. We have Soviet Russia as the only country showing the greatest natural increase. The birth rate of that country is 300 per cent. higher than ours, that of Japan is about double, Italy is about double, Germany is slightly higher, and France lower, while the United States is about on a par with ours. We must realise that we shall have to build up our nation with people of our own race, otherwise we shall be swamped by a race from other countries. Only by peopling Australia with our own race can we prevent invasion. It is my considered opinion that there is only one thing that stands between Australia and invasion and that is the British Navy.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And the Labour Party refused to assist that Navy outside Australia.

Mr. STYANTS: If the hon. member wants to fight for the Japanese or the Chinese, he has a perfect right to do so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is a new idea.

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

Mr. STYANTS: I was pointing out that a great population would not preserve the nation from invasion. The fact of having a large population has not saved countries from invasion in the past, and will not save them in the future. The possession of a large population did not prevent the invasion of France in 1914, and did not prevent the annexation of Abyssinia, and is not preventing the invasion of China to-day, although that country has a population of hundreds of millions. I would prefer to see Australia populated with 7,000,000 people who were well fed, well clothed and prosperous rather than 14,000,000 people who were not healthy, well fed, or well clothed, living in slum conditions. But there is no reason why Australia should not carry a population of 14,000,000 living under condi-

tions that we all desire. This brings me to the main point of my speech. The statistics were intended simply to lead up to the more important subject of child endowment which was mentioned by the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty). I am not an advocate of large families, because I believe it can be overdone, but I consider it is necessary that families in the British Empire should have a larger average than they have to-day. One of the weaknesses of the basic wage system is that it makes provision for no more than a man, his wife and two children. What about the children in a family over and above two in number? If a family consists of more than two children, they are unprovided for, and consequently the additional children lower the standard of the others. If a man and his wife have two children, and then a third child arrives, the standard of the wife, husband and two children must necessarily be reduced. We should introduce legislation to provide for children in excess of the number for which the basic wage allows. I cannot agree that it is altogether a matter of economics that is limiting the size of families. Generally speaking, those people in poorer financial circumstances have the largest families. There are many parents so situated that they could easily have one or two more children; they have one child, and sometimes two children. In considering those breadwinners who are on the basic wage, or on a margin slightly over the basic wage, we have to bear in mind some of the disabilities suffered by married people with large families. The greatest disability is the constant dread of unemployment. Parents think seriously before increasing the size of the family when there is no guarantee that the breadwinner is likely to remain in constant employment. During the depression many people who could reasonably have expected to remain in constant employment found themselves suddenly thrown out of work, and they had to live on the dole, or accept employment at sustenance rates. That, I think, is the greatest bar to parents increasing the size of their families. Another factor is the extortionate rents charged for houses. We might give consideration to that matter in order to ensure that married couples might get homes at a reasonable rental that would provide a fair return on the capital invested in the building of those homes. Parents with large families—sometimes parents with only one

child—are not always acceptable to house owners as tenants. I have often seen in the *Kalgoorlie* newspaper notices of houses to let, stipulating that children were not acceptable. That is another bar; parents with large families find it difficult to rent a home at any price or under any conditions. Then there is the matter of heavy indirect taxation. Excise and Customs duties bear heavily on a man with a large family, who are large consumers of the necessities of life. There is the cost of feeding, clothing and educating the children, for which the father of a large family gets no more than does the man who has only a wife, or a wife and one child, to support. Another disadvantage, apart from the consequent lower standard of living, is the limitation of recreation, and the limitation of the ordinary pleasures of life. All these considerations deter people from having large families. It is difficult to find a remedy for this state of affairs. Compulsion would not be warranted or desirable, but we should assist parents who have children in numbers exceeding those provided for under the basic wage declarations. There are two schemes operating in Australia. The first of which I have been able to find any record is the scheme of child endowment introduced in England in 1795. Over various periods, child endowment schemes have operated. The first record of such a scheme in Australia applies to New South Wales, which scheme, introduced in 1919, provided for a flat basic wage for a man and his wife, and 5s. per week endowment for each child, the maximum to be £3 per week over the basic wage. The Bill, however, was rejected. Nothing more was heard on the subject in New South Wales until the session of 1926-27, when it was proposed to provide a basic wage for a man and his wife, plus child allowance of 5s. per week in respect of each dependent child, subject to the provision that child allowances would be paid only to the extent by which the total earnings of the worker and the family fell short of the sum represented by the basic wage, plus child allowance at the rate of 5s. per week for each child under the age of 14 years. The basic wage in New South Wales at the time was £4 5s. a week, so that a worker with three children on a wage of £5 a week would not receive any assistance. He would receive 5s. a week if a fourth child arrived. Those payments commenced on the 1st September, 1927, but an amending measure was introduced on the

23rd December 1929 providing that child endowment should be 5s. per week for each child under 14 except one in the family. The money necessary for the payment of the endowment scheme in New South Wales in 1930 was made up by a levy on the wages bill of all employees to the tune of one per cent. This was altered from the 30th June, 1931, and was made 2 per cent. until the 1st January, 1932. Then a rate of 5d. in the pound on all wages above £3 per week was levied. The total amount of the levy collected during 1932 was £2,409,034; the payments made amounted to £2,105,659, and the number of families who benefited was 63,072. The levy was discontinued as from the 1st January, 1934, and the cost of the endowment scheme in that State is now met from Consolidated Revenue. That is one scheme in operation in Australia to-day. Whilst the New South Wales people were the first to discuss and bring before Parliament a Bill for a fund for child endowment, the first actual payments under a child endowment scheme were made in Australia by the Commonwealth Public Service on the 1st November, 1920. The scheme provided for 5s. weekly for each dependent child under 14, with a limitation of salary, plus allowance, of £400 per annum. In 1933 the Public Service Arbitrator confirmed this as a permanent allowance, and a fund to provide the necessary finance was created by deducting the average value of the payment from the basic wage of all adult officers, so that the officers themselves are providing the funds from which the payments are made. The average deduction from the salaries of adult officers during the first year was £11, but to-day it is £12 per annum. Payments are now limited to officers whose salary does not exceed £500 a year inclusive of the endowment allowance for children. The Federal Government called a conference in June, 1927, to consider this question from a national standpoint. As a result of the deliberations at that time it was decided to refer the question to a Royal Commission. The Commission sat but were not unanimous in their findings. They produced a minority as well as a majority report. At a conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, held at Canberra in May, 1929, the two reports were considered. The minority report advocated an allowance financed entirely from the proceeds of taxation. The Commonwealth Government were not prepared to agree to

that, but did agree with the majority report that the question should not be separated from the control of the basic wage over which the Commonwealth had no power, and over which the States were not prepared to give them the power. It was generally agreed that the matter was one for the State Governments to deal with. The Federal Government decided to have nothing more to do with child endowment at that time. As a result of the deliberations of the Commonwealth Government and the State Ministers it was decided that this was a proper measure for any State Government to introduce if they thought fit. I have always been an advocate of granting some extra allowance to people who have children in excess of the number provided for in our basic wage declaration. If any Government will introduce such a measure I will be a strong supporter of it.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [7.45]: I feel that the Commonwealth is on the eve of a great forward advancement in social legislation. I am referring to the proposal for national insurance in respect of old age, sickness, unemployment, widows and orphans. Under the Federal system such as we have it the introduction of such a scheme would meet with a certain amount of difficulty, and how far such a scheme can be introduced will constitute something of a test of our Federal system. I sincerely hope it will not break down under the strain. I feel sure that the public of Australia have for a long time thought that a measure of social reform of this kind has been overdue. We know that in most countries it has been in existence for many years, countries that we actually regard as far behind us in humanitarian legislation. In England the system has been in force since 1911. I hope this Government and this Parliament will use every possible endeavour to ensure that the scheme does not fall to the ground through any disagreement between the parties which might be overcome by some give-and-take necessary to the introduction of the scheme. I feel that when this scheme is inaugurated, as the public are demanding it shall be, we shall have an opportunity to review our whole system of unemployment and of help to those who are in need of State assistance, in the light of the benefits that will be created and provided by national insurance. It may relieve ultimately, if not

