

# Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 18th August, 1925.

	PAGE
Question: Local Authorities, Fees and Licenses ...	292
Address-in-reply, eighth day ...	292

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

## QUESTION—LOCAL AUTHORITIES, FEES AND LICENSES.

Hon. A. BURVILL asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the importance of the Mains Roads Bill shortly to come again before this Council, will he have prepared for use of members a map showing—(a) the boundaries of the various municipal and road districts throughout the State; (b) the area contained in each; (c) the total amount received by each council and board as fees and licenses for motor-driven and horse-drawn vehicles, separately, during the last available financial year?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The information asked for will, so far as practicable, be made available at the earliest possible date.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Eighth day.*

Debate resumed from 13th August.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.35]: It is pleasing to note from the Governor's Speech that Ministers are seized with the importance of developing the State and that, according to the utterances of the Premier when addressing a deputation, the Estimates will be exceeded by a very large amount, a large proportion of which will be utilised in the development of the country by means of further advances through the Agricultural Bank, the extension of water supplies in the agricultural areas, and so on. The Premier also said that a large sum would be required for group settlements. I hope the Government will follow out what has been suggested in the Governor's Speech and also what was outlined in the Premier's remarks. I have every confidence that they will do so. In support of such actions by the Government, I

hope the farmers of Western Australia will do their share by continuing to improve their methods of farming. Hon. members will think, perhaps, that I am thrashing this subject to death because session after session I have spoken along these lines. I advocate dollars instead of acres. In other words, I am not concerned about the acreage so much as I am that what land is brought into cultivation shall be farmed well. I was interested in a letter I received from a constituent, Mr. Lawrence Dunsday, who has been on the land for some time. He could not have been considered a practical farmer at the outset, because he was an accountant. He was plucky, however, for he walked 30 miles to inspect his block and then he took it up. He selected his land at a time when he was regarded as unwise, because his land was in a so-called dry area. His success has been wonderful. It has been largely due to the methods he adopted and others should profit by his experience. He has developed his land on sound scientific lines as the following extracts from his letter will clearly demonstrate:—

The farm is situated in the Talgomine-Goomarin valley, 20 miles due north of Merredin, and about 13 miles east of Nukarni—

That district has always been considered by many to be a dry area—

The soil consists of gimlet and salmon gum country.

Hon. members will probably be aware that salmon gum and gimlet country is generally regarded as heavy forest country that needs a lot of moisture. The system he has followed of fallowing and cultivating has had the effect of conserving the moisture and has brought about the good results he has obtained.

The rainfall last year was 804 points for the whole year and 676 during the growing period. The rain gauge is situated between the crops.

There was 6¾ inches of rain. I want hon. members to follow that point closely, because it bears on the yield he secured. This particular crop was represented in the Royal Agricultural Society's annual show competitions and the exhibit was placed seventh on the list against all comers. His yield was a very creditable one. Continuing, this farmer said:—

The official results were:—335 acres yielding 21 bushels, 25lbs. per acre; 190 acres were fallowed and 145 acres were partly new land and partly second cropping.

This man follows the three years principle in dealing with the heavy forest lands. He crops one year, lets the area go to grass next year for the stock and fallows the third year. Then he proceeds:—

The fallow was completed on 18th August, 1923, and cultivated in September; harrowed in December after 166 points of rain and again harrowed in March, after 71 points of rain. The fallow was drilled in dry, before the winter rains, the first of which fell on 14th May. The unfallowed land was disc ploughed about two inches deep after the first rains, and then drilled. The fallow averaged about 25 bushels; the unfallowed land averaged about 16 bushels.

That is the secret of it. We hear of farmers saying that they have tried the fallowing system and have not noticed any appreciable difference in the crops raised on fallowed land, but that is because they have not followed up the system as it should be carried out. In most instances the trouble is that while such farmers have certainly ploughed the ground, they have then left it untouched, they have not followed up the system as Mr. Dumsday has done. His work has proved successful indeed. If the farmers were to follow his system, they would find that it would make the difference Mr. Dumsday has experienced, namely, upwards of nine bushels per acre. I have always been keen on this form of scientific farming. On my farm the land was ploughed not deeply at the start, but it was then harrowed no less than five times through the summer. It was harrowed after each time the rain fell. Subsequently it was ploughed deeply before the seeding. If the Government are to proceed with the policy outlined, then the farmers should be prepared to improve the methods many of them adopt to-day. If they would only follow the early pioneers of wheat growing, much would be achieved. In the dry areas of Victoria very little good resulted until the wheat farmers from South Australia took up the land. The South Australian farmers were mostly Germans from the south of Germany. They must not be confounded with the Germans from the northern parts, where the people are more war-like. The latter were the people who caused so much trouble in the past and I hope will not cause trouble in the future. The southern German is a peace-loving man, and his methods of farming are scientific. There are many Australian-German settlements throughout Australia,