at first, the burden laid upon the State. In any case it will give us the chance to overhaul our scheme of unemployment assistance, and relief to widows and orphans, and I hope place those people on a better basis. The main thing for every State and the Commonwealth to strive for at the present juncture is to ensure that the scheme does not break down through some objection which might be overcome by a certain amount of reasonableness on the part of the various parties concerned. Now I propose to deal with a very few of what I may call the major problems of the State. One which is always with us is the matter of finance. Our finances have shown a gratifying recovery; but we had £400,000 more revenue last year than we estimated, and although the Commonwealth grant to the State was reduced by £300,000, we should have finished up with a surplus of £100,000 had it not been, as the Premier has stated, for certain additional inescapable expenditure above the expenditure for which the Budget was made up. As far as the ordinary individual and the ordinary private business are concerned, if there is unexpected expenditure they are mainly compelled to offset it by some degree of saving in other directions. As far as the State is concerned, some of the added expenditure, at all events, was something that we could not possibly avoid; but what I do not feel certain about, and I do not think the people at large feel certain about, is whether we might not have done more to offset that increased expenditure by economies that could be adopted without injury to the State. We have to look at that aspect of the matter because in 1933 we passed an Act—which no one is likely to forget—to impose a financial emergency tax. That tax is now, in round figures, £1,000,000 a year, and represents, if it were added to our income tax, something like quadrupling the income tax. I mean that taxation from income tax and financial emergency taxation together represent three or four times what the income tax would have been had there been no financial emergency tax. I cannot see any prospect of substantial reduction in taxation in the near future. We may just as well accept that fact. But the public are asking why, if there has been some restoration of prosperity and some lifting of the depression, a tax called a financial emergency tax is still imposed, bringing in such an enormous amount of revenue compared with our ordinary in-

come tax. I think the people are asking, and not unreasonably asking, the Government and Parliament why this large additional taxation called financial emergency tax is still being retained. As I said, I do not see much prospect of any major reduction in taxation: but I do consider that we could do more as a Parliament to ascertain how far we might be able to reduce expenditure in some directions. In Britain, since Mr. Gladstone's time and operating to-day, there is a body known as the Public Accounts Committee. The committee examine the public accounts every year, not before but after the Budget; and the committee's mission is to see as far as possible that the expenditure has been on the lines which were authorised by Parliament. According to a book on English parliamentary practice, of which I forget the name but which was written by a former Under-Secretary in the English civil service, the Public Accounts Committee have worked extraordinarily well. The composition of the committee is 15 members of the House of Commons, usually with the Leader of the Opposition as chairman, officials of various departments who are called into consultation, the heads of the Treasury, and other permanent officials. The committee are not only a check on the accounts but also a means of suggesting worthwhile economies to the Government. The writer of the textbook says that the committee have operated in a non-party spirit, and have proved a great success in the administration of the financial affairs of Great Britain. If we had something of the same kind here, it might assist whatever Government might be in power in the control of finances: and we would also be satisfying the public and ourselves that the whole of the energy and initiative of all the members of Parliament was being addressed towards the matter of prudent finance. I would also like to see small committees attached to the big spending departments, committees consisting of, say, a member from each side of the House or from each party. Such committees might be attached to the Department of Public Works and to other departments concerned with the expenditure of Loan Funds, because the committees might be able to make valuable suggestions to the respective Ministers as to means by which money could be saved. Similar committees attached to the State Trading Concerns and

the Railway Department might also make valuable suggestions as the result of being in touch with the proposals of those departments. The Auditor General in his last report to Parliament said he wished to sound a note of warning as to our loan expenditure. He pointed out that while we had the advantage of a reduction in our interest bill through successful reconversions, the added moneys which we are borrowing are going to bring the interest bill up again, and that if we have, as seemed likely a short time ago, a tendency towards increased rates for Government loans, our interest would soon be a heavy drain on the exchequer. The Auditor General said it was absolutely incumbent upon Parliament, and upon the Government which is responsible for that, to ensure that loan moneys are spent as far as possible in re-productive undertakings. If we had a committee to consult with Ministers, that body might, with members of the House, assist in ensuring that loan moneys went into works which would give the best prospect of relieving the future interest bill and providing sinking fund for repayment of loans. Now let me turn for a moment to the matter of unemployment. The real position is that unemployment as viewed by the State or the public or country has undergone a revolution in the last few years in Australia. Before the depression the policy of the State as regards unemployed was a policy of laissez faire. We simply said, "We take no responsibility for unemployment." But since the depression the State has been compelled, and properly so, to assume a responsibility for the unemployed man and his wife and children. It has been found—and I suppose this has always been the case—that in spite of returning prosperity, there is going to be a certain number or percentage of unemployed who will persist as unemployed in spite of any degree of prosperous conditions. What has been termed by one writer the hard core of unemployment, composed largely of elderly men, or men who through some physical or mental lack of ability cannot be fitted again into employment. Those men are going to remain with us permanently. Therefore, in the light of what is now proposed regarding national insurance, we shall have to model our system to meet the position. We shall require to have a very elastic and open mind as to



what we shall do with those who will not fit into the scheme of things even when comparatively prosperous conditions return. I do not know quite what could be done, but it may be possible to give them some particular type of employment under Government auspices, even though it may not be reproductive, that will enable them to do some work that will keep them from idleness and make them feel that they are doing something to earn their living. Arising out of that phase, I desire briefly to refer to the employment of youth. I regret exceedingly the illness of the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Wolff, who has been a very capable officer of the Crown. Possibly his ill-health may be due to the fact that he is an extremely hard worker and may now be feeling the strain of his efforts. I think that at all costs we must do more for the young people of the State, even if it should mean sacrifices on the part of the older people. If there is to be any choice and money should be short, it is the older people that should go short and the younger ones should get their chance. A moment's reflection will demonstrate that any other policy will strike at the very foundation of the success of our present system of government. It is of the utmost importance that the young people who, in a few years time, will be in control of the affairs of the country shall grow up with that healthy and balanced mental outlook that can only be attained if they had work and discipline to help them in the battle of life. We must therefore provide for them an opportunity to learn some sort of trade, even though it may mean an alteration to our present apprenticeship system, a more generous allowance respecting those who go into the various trades and learn the callings of artisans and although it may mean some relaxation of existing Arbitration Court awards. We must not allow the older, or middle-aged, man who has had the greater part of his life in employment, to stand in the way and monopolise a trade as against the claims of the younger man.

Mr. Marshall: How are the youth faring in other countries? Is this the only State where they find themselves handicapped?

Mr. McDONALD: I understand that the youth problem is handled very much better in other countries.

Mr. Marshall: I will quote figures to the contrary.

Mr. McDONALD: I am told that in England youth is allowed free entry into the various trades and callings.

Mr. Marshall: And they are no better off there.

Mr. McDONALD: Restrictions have been largely removed, and it is generally realised by Governments of various countries that the young people must have their chance and that the position cannot be met in any other way.

Mr. Marshall: Nonsense!

Mr. McDONALD: It is an absolute fact. We must do more in the direction of improving the national physique of the people, and the Government, as in other countries, should give a lead in that direction. I know one school where excellent work is being undertaken along those lines and I believe it is also being done in other schools. Nevertheless, I believe we can do more to improve and maintain the physical well-being of the people than we are doing to-day. When I was in New Zealand recently I found that the Government had instituted what were known as holiday camps. These consist of a number of hutments with lighting, water, and provision for cooking. These camps are situated short distances from cities and enable people who are not in well-to-do circumstances to go there with their wives and families and spend a brief holiday at comparatively no cost at all. They enjoy themselves in pleasant surroundings and in the open air. We could do a lot in that direction ourselves.

Mr. North: This is the new nationalism.

Mr. McDONALD: It is nationalism the same as ever. The population problem was correctly touched upon by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants), and I agree with him that the principal way in which we should attack that most pressing problem is through assistance to the children of our own people. I shall not refer at length to what has been done by way of wages. The position is summarised very well in the Commonwealth Year Book and members are familiar with the various theories that have obtained from time to time, particularly during the last 200 years, as to wages. It is sufficient to say that in 1907, under the Harvester judgment, we embarked in Australia upon the humanitarian idea regarding wages. That is to say, the principle that industry must pay sufficient to keep the worker and his family in reasonable and decent comfort

was to be adhered to. That was an experiment, and it has operated with some measure of success. The experiment is due for overhaul for the reasons stated by the previous speaker as well as for other reasons. There has been no great grasp of the underlying principle of the basic wage. Various States have different ideas. The basis wage in New South Wales provides for the worker, his wife and one child.

The Premier: But New South Wales has a system of child endowment.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so. In another State their basic wage provides for the worker, his wife and three children. In Western Australia and under the Commonwealth provisions, the basic wage provides for the man, his wife and two children. New South Wales has gone in for a system of child endowment but so far no other State has done so. If we judge the basic wage as a means for providing a reasonable degree of comfort for the worker and his family, then in Western Australia it falls down the moment the family exceeds two children. The system is self-condemned at that stage because if the court says that a certain wage is sufficient to enable the man, his wife and two children to subsist reasonably, then obviously the court also says that the wage is insufficient for the man who has seven children. In these circumstances I think the time has arrived when the system regarding the basic wage might be reviewed with the idea that there shall be more recognition for the added responsibilities shouldered by the man who has a large family. It might be done in conjunction with the forthcoming consideration of State and Commonwealth legislation that is to be undertaken. If that added recognition were given to the responsibilities of the man with a large family, it would enable that individual to have a better chance to bring his children up as decent citizens, and therefore the additional children would be welcomed and it would not be felt that the economic position was made so much worse by the advent of each additional member of the family. The last thing I want to say concerns the basic wage. The previous speaker was quite wrong in some of his suggestions about the basic wage. Everybody would like to see it as high as possible. One of the Ministers of the New Zealand Government said that his Government would never rest until every worker in New Zealand was living at the standard of an American millionaire. That

is a splendid ideal and everybody would like that too, provided of course that other people besides the workers lived at the same standard. But in Western Australia our State economy must preserve a balance between the agricultural industry—and in that I include the timber industry—and our secondary industries. The farmers—and, after all, perhaps they are the most important people in the long view of the State's future—can carry on their farms, selling their produce at world's parity, only if they can save enough, after paying expenses, to keep their homes and wives and families. But if the cost of living rises—and if the basic wage is increased, of course it must rise—then that little difference they had between their costs and their receipts is whittled away, and the farming industry is in dire trouble. So that if our cost of living rises too high, presuming that world parity for wheat and wool remains the same, we come back to the fact that our farmers are the losers, and they must be subsidised by the rest of the State. Therefore, while we all wish to increase the wages and the income of everybody as much as possible, we must preserve the balance between the costs in secondary industries and the position of the farmer who cannot increase an income which comes only from world parity. New Zealand has a most interesting series of Acts of Parliament. There it was proposed that the Government should take over and pay for all primary industry products—butter, wool, meat, cheese, and so on. The idea was that the Government would then sell on the export market in England and elsewhere, and recoup itself from the proceeds. At the same time they introduced a 40-hour week at the same wages. I am telling members this to show the difficulty that exists in increasing local costs in a country which depends for stability on world parity. Having introduced that scheme, the New Zealand Government have gone no further than the first instalment in relation to the butter industry. So much doubt has been created—I will not say failure, because the scheme may yet succeed—that the scheme has only been applied to the one department of their primary products, namely butter.

Mr. Patrick: Was there a guaranteed price for butter?

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, 1s. 1d. a lb. for butter fat.

Mr. Patrick: And they lost two millions last year.

Mr. McDONALD: The last estimate I saw said that the Dominion would lose £2,000,000. I do not know what the position is now. The difficulty is that no sooner had it been arranged that farmers should receive 1s. 1d. from the Government for butter, than the cost of living went up very severely in New Zealand, and now they all want 1s. 3d., and next year they will want 1s. 5d. The result is that one of the members of the Government when I was there said to the farmers, "We have attempted this only with regard to butter, and if you do not like it, we will give you a chance of getting yourself out of it." I only mention this to show that in a country like Western Australia, if we are to keep our farmers on the land, and our woolgrowers on their stations and farms, we have to preserve some balance between the secondary industry costs and the position of the farmers. I am sorry to see the decay in what I may call the agricultural-mindedness of the State, to adopt a popular phrase. Young men feel that the last place they should be called upon to go to is outside the city.

Mr. Sleeman: Not if they are paid for it.

Mr. McDONALD: I will come to that. The position is this: I want to know when the existing farmers who have been battling for years against most adverse conditions become old and retire, who is going to replace them? My friend opposite said young men would go to the country if they were paid. Admittedly the pay is not so good as in the towns and conditions are not always so pleasant, but there are opportunities in the country far greater than the young men would get if they remained in town. With regard to wages, almost every day of my life, when I ask young men whether they will go to the country if I can get them a job, I am met with the query whether their wages will be paid. The suggestion that wages are not paid by farmers is mostly exaggerated. I carry on a business where people come to me and tell me they have not been paid wages or debts, but in years of experience I can only recollect one case of a man coming to me and saying his wages had not been paid by a farmer.

Mr. Sleeman: You have lost a lot of business, then.

Mr. McDONALD: If my friend goes to the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, he will

be surprised to find how few there are that are not paid their wages by farmers. Moreover, I do not think there would be the slightest difficulty for the Labour Bureau to arrange with the Associated Banks and the Agricultural Bank to ensure that if a man is nominated as being about to be employed on a farm, his wages will be paid, because the banks know that there must be employees on farms, and they know the employment of men is of benefit, and that the men ought to be paid. I am positive there would be no difficulty in inaugurating a system by which the banks could ensure that money would be kept back to pay any employee of whose employment they had notice. I hope the Minister for Employment will endeavour to impress upon these young men the opportunities they have of healthy employment and future advancement by taking up that industry which is, to use a hackneyed phrase, but a very true one, the backbone of this country.