and I guarantee that if hon. members were to go through them, very few northern Germans would be found among the farmers. A number of South Australian farmers came to Western Australia. If hon. members were to ask anyone who knows those settlers in Western Australia, no instance could be pointed to where those Germans have been unsuccessful. The secret of their success has been the utilisation of proper farming methods. They do not put the seed in and trust to the Lord to do the rest. It is necessary to do the work along scientific lines; the farmer has to do his part and then the elements as a rule will do the rest. We are faced in Western Australia with what would appear to be a shortage of land for wheat growing. My opinion is, however, that there are yet large areas of land available for wheat. Most decidedly we have not settled all our wheat areas yet. I can remember addressing a meeting 20 years ago, and I told the people that the wheat belt of Western Australia would be extended successfully to Southern Cross. At that time I was looked upon as a crank. I contended, however, that with up-to-date farming methods suited to that particular class of country and the utilisation of early maturing wheats, farming operations would be successful there, and we know they have been successful. If proper methods are followed out, we shall have successful wheat growing throughout the whole area. I would point to the Esperance district and emphasise the fact that there is a large tract of good country there that has been opened up by a railway. That country must be worked properly. It is not now being worked properly, because the settlers have not the necessary capital to do so. As I explained after my visit to that district last year, the Government must extend greater consideration to the Esperance-Norseman settlers than to those in other wheat growing districts. That country will require several croppings before the settlers begin to get good results from it. Let us consider other land that has been worked for a number of years and compare the results with newly broken land. We had experience of it during the dry season in 1914. Land that had been cropped four or five times gave fair yields in that year, while new land gave nothing. From land that I had cropped five times I secured 12 bushels, but on new land where I expected to get a

bigger yield—both lots had been worked and seeded similarly—I secured only four bushels, showing how the working of the land builds it up and conserves the moisture. That will be found to be the key of the situation in the Esperance district. The land must be worked, and some of the settlers down there have not the necessary implements to do the work thoroughly.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Why not put good State machinery on that land?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is not a matter of putting good State machinery on it. The settlers have a little capital, but not sufficient I urge the Government to give the settlers extra consideration because if they are going to be successful they will need greater assistance than do settlers in other parts.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is correct.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This work must be started because Esperance will prove a good wheat growing district. Some time ago I was taken to task for speaking of millions of acres of land being still available for wheat growing in this State. I was not speaking of the Esperance district at the time; I had in mind land far out from the railway where there is a good belt of country suitable for wheat growing. If the Government do not grant extra assistance to the Esperance settlers, they will go off their blocks and other men will take their places. We do not want that to happen. We want to keep on their holdings the plucky men and women who have settled there, and if extra assistance is given them, they will remain. The same argument applies to them as to group settlers. The Government already have advisers, but what is wanted is a practical man to advise them how to work on proper lines. There are several good farmers of means in the Esperance district at present, and they will be successful because they have the money. The Government should assist men without capital to follow the system adopted by the most fortunate farmers. Reference has been made to the country east of the Wongan Hills line. There is undoubtedly good wheat growing country that could be opened up in that locality, but the remarks I made about the successful working of the Merredin to Southern Cross country applies there also. There is no question that that land can be successfully settled, provided proper methods of farming are adopted. I know the country between Kon-