Mr. Patrick: I suppose you have come across other men, besides farmers, who have not paid wages due to employees.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, I have come across employers in the city who have not paid wages to their employees. Now I hope the Government's proposed legislation will endeavour to touch the real substance of the subject of that legislation; I hope it will not be like some of the measures of last year, which only touched the externals. The Bills I see at the top of the list of the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, the Factory Act Amendment and the Arbitration Act Amendment, if they are like what they were last year, it is as though the body politic were asking for food and we were simply giving them new suits of clothes. I suggest that if we talk about factories, let us try to train the 3,000 boys and girls who leave school every year so that they can enter factories, and that we endeavour to foster a greater activity in industry, and get our people trained. Then we may perhaps find time to deal with externals or procedure in connection with factory employment. But I think our main object in legislation should be addressed, not to the frills of our industrial life, but to the problems that go to the heart of the matter, which are really affecting the community fundamentally, and not merely in a slight external degree. I do not wish to close my remarks without reference to the visit of the Premier to England. I am delighted that he should have had the

opportunity to visit England, and I am extremely glad that he has come back much restored in health. I feel that a trip would also do me a lot of good, but I do not think it is possible at present. However, I join with the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) in hoping that Ministers, whatever the public may say, will go to England from time to time; and members, too, if they can possibly raise the money, though I know they cannot. Because if we have any chance of bettering the conditions here, it is only by increased knowledge, for increased knowledge will bring increased tolerance and facilitate the coming together of the nations. At the last International Labour Conference at Geneva it was shown that unemployment was a peculiar thing in that it does not depend upon access to raw materials, and does not depend on population, for the same percentage of unemployment is to be found in Australia as is to be found in Belgium, and a less percentage still in Japan, which has 370 people to the square mile. But what the International Labour Conference did find was that unemployment was as much, at all events, a matter of international intercourse of trade as it was national in character.

Mr. Hegney: Did you find any evidence about Russia?

Mr. McDONALD: In Russia it does not matter, because they pay their people so little.

Mr. Tonkin: That cannot be true. If it were, there would be no unemployment in Japan.

Mr. McDONALD: There are practically no unemployed in Japan, where there are 370 people to the square mile, because very low wages are paid, and so employment is spread over the community. But I wish to say that the visits abroad of Ministers will help to restore those international relations which will be one of our best guarantees for a return to prosperity. I am very glad that the Premier should have had an opportunity to gain increased knowledge and experience which may help Western Australia to a restoration of prosperity.

**MR. WITHERS** (Bunbury) [8.25]: It has been remarked that on such an occasion as the debate on the Address-in-reply there is a great deal of discussion that to some people may seem unnecessary, resulting in a long-drawn-out debate. But when all is said and done we are endeavouring

to adopt a motion touching the Speech by His Excellency, and whenever there is a motion for the adoption of some sentiment, the adoption can take place only after discussion. That is why we are privileged to discuss this motion in the manner in which we do. Nevertheless, after a good deal of experience one comes to the conclusion that the debate on this annual motion occurs too early in the session, insofar as when one looks at the Table one sees how few reports that we can criticise have been presented at this juncture in the session. Some of my friends say that one will have another opportunity on the Estimates. But when the Estimates actually come before us they are the Estimates, an established fact, whether they be Loan Estimates or Revenue Estimates, and so speaking to them does not get one anywhere. I do not know that when one puts forward a suggestion during the Address-in-reply one is likely to see his suggestion adopted and given a place on the forthcoming Estimates. Nevertheless one can make suggestions, and possibly see them presented in the Estimates of the following year.

Mr. Hegney: That, too, is a good prospect.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, it is. I have discovered that year after year there has been at least some consideration given to requests made, even though the consideration may not have been favourable. I do not wish to go into the detailed matters that have been handled by some members, but with other speakers I am concerned with the taxation proposals. I see on the list of proposed legislation for this session "uniform taxation." I do not really know what that means, nor do I suppose that other members know, but I do know and I do really agree with others who have already spoken that the financial emergency taxation is due for very serious consideration, even to the extent of abolition. If we could carry on successfully before the depression, when the basic wage was in the vicinity of £4 odd, if we could carry on during that period without the financial emergency taxation, surely we could carry on without it to-day when the employment figures compare very favourably with those of 1929. The position is better to-day than it was at that earlier date, although the basic wage to-day is £3 14s. 11d. in the metropolitan area.

I have long since come to the conclusion that by whatever name we call it—financial emergency tax, income tax, or hospital tax—it is all taxation, and that the whole of the taxation should be lumped. As the member for West Perth, (Mr. McDonald) pointed out, our income tax has increased. If we could afford to pay the financial emergency tax, we could just as well afford to pay the money through a general income tax. Then the individual who was in a position to pay would pay, and the person entitled to deductions would get them through his income tax assessment. Family concessions would be a consideration, and the position would be more satisfactory than that of to-day. Last year the financial emergency tax was amended in the endeavour to keep pace with the basic wage. The basic wage at the time was £3 11s., and an endeavour was made to stipulate that persons on the basic wage should be exempt. We know what happened. The Government were told by another place, "No, we will agree to only a set figure." Then it was decided to make the amount 2s. above the basic wage, and eventually the figure was made £3 15s. That was all right until the basic wage reached £3 15s. In my district to-day the basic wage is £3 15s. 10d. and the workers receiving that wage are paying the financial emergency tax. There is deducted on the pay sheet an amount of 1s. 4d., which reduces their £3 15s. 10d. to £3 14s. 6d., and thus brings them below the basic wage. Nobody can tell me that that is a fair or equitable system of taxation. While for the South-West Division a basic wage of £3 15s. 10d. was prescribed, the rate for the metropolitan area was £3 14s. 11d. Thus the people in the South-West of the State, who, according to the basic wage determination, should be receiving more than the workers in the metropolitan area, are receiving 5d. a week less. I trust that when the Government are considering their taxation measures for the session, they will bear that aspect in mind. I am quite aware it was not the fault of the Premier or of the Government last year that the basic wage was not specified as the minimum. If we had had our way, we would have ensured that workers on the basic wage were exempted from the financial emergency tax, but the opposition was so strong that the amount was fixed at £3 15s., and now see the position we have reached! The hospital tax operates similarly. That tax was originally intended to exempt men who received less than £232 per annum, but

to-day, if the department consider that the individual is in a position to pay, whether he receives £232 or £153, he is expected to pay for his treatment, although he pays the tax at the source as do other people. All this taxation legislation is due for overhaul, and I trust the Government will consider these matters before the measures for this session are introduced. A good deal has been said about unemployment. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) spoke on a vital question—the unification of railway gauges. If the Trans-Australian line is so important as to justify the construction of the Port Augusta-Red Hill section on the Commonwealth gauge to give an improved service, there is no justification for not carrying the same gauge through from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. What better scheme could be suggested for providing employment, so long as the Commonwealth Government were prepared to come to our assistance in constructing the line? The work is essential; it would be of wonderful assistance to Western Australia and to Australia as a whole. I hope that as a result of the remarks made at the opening of the Port Augusta-Red Hill section, the matter will be put to the Federal Parliament in such a way that the Western Australian Government will be given the necessary assistance to give effect to the proposal. I am not particularly concerned about the question of route, or whether the broader gauge should open up new country. The State has opened up practically all the country for which railway communication is required. There is another small railway to which I wish to refer, the four miles from Picton Junction to Bunbury. I understand that the Commissioner of Railways visited Bunbury to-day and that it was intended to ask him to make a recommendation that that section be built. I intend to deal with the matter of further improvements to the Bunbury harbour, and I shall be able to justify the construction of that line on those grounds.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There is a line from Picton to Bunbury.

Mr. WITHERS: I mean a duplication of the existing line. The member for West Perth said that better provision should be made for apprentices. On studying the figures some time ago, I discovered that no industry in Western Australia employed the number of apprentices to which it was entitled, not even the Midland Workshops,

which had the largest percentage of apprentices of any industry. It has to be remembered that we live in a machine age as opposed to the time when tradesmen were required to do most of the work in industry, and that whereas a wheelwright, shoemaker, blacksmith or other tradesman required five or six years in which to learn his trade, very little time is needed for a youth to learn to handle a machine and do the work that formerly a snob or farrier did. Thus there is scope for unskilled labour that starts a machine and watches it at work, but there is not the scope that previously existed for tradesmen. There might be scope for apprentices in the bricklaying, carpentering and similar trades, but we know what an important part steel and concrete are playing in building construction to-day. The unskilled labourer has to a large extent taken the place of the artisan.

Mr. Sampson: The building trades are very short of men.

Mr. WITHERS: In some directions there may be a shortage. In my district building operations are proceeding actively, and all the tradesmen required are obtainable.

Mr. Sampson: The member for North-East Fremantle mentioned the plastering industry.

Mr. WITHERS: Members cannot fail to feel sorry for the farmers, who have reached a most difficult position.

Mr. Hughes: Perhaps they need a union?

Mr. WITHERS: They have a union.

Mr. Hughes: Where is it?

Mr. WITHERS: I suppose the hon. member is referring to the employees?

Mr. Hughes: Yes.

Mr. WITHERS: The amount of wages is not always the deterrent to boys accepting work on farms. Last year a nephew of mine left his widowed mother to see whether he could find work in the city. He called at one of the registry offices and obtained employment on a farm out of Narrogin. The man who employed him was in Perth at the time on holiday with his wife and a couple of children, riding in a fairly handsome motor car. They took the 20-year old lad back with them, bag and baggage, and when they arrived at the farm the boy found that there was not a bed for him, but that he had to sleep in a shed with bags for a covering. That was the treatment meted out to him, and the farmer wondered why he did not stay. He would have been willing to work for

15s. a week and his keep had he been properly housed. As it was, those people could ride about in a flash car and spend a holiday in the city, though they were not prepared to give the lad decent accommodation. That boy, of course, told his friends what he had to put up with. That kind of thing is no inducement to other boys to risk the same conditions.

Mr. McDonald: How many cases are there like that?

Mr. WITHERS: There do not have to be too many such cases to act as an influence against boys taking such employment.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is quite a common practice for farm labourers to be put into a shed for sleeping purposes.

Mr. WITHERS: I have referred to this case because of the remarks of the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald). I know of many other cases where the boys have not been given adequate accommodation. I do not think this particular family could have been so hard up that they could not afford to buy the lad a bed to sleep on. If they had provided a bed, no doubt he would have stayed on.

Mr. Warner: If the farmer was under the Agricultural Bank he could not get a "razoo" with which to buy anything.

Mr. WITHERS: Where did he obtain the flash motor car? It is a better one than I could afford. I may be trenching on the ground of other members interested in the South-West, but I do wish to refer to the work of those who are endeavouring to acclimatise trout in the freshwater streams of the South-West. I do not know whether we are as wealthy as we appear to be, but I do know that the tourist trade is commanding a considerable amount of attention. When people go touring they like to know what the attractions are. We know that many of our salt water streams are becoming depleted of the type of fish for which people usually angle. If we could get trout established in the Collie and Blackwood waters, it would undoubtedly be a great inducement to people to use the excellent roads that have been provided through those areas. There is no doubt the road boards have done a wonderful job in this respect, and if some assistance were given to those who are engaged in this very useful work, it would be the means of creating a very live interest for tourists. An application was made by

South-West members to the Government for a sum of £500 to assist the people who have already done such wonderful work in this direction. Those people have not only devoted their time and their services, but their money as well. The Government have rendered some assistance, for which those concerned are very grateful, but I do hope when the question is put up to the Government that they will not turn a deaf ear to the appeal. There may be tourist resorts in and around the city, such as the caves at Yanchep. These provide an attraction for a time, but those who can avail themselves of the opportunity to go to Yanchep for an afternoon or a day, want to go further afield when they can get a longer holiday.

Mr. Marshall: What about Turkey Point?

Mr. WITHERS: That will be all right in good time. I wish to support the case put up by the member for Sussex (Mr. Brockman) concerning improvements to Cave House. This is one of the old established pleasure resorts. In its day it was most popular, though even at that time it could not accommodate all those people who desired to go there. Unfortunately a fire occurred, and the accommodation was greatly depleted. I hope that the money on the Estimates this year will be spent so that the public may have an opportunity of visiting this beautiful spot. I appreciate the value of the tourist traffic to Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition the other evening said that employment did not seem to have increased very much. As a fact, it has increased considerably since 1929. The Leader of the Opposition also said that butter production had decreased. It was down considerably during this year because of many factors. One of the factors was the dryness of the season during the early period and another was the outbreak of fires in the South-West. Both had their effect upon the industry. During that period, too, quite a number of group settlers or Agricultural Bank clients, who were dairy farmers, left their homes. We had not the same number of people producing butter over that period that we have had in the past. Although the Government were day by day reducing the number of unemployed, on the other hand settlers were leaving their holdings and temporarily, at any rate, were swelling the number of unemployed. I am

not prepared to say that the incentives offered to the relief worker are such as to induce a man to leave his holding for that class of work, but apparently it is a better proposition than farming for some people. That is another reason why the butter position is down, and why there has not been as great a decrease in unemployment as the Leader of the Opposition would like. I now wish to touch upon one or two local matters.

Mr. Patrick: What about the harbour?

Mr. WITHERS: I will come to that. I will first deal with the senior school site at Bunbury. This was the site of the school before I ever went to school. Members can imagine what it is like to-day. It was not in a central position in the early days, but Bunbury has grown around the school, and to-day the school site is in one of the busiest parts of the town. The school grounds are cramped, and the locality is not suitable for a school of that description. I have approached the Minister for Education with a view to the Government resuming or purchasing a suitable site for a future school. When the late Mr. McCallum was Minister for Works, I suggested to him the purchase of a suitable site. I pointed out that the site was highly valuable and could be bought at a reasonable price. It contained five acres, and was likely to be subdivided and sold, thus getting out of the Government's reach for the purpose of a school site. The Government turned down the proposal, and the owners decided to subdivide and sell. There are already seven houses on that land, and two more are to be erected. The incident goes to show that sites are not as readily available in Bunbury now as they were a few years ago. Nevertheless, I have in view an ideal site. The inspector of schools agrees with me, and the matter has been submitted to the Minister, whose reply reads as follows:—

I have now asked the Treasury to set in motion the necessary functionings which deal with the inspection and reports on such proposals involving resumptions.

I want the Treasury to know that there is a move with a view to purchasing a site for a future school—either next year or the year after. The present school is on one of the most valuable sites in Bunbury. If the Government decided to dispose of that site, they could command enough money to purchase the proposed new site and build a school on it. The proposal is worthy of investigation,

and the Government could not lose by adopting it.

Mr. Marshall: Will it be a reproductive work?

Mr. WITHERS: I hope so. Probably hon. members are anxious to be informed about the Bunbury harbour. During my 14 years in this Chamber I do not think I have been guilty of neglecting to mention the fact that at Bunbury there is a place where a harbour should be. As I go along, I hope to prove to hon. members that Bunbury needs a harbour. Fortunately I have come across Mr. Stileman's interim report on Bunbury harbour, made to the Minister for Works in 1930. In 1926 a report was made containing the following passage:—

Investigations on which a special survey party is engaged are still in progress to permit of a future harbour scheme being prepared.