dinin and Ravensthorpe, which is some of the finest that it has been my pleasure to see anywhere. There is a very large belt of it. Interspersed with it is sandplain, but the sandplain is not to be despised, for it will yet prove capable of giving good results if only it is properly handled. There is an opportunity to settle a lot more wheat growers in that part. Land values generally in this State have increased but they are nothing like what they should be. Farm land can be valued only on its productivity. Comparing wheat land in Western Australia with land of equal producing capacity in the Eastern States, we find that here it is bringing little better than one-third of the price of that in the Eastern States. I have travelled a good deal in the Eastern States, and I have not known the farmers there to be so enthusiastic about Western Australia as I found them this year. If they find the visitor is a farmer hailing from Western Australia, they show themselves keenly interested in our farm work and farm values. There is a wonderful opening in Western Australia for farmers from the Eastern States, but they do not seem to take kindly to the information disseminated by agents. I do not know whether it is within the province of the State Government to disseminate information, but it is regrettable that we have such wonderful land offering at comparatively low values, and yet do not seem to be in a position to impart the knowledge to people in the Eastern States. People in the East are land-hungry. Many of the farmers have big families, and their holdings are incapable of supporting more than half the family. Such men would invest their money in farm property here if only the information were given to them.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The late Government would not assist anyone with money. Anyone with money they did not want.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Quite so. I am hopeful that the present Government will give encouragement to men of capital to come here. The Premier has announced his intention of adopting a bold policy of land development. If he does so, he will have my support and the support, I think, of every member in this Chamber; but all the money he can get will be needed to give effect to it. Above all we want men of capital to come here. Western Australia has always been in need of such settlers. We can congratulate ourselves upon having

obtained a record wheat yield last season. Western Australia is indeed making progress. The average of 12.8 bushels per acre was good, but I am looking forward to the day when we shall have a State average of 14 bushels and shall ultimately top the yield of all the States. This is quite possible of achievement. The Government are appointing scientific advisers. I am glad of that. Year after year I have urged the necessity for it. Therein lies the means of attaining even greater success in future. Consider what it would have meant this year if we had harvested 14 bushels instead of 12.8 bushels to the acre! There are certain drawbacks to wheat farming. One is the rabbit pest. I am absolutely astonished that some people in this State advocate tearing down the rabbit-proof fence and giving the material to the farmers. If this suggestion were adopted the netting would be worthless because it has been up so long. Any man who would advocate the pulling down of the fence has not studied the question. Anyone who understands what a serious menace rabbits and dingoes are knows that they come down in waves from the North, and that the fence is the one barrier opposing their onward march. When I took over the Department of Agriculture some years ago, I found that a long length of fence was not dog-proof. Rolls of wire were lying alongside the fence, and farmers were applying to be supplied with that wire. I inquired why the wire was lying there, and was told it was intended to fill a gap miles long in the fence. A special report was obtained, and I learnt that the dingoes were moving along the fence and gaining ingress at the gap. The Government made available the money necessary to complete the fence. Now some people advocate pulling the fence down. The Government must not think of adopting that course. They should keep the fence in good repair. It has been a Godsend to this State for many years and will still prove beneficial in future. The fence should be retained until the farmers have fenced their holdings against rabbits, and it will be a few years before that can be done. I commend the previous and present Governments, as well as the Federal Government, on having provided wire netting for the fencing of farm properties. It is a splendid work that will mean a lot of additional revenue to the State, in addition to saving many farmers from disaster. The unfor-

tunate part is that the Federal Government will not make sufficient money available for this purpose. Additional funds should be provided, so that this good work may be continued. In the outside districts there is no chance of farmers running sheep owing to the prevalence of dingoes, and in addition there is the rabbit pest to cope with. There should be no difference of opinion regarding the rabbit question. To keep the pest within bounds depends upon the efforts of the individual. If the whole of the settlers fought the rabbits they could be kept in check, but unfortunately some people expect the local boards to do the fighting for them. It is of no use a farmer taking the view that he can poison in the summer time only. When Minister for Agriculture, I had experiments carried out at the foot of the Stirling Ranges in the best part of spring, and when food was at its best, and the havoc wrought amongst the rabbits was wonderful. If the farmers continued to poison around their crops, they would obviate much of the loss that is occurring to-day. Rabbits have increased considerably, but they have not been taken as seriously as they should have been. It is necessary to fight them all the time, and every farmer should be compelled to do his part. One man I know is poisoning around his crops twice a week, whereas a neighbour of his has not attempted to do any poisoning for 12 months.