That was in 1926—11 years ago—and I think the future is here. Mr. Stileman states—

Practically the whole of this is carried by the vessels of the Commonwealth and Dominion lines, which on arrival from the East are already deeply laden and draw from, say, 20 feet upwards. To enter for these vessels 32 feet of water would be required in order to give an adequate margin of depth in a berth subject to range as is the case at the existing outer berths at Bunbury.

It has been urged for many years that Bunbury is handicapped in that respect, because oversea vessels trading to England and coming around the coast of Western Australia are heavily laden by the time they reach Bunbury. In fact, they are then drawing their deepest draught, and therefore cannot possibly enter our harbour for the purpose of taking additional cargo. If the position were reversed, if those steamers were light in going past our harbour, we would be able to accommodate them for the purpose of picking up commodities to the shipment of which the port of Bunbury is entitled. Therefore we have contended for some considerable time that this is not only a State matter, seeing that Eastern States ports have started the loading, but is also a matter in which the Commonwealth should assist to remove the handicap at present imposed on Bunbury harbour. I quote further from Mr. Stileman's report:—

All work put in hand should be part of a complete scheme designed so far as possible to promote scour and so reduce present maintenance dredging, cost of which can be taken as about £10,000 per annum.

When the present extension of the breakwater was begun, Mr. Lindsay, who was then Minister for Works, showed me a plan which I take to be the one Mr. Stileman eventually submitted to the Government. In that plan there was provision for the scouring mentioned in this report, and also provision for dredging the approach channels to a depth of 32 feet. The rock was not to be blasted, but pummelled, and could be dredged up. That was part of the older scheme for a harbour at Bunbury, which was started in 1933. Mr. Stileman's report continued—

For the above reasons the first work should be reconstruction of the existing inner berths, which are at present of little or no value, and that, if possible, 30 feet of water should be provided there, with an equal depth in the approach channel . . . I undertook to report to the Hon. Minister the result of the meeting, and, in view of the general agreement, to recommend that preliminary designs outlining generally proposals for future construction should be prepared. This I am now in a position to do, and recommend accordingly. With the preliminary design I will put up a complete report covering the present and prospective trade of the port, together with an estimate of the cost of the works shown.

I do not know what the prospective trade of the port of Bunbury was when that report was made in 1926. I do not know whether it was possible for Mr. Stileman to visualise 11 years ago the prospective trade of Bunbury. We do know that that trade has increased considerably during the interim. A minute dated the 21st March, 1930, reads as follows:—

Under Secretary.—Authority is given the Engineer-in-Chief to proceed with the preliminary designs mentioned. (Signed) A. McCallum.

It will be remembered that at that time Sir George Buchanan reported on the various harbours along our coasts. He visited Bunbury, and his report was a little discouraging and disappointing. We naturally thought we were going to get a more favourable report. He said, "I can give you a harbour at Bunbury. It will be costly, and I am not in a position, as Mr. Stileman also says, to say whether the products of the back country are sufficient to justify the expenditure." The stage is being reached to-day when, I think, the products of the country and the population, the figures of which I shall quote, justify the work being proceeded with. I do not say that the Government have ceased to engage upon the work by any means, but I want them to under-



stand that, from the point of view of the south-western corner of the State, of which Bunbury is the natural outlet, provision is required to enable the producers to export their products through their natural port at the cheapest possible rates. On that point, the freight to Bunbury from the fruit-growing districts, principally from Bridgetown, is 11s. 8d. per ton, while to Fremantle the freight is 16s. 9d. per ton. It is nearly twice the distance from Bunbury to Fremantle as it is from the point of production to Bunbury, yet it costs only 5s. 1d. to transport the fruit over double the distance to Fremantle. From a railway point of view, it is contended that the further the distance the cheaper the rate should be. That is quite all right provided the goods come from Merredin or some similar centre in the back country. It is realised that the man who is producing at such a distance in the back country should have an opportunity to transport his products to market as economically, if not as cheaply, as the man who is operating nearer the port. But when the commodity is railed into Bunbury and from there on to Fremantle at the extra cost of 5s. 1d. per ton, such a practice would be without justification if we had sufficient depth of water in the harbour at Bunbury.

Mr. Doney: Did Mr. Stileman indicate what his proposals would cost?

Mr. WITHERS: I secured Mr. Stileman's report on Sunday when I was at Bunbury, and since my return to Perth this morning I have not had an opportunity to inquire at the department to secure the additional details regarding cost and so forth.

Mr. Doney: I thought you said that the expenditure was now justified.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not claim that the whole of the expenditure is justified, but I certainly want the scheme proceeded with. At Bunbury to-day there is an agitation, the object of which is to secure two 30ft. berths. We have not got the 32ft. berth that Mr. Stileman suggested, but we claim that if we can secure two 30ft. berths, they will meet the situation for a considerable time. At a meeting of the Bunbury Chamber of Commerce held on the 24th July, a report was presented that included the following:—

Figures from official sources show that 30,000 cases of butter and 600,000 cases of fruit are produced annually for export. It is considered that the provision of the necessary facilities would lay the nucleus of a thriving export trade for the fat-lamb industry and frozen pork.

Mr. Patrick: Does that fruit now go to Fremantle?

Mr. WITHERS: Yes. Before concluding, I shall quote a few figures to indicate the population and products of the district within a radius of 60 miles of Bunbury. In that estimation, I am not encroaching upon the Sussex electorate. I have not taken any figures relating to the road district and other parts of that particular electorate, except possibly in respect of Kirup, which is at the top end, for which Bunbury is the natural port. Nor have I included figures relating to the Murray-Wellington constituency. Although Pinjarra is nearly half way to Bunbury, I have allowed that centre to remain as in the Fremantle zone. The figures supplied to me show that the population within a radius of 60 miles of Bunbury is approximately 29,000 people, while the products within that area are valued as follows:—

	£
Wool .. ..	137,000
Potatoes .. ..	187,000
Apples .. ..	258,000
Timber .. ..	705,000
Butterfat .. ..	332,000
Cheese .. ..	21,000
Condensed milk .. ..	44,000

These alone give a total value of £1,684,000. It will be noticed that the coal produced at Collie has not been taken into consideration, because that is not agricultural produce.

Mr. Doney: You could hardly include that, as none of the coal goes oversea.

Mr. WITHERS: It is produced within the area although it is not an agricultural product.

Mr. Marshall: Much of that production rightly belongs to Busselton.

Mr. WITHERS: If the honourable member had heard what I said, he would appreciate the fact that the figures I have quoted do not relate to production in the Murray-Wellington or Sussex electorates. I have not even included Nannup, although that centre is within a radius of 60 miles of Bunbury. We have not made provision for fat lamb production, although a fairly large number is produced in the district. Those lambs are not exported from Bunbury direct, but are exported either through Fremantle or Bunbury where refrigerated space is available to enable the lambs to be handled. Mr. Dodson, who is a well-known shipping agent at Bunbury and takes a great interest in these

matters, has stated that "vessels fitted with refrigeration space following the general trend of ship-building, which was to have broader and shallower draft vessels, could probably be berthed at the existing jetty at Bunbury if the depth there was as great as it was several years ago, namely, 28 feet." It has to be remembered that when reference is made to 28 feet in relation to a berth at a jetty, allowance must be made for an additional two feet of clearance. Therefore a depth of 28 feet really means one of 30 feet. Ships' captains and the harbour master at Bunbury require at least 18 inches clearance before they will admit that the berth is safe. Mr. Dodson also said that "a proposal to lengthen the jetty to provide deeper berths would involve a widening of operations to meet the entire needs of the export trade of Bunbury." With regard to the question of cool stores, there is money available from people in the district who are prepared to establish cool stores if the Government will provide the facilities for handling their products. The Government have not been unmindful of the possibility of future developments, because they have gone to the expense of provision for the bulk handling of wheat at Bunbury. From an industrial point of view, that work may not be altogether acceptable, but it has to be realised that we live in a progressive age, and the position as it is has to be accepted. While the Government are prepared to spend money at Bunbury in the provision of bulk handling facilities for the farmers, they will have to go further in the development of the port to deal with the trade generally. That is a step in the right direction. Bulk handling is one step towards progress, and cool storage will be another; therefore development will be going ahead all the time. When speaking of the primary products, I never mentioned tobacco because that is grown more than 60 miles from Bunbury. But when it is taken into consideration that a special train load of tobacco recently came from Manjimup, only about 70 miles as the crow flies from Bunbury, the value of that district from a primary producer's point of view is apparent. A telegram from Manjimup dated 24th July stated:—

A special tobacco train of about 28 vans will leave Manjimup on Monday morning carrying about 150 tons of locally-cured leaf for shipment at Fremantle to Melbourne.