Hon. J. Duffell: Is not the lack of summer rain the greatest enemy of the rabbit?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That means that the rabbits will not breed in summer, but they remain all the same.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They are an absolute pest this year in places where they have not been known before.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: United action is required and must be taken. It has been suggested that the Government should provide poison free of charge. The Government have been doing that for many years. In the early part of 1917, when Mr. Willmott was Minister, the Government agreed to supply free poison. I followed Mr. Willmott in office and, although the Government supplied the poison free of cost, people receiving it wasted it because it cost them nothing. In consequence of that I decided to charge 6d. a tin and more care was taken. For some time we have had before us an agitation for the adoption in this

State of legislation for the marketing of fruit on the lines of the Queensland Act. In my opinion Acts of Parliament to control industry are always dangerous. I do not pretend to be an authority on this subject, but I have been amongst my constituents and I have yet to learn that any of them are in any way favourable to a scheme for the full control of the marketing of fruit. It is all very well to say that the growers will, by adopting such a scheme, improve their positions. That is questionable. I remember the time when the fruit growers joined the Dried Fruits Association of Australia. The consequence was that first class fruit was sold here at the same price as the Eastern States sold their second class fruit. There are many fruit growers amongst the constituents I represent, and before I can support anything in the nature of a scheme for the control of marketing, I want to be assured that it is going to be a success.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: It is a rotten idea.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I take it that Mr. Willmott's interjection has reference to the Queensland Act. To the fruitgrowers who are in my province, I have not hesitated to express the views that I am now enunciating. I admit that something must be done, but to control the whole fruit crop, no. We shall await with interest the introduction of the measure that the Government propose to submit to Parliament. There is one important matter that concerns not only fruit, but vegetable growers as well, and the consumers likewise, and that is the establishment of central markets. Last year the Perth City Council put forward a proposition which was not agreed to. Markets mean a great deal to the producer and also to the consumers. Why is it not possible for the Government and the Council to arrive at some concrete scheme? Even if it cost £100,000, that figure should not deter the Government or the Council from proceeding with the work, because it will pay interest and sinking fund and show a handsome profit as well, even though the rentals be low. We have no need for a palatial structure; all that we require is a decent shelter on the lines of that provided in Wellington-street at the present time. It can, however, be made more substantial. If we erect a big building, it will always be in the way. Of course it would be very convenient if it could be built

adjacent to the railway, but after all only a few would be able to avail themselves of its proximity to the railway. The most important thing is to get the markets built right away. Then we may hear the old argument advanced that if we have these markets, it will be necessary to provide cold storage. I assure members, however, that if either the Government or the City Council will build the markets, private enterprise will soon come along and provide the cold storage. At the present time everything is scattered all over the city. Let us combine under the one roof the produce that is to be disposed of in the metropolitan area, and the buyers will benefit considerably whilst the consumers will reap an immense advantage. For the life of me I cannot understand why the markets have not been built before. It is clearly a matter for the City Council and not for the Government. Surely, therefore, it ought to be possible for the municipal authorities to arrive at a concrete scheme which will meet with the approval of the Government. There is a reference in the Governor's Speech to the flourishing condition in which the dairying industry is at the present time. I am very glad to hear that, because I have been interested in dairying for a considerable time. I did all I could to advance it during the period that I was a Minister of the Crown, and even before that time I helped it as much as I possibly could. There is no question that we have a big area of dairying country that can be and will be developed, but there have been many innovations introduced since I was a Minister, and good progress has been made. I am delighted to know this, and that it is on the way to becoming an industry that will be worth while. On this subject I might remark that I have been regarded as an opponent of the South-West. That idea, perhaps, has got about by reason of the criticism I have offered to group settlements. No more ridiculous statement could have been made. I am a whole-hearted supporter of the South-West. Indeed there is not one part of the State in which I am not interested and to assist which I would not do my best. But because a few years back I issued warnings and tried to impress upon Parliament the fact that we were not proceeding on right lines, and that we should have a complete stocktaking. I was criticised and referred to as an opponent of the South-West, as a traitor to the country, a