There at least is a commodity which we are exporting to the Eastern States and which should help to combat the imports coming from the Eastern States to-day. If we can send 150 tons of locally-cured leaf in one shipment from that district to-day, what are we likely to do in a few years time?

Mr. Doust: It costs a good deal to take it to Fremantle.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, it costs additional freight to take it to Fremantle. The estimated value of a trainload of tobacco leaf is £30,000, which represents half the State's tobacco production, grown in one little corner of the State. And as the member for Nelson pointed out, it has to come to Fremantle because there is no class of boat calling at Bunbury which could take it to the Eastern States. The grower is consequently suffering because he has to pay so much extra freight. I should like before concluding to indicate the confidence of the tradespeople in the district. I have statistics in connection with building operations from the 23rd March, 1926, to the 31st July, 1936, a period of 10 years. In that time 443 building permits were issued, of which 228 were for dwellings, 61 for commercial buildings, and 101 for alterations and additions. These cost £213,215. Last year, that is, to the 31st July, 1937, £38,485 was spent in building operations. There were 40 dwelling houses erected at a cost of £21,320, one shop and dwelling £600. 15 minor alterations and additions £1,222, and nine large alterations and additions £13,343. That shows the confidence the business people have in the district. Bunbury cannot grow and expand if the back country is not supported. It is the primary production of the back country, the hinterland of Bunbury, that is making Bunbury go ahead. It is with the people producing the primary products in that area that we are concerned. The member for Narrogin was at a conference in Bunbury and heard the delegate from Boyup Brook put up the figures I have used here in connection with the production of this particular district. I said at that conference that I was pleased at last to see that agitation was coming not only from the business people of Bunbury, who have claimed in the past that they have put up this proposition for the benefit of Bunbury, but that it was also coming from the people of the hinterland, who are now declaring that they want this facility. We

are very pleased to have their backing for it enables us to impress upon the Government the necessity for doing something in connection with the proposition. Some of the building alterations to which I referred are not of small dimensions. An alteration to the Union Bank cost £3,800 and it has not been completed yet; £3,000 has been spent on the Lyric Theatre, £2,300 on the Bon Marche building, and £1,200 on the Prince of Wales Hotel. These are all different classes of business, and the expenditure is evidence of the confidence of the business people in the town and district. Since the end of the year we have already had £13,000 worth of dwelling permits granted. One building cost £8,000, another is to cost £2,300, and the Commonwealth Government are showing their faith in the district also by erecting a Customs officer's residence at a cost of £1,650. When one has figures of that kind to show the progress the district is making, and the confidence of the people in it, one has no difficulty in asking the Government to give these people the convenience they require, which is possibly going to cost a lot of money but which I am satisfied will recoup itself. I do not know whether Sir Geo. Buchanan is still alive, but if he is and the scheme is gone on with, he will see that although he was cautious at the time of his report—and being an engineer he naturally had to be cautious—the progress has justified the expenditure. Another fact of interest is that in 1926 the motor registrations totalled 200, to-day they total 549. There is prosperity and progress on all sides, and I have no hesitation in asking the Government to give heed to the request which practically all hinges on the provision of two 30ft. berths for Bunbury.

**MR. SHEARN** (Maylands) [9.17]: It is not my intention to delay the House at any length to-night. I agree with the fact mentioned by other speakers that the Address-in-reply debate does give members an opportunity of making other members of the House au fait with matters of peculiar interest to their own electorates, and of general interest to the State. For that reason, as a new member, I would not presume to say, and did not say previously, that the Address-in-reply should be entirely eliminated, but I do believe that a good deal of curtailment of the speeches would be in the interests not only of the members

of the House and of the Government but in the interests of the State generally. Speakers who have preceded me have drawn attention to the lack of frankness on the part of the Government as exhibited by the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. Irrespective of the Government that may be in power, one has to admit that we must take into consideration the fact that the conditions to-day in relation to the unemployed, though better than those of last year, are still very serious. Unfortunately I, like other members representing metropolitan constituencies, know only too well what the position is. Not a day goes by without my being inundated with applications from men genuinely seeking employment. One, of course, endeavours to comply with the requests, but the general conditions are such as to make those efforts of little or no avail. Then, side by side with that, when one takes into account the gradual financial drift measured in terms of our present-day monetary system, one realises that it is little wonder that the Government are reticent about making any proclamation as to their future intentions. I hope that as time goes on the Government will be able to devise some means considerably to alleviate the conditions that exist, not only in our primary industries, but also in the metropolitan area. Those conditions are appalling. Every member realises that there are certain conditions over which the Government have no guiding control, but for which nevertheless we are responsible, at all events to the extent that we should do what we can to alleviate the position, which is, as I have said, exceedingly serious. I would like to say that the Governor's Speech though briefly, indicates great improvement, amounting to prosperity, in relation to our mining industry: and all sections of the community are more or less wrapped up in the success of the mining industry. I am going to be frank enough to say that notwithstanding what may be said by others, I think the Minister for Mines has done a wonderful job in connection with the various aspects of the mining industry. I have taken a lively interest in what he has done, and undoubtedly he has carried out a very good job. I trust that he may continue to go along those lines and assist what, after all, has been more or less a God-send to the rest of the community.

A matter coming nearer home and of great satisfaction to me and other members of the metropolitan area is the installation of the sewerage system. As you, Sir, know, the greater part of my district has been or is being sewerage. The new installations have been not only of great benefit to the particular district, but have exercised a tremendous influence in assisting the Government to find work for the unemployed. However, in that regard I want seriously to suggest to the Government that they take into early consideration the position in which scores of people in my electorate now find themselves, particularly those on sustenance, and also those on the basic wage or thereabouts, and those who hope eventually to own their own homes. From the estimates submitted we know that the house connections cost from £40 to £50 each, and so we realise how absolutely impossible it is for the individual owner to be able to connect up with the Government mains. I have brought this under the notice of the department concerned, and I understand the Minister himself has taken note of it. I want to be fair enough to say that some consideration has been offered; but unless the Government can introduce a general plan in connection with this feature of the scheme, it seems that whilst certain people will have to be deprived of the service, they, under the operations of the Act, will be forced to pay the sewerage rate and continue to pay the local authority for the pan service. So it means that until something is done in connection with that aspect of the question, those people through no fault of their own are faced with double rate payments. Therefore, I seriously urge the Government to set about to endeavour to give all people in the district the benefit of the system that has been introduced. I, like other speakers, am pleased to know that the Government, according to the Governor's Speech, intend introducing the much delayed Municipalities Act Amendment. I do not propose to discuss that measure at length now, but merely to say that as one who is associated with local authority activities, I know the difficulties under which they are labouring. I hope the Bill will be passed this session and that then the municipalities will be able to function in the way in which they are entitled to do. I should like to make passing reference to the fact that the consummation of that long-delayed Infectious Diseases Hospital having been effected by the common sense attitude of the local authorities

and of the Government, we might now seriously take up the appalling situation at the Perth Hospital. I am not going to weary the House with a reiteration of the conditions that prevail, but I say it is the duty of every member of the House to use his utmost endeavours to influence some early arrangement which would be the means of having a hospital erected with the accommodation and equipment which the present conditions undoubtedly require. I was likewise pleased to hear the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) speak so plainly in connection with the proposed discontinuance of our North-West air service. I realise with that hon. member that it would be a very serious matter for Western Australia, and I concluded from the remarks he made that he and the Government and other members of the House will take the requisite steps to make their representations to the Federal Government so strenuous and consistent that we shall not have any fear of this proposed scheme being carried out. That hon. member likewise struck a rather good note regarding the growing state of apparent autocracy of heads of our public service. While to some extent this may be true, I personally feel that we are fortunate in having an able public service which, generally speaking, uses its great power with restraint. I would suggest that it is not the service that is to blame, but possibly Parliament itself. It appears to me that Acts are sometimes passed in haste by this and other Parliaments, and after all such measures resolve themselves into a mere outline of the intention of Parliament. To make the requisite provision, the Governor, by regulation, finally sets out how the Act shall operate. It appears that Parliament has to some extent given away the powers entrusted to it under the Constitution, and I therefore suggest to the member for Roebourne, and to members generally, that in relation to the suggested curtailment of the Address-in-reply debate, there would perhaps be an opportunity for the House to give more time to the various measures submitted before they are adopted. By those means, members would be able to pass a measure with a completeness that would embrace all that the Act was intended to deal with, and the necessity would not exist of suggesting that there was a sort of autocracy existing in the various departments of State. There are several social questions that will be considered during the session,

very soon, I understand, and for that reason I do not intend to speak upon them tonight, but will take an opportunity to express my opinions at the appropriate time. There are a number of matters dealing with my own electorate to which I should like to make passing reference. One is the necessity, to which I directed attention last session, of there being not only an extension of the tramway service on the Walcott street, North Perth, line, but for some speeding up of that service. Members who live in the metropolitan area are aware that there is no district within that area that has grown faster or produced a consistently better type of house than the Mt. Lawley-North Perth area.

Mr. Cross: What about South Perth?

Mr. SHEARN: I admit that South Perth, having such a representative, would necessarily be a very prosperous suburb, but I think that I said there was no district making greater progress. I therefore seriously suggest to the Government that I am making no unfair request when I ask for this consideration. The necessity has existed for a considerable time; I believe the former member for Maylands brought the matter to the notice of the Government on several occasions, and I shall certainly continue to do so until the Government do something.

Mr. Marshall: How far is development beyond the terminus of the line at the moment?

Mr. SHEARN: About a mile. I recently asked the Minister to consider the practicability of duplicating the present line. To-day I received a reply from the Minister, and it is not at all satisfactory. At this juncture I urge the Minister to give this request, which can be amply justified, due consideration, and I hope the result will be that funds will be made available to improve the conditions on the Mount Lawley, North Perth, line. With other members, I regret that the Minister for Education should have met with an accident that has not only caused him inconvenience but has subjected him to physical pain. We trust that it will not be long before he is again restored to health. I have a matter to mention affecting his department—the necessity for a junior school in the North Perth-Mt. Lawley territory. I know it has been said that departmental inquiry has revealed that facilities exist of which those children might avail themselves. But the majority of the children in this particular area are of very

tender age, and they have to travel about 1½ miles to school. It is a modest request, and I suggest that the Minister might give us a building that would form the nucleus of an enlarged structure as time goes on. I have been informed that this matter will receive consideration. By the time it receives consideration, if it is dealt with in the usual way, the children will be ready for the Modern School, and that will be of no good to the children of to-day. In summer there is very little shade for the children, and in winter they are subject to the severities of the weather. I claim that the people of the district are entitled to receive the service for which they are paying, and they are not asking for something that is not well overdue. I hope the Minister will take this matter into consideration, and will be able to prevail upon the Treasurer to make funds available for what is a modest request and a dire necessity for the district. There are a number of other matters to which I intended to draw attention, but I will deal with them when the Estimates for the various departments are under discussion. Although the finances of the State are anything but satisfactory, I believe that the recent visit of the Premier to London as the ambassador of Western Australia was amply justified in the interests of the State. The occasion being the coronation of Their Majesties, the King and Queen, it presented a unique opportunity for intercourse between the various leaders of the different countries of the British Empire. As the member for West Perth pointed out, if ever there was a time in the history of the Empire and indeed of the world when there should be a complete and proper appreciation of the difficulties, surely it is to-day. I understand that the actual expenses of the trip were comparatively small, and the ultimate good should doubly repay the State for the outlay. I am not going to adopt a party attitude and say that the Premier should not have made the trip. Irrespective of the party in power at the time, I believe that the circumstances quite justified the trip. In view of the present position of the State, it behoves every member, regardless of whether he sits behind the Government or in Opposition, not only to do his best in the interests of his own electorate, which is what we are primarily here for, but to make his contribution, irrespective of party alignment, provided he is satis-

fied that the proposed legislation is in the interests of the people. With that condition fulfilled, he should stand behind the Government of the day. If we do that, our united efforts will bring a greater measure of prosperity to the State than would otherwise be possible under the financial conditions at present existing. Until such time as the Government are able to devise some means which will provide a greater step towards full-time employment for many thousands of men now on sustenance, I believe we shall never be able to enjoy any material state of prosperity. Members will surely agree with me in that view. As has been pointed out by previous speakers, the greater volume of prosperity in this or in any other primary producing State is largely in the hands of the elements, but I still believe that as a result of the adoption of a careful and unbiassed attitude on the part of the Government, ably supported as they would be by members of the Opposition, a genuine effort to improve the conditions generally could be made. For my own part I will at all times endeavour to assist in the passage of any legislation which, I am satisfied in my own mind, is in the best interests of Western Australia.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.43 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 18th August, 1937.*

Question: Education, Goldfields High School	Page 124
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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION—EDUCATION.

*Goldfields High School.*

Hon. C. G. ELLIOTT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, In connection with the Goldfields High School, what was the total cost of—(a) buildings, (b) furniture? 2, What provision has been made for a supply of water should an outbreak of fire occur at the school?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) £7,854; (b) £1,522. 2, In addition to the provision of standpipes in the quadrangle and an alarm connected to the Kalgoorlie Fire Station, two street fire hydrants have been installed near the school. The question of further safeguarding the school from damage by fire is now under consideration.

### MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

*To Disallow Regulations.*

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [4.36]: I move—

That the regulations (Nos. 1 to 9 inclusive) relating to the Natives' Medical Fund made under the Native Administration Act, 1905-1936, published in the "Government Gazette" of 2nd July, 1937, and laid on the table of the House on 10th August, 1937, be and are hereby disallowed.

No alteration has been made in the fees payable in respect of permits, a permit to employ one native costing 5s., and a general permit £2. The regulations now provide, however, that in addition to the above fees the permit holder shall contribute £1 per head per annum in respect of each and every native employed by him under the authority of the permit. The Commissioner may, in the case of wards or trainees of the Aborigines Department, or where a permit is de-