doubting Thomas, etc. I repeat that there is no one more eager to assist in the development of the State than myself, and I say this fearlessly because I know the value of the country. But with regard to the South-West I can say that the Government are going to lose a lot of money over the scheme on which they are engaged. Yet I recognise that that part of the State must be developed and that a good deal of the money now being expended will come back to us in the shape of revenue. Take the Peel and Bateman Estates. In 1923 I made a number of statements against the manner in which development work was being carried on. A little while afterwards a Royal Commission was appointed, and the report of that body supported every charge that I made. I knew what I was talking about when I made the charges. That Commission was not supporting me personally at all; the members of it did not care a rap about me. Then what was the result? It was said that the members of the Commission, like myself, were biased. That is not the way in which to bring about the development of any part of the State. When people are doing their utmost for the country in which they live, and have occasion to criticise methods that are adopted, they should not be told that they are biased. Now we have before us the report of the Royal Commission that inquired into the Group Settlement in the South-West, and never before have we heard anything like the criticism that has been hurled at the members of that body because of the report they have been honest enough to submit. That Commission has been attacked by all and sundry. I know most of the members who compose that Commission, and could repose so much confidence in them that I would trust them with the management of any of my affairs, were it necessary to do so. They spent a considerable time in investigating the conditions under which group settlement is being carried out, and have given their verdict to the best of their ability. What do we find? That two and a half years later after I made my charges they support what I said. Why declare that these people are prejudiced against the South-West? Is it reasonable that a body of men would make inquiries in the thorough manner that we know was done by the members of the Group Settlement Commission, and then present a report like the one we have before us, if they were not

convinced that it was true? Why should we now say that the report is going to injure the State and that the members of the Commission have gone out of their way to do harm to the country? Those gentlemen, like myself, have every faith in Western Australia and will look to it, for the rest of their lives, for their livelihood.

Hon. J. Ewing: The report has done material damage.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Then the statements that I made probably did more harm than those of the Commission are likely to do. It was said, when I criticised what was being done, that my statements would prevent private enterprise from coming in, and I was openly declared to be an opponent of the South-West. When I offer criticism I offer it with a view to giving assistance. It is constructive and never intended to be destructive. Why should anyone offer destructive criticism, especially if he be interested in the State and is dependent upon it?

Hon. A. Burvill: We have not yet had much constructive criticism.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Then I do not know what the hon. member wants. In the first place I advocated the establishment of boards to advise Government officials on the proper lines on which to carry on operations in the South-West. What did the Government officials know of the South-West? Very little.

Hon. J. Ewing: What about Mr. McLarty?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. McLarty is an office man. If you take him out of the office and tell me that he is capable of advising as to what should be done in the South-West, I cannot subscribe to the statement.

Hon. T. Moore: What experience of development has he had, and where?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. McLarty has had no experience whatever in that direction. In the South-West the land changes so much every 50 miles that it is necessary to secure advice from different people.

Hon. T. Moore: And even less than 50 miles.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Government of the day took no heed of the suggestions that I made. It was possible at that time to secure the advice that I suggested should be obtained. We had as much confidence then as we have now in the Government officials, but what we wanted was advice regarding the country that it was proposed to settle, advice that could only come from those

with practical experience. Mr. Burvill said that constructive criticism was wanted. I remind members that at the outset I said that there would be no dairy cows to provide for the farms that we were about to establish. I suggested then that the Government should turn their attention to the Midland country, where decent stock was being bred, and that an offer should be made for good heifers. If something of that kind had been done we might have been in the position to-day of supplying a good class of cow to the dairy farmers in the South-West. The position at present is that we must send to the Eastern States to buy that stock.

Hon. J. Ewing: What happened to the Brunswick cows?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Some of them were sent to Denmark and some were distributed amongst settlers. But we only had about 25 altogether at Brunswick. What was the use of 25 cows for group settlement purposes? Thousands of cows will be wanted. The hon. member challenged me again and again. But I give him credit for, when he was in office, having acted honestly on the advice given him by his advisers. Unfortunately, however, he was ill-advised. Even when the hon. member was sitting on the other side of the House it would not have been possible to buy 500 cows in Western Australia, and now the Government intend to import what should have been bred in the State. If the cattle breeders of that part of the State to which I have referred had been guaranteed a reasonable price there would have been sufficient cows within the State from which to make the necessary purchases for the South-West. It is not too late even now to make a start.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: They are doing it now, are they not?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Tens of thousands of tons of feed are going to waste in the South-West.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Group settlement is vital to Western Australia, and it is for the whole of the people to bend their energies to bringing it to a success. I have always been opposed to the so-called training of the group settlers. It is nonsense to bring inexperienced men from England and put them on clearing and preparing at 10s. per day. As a result of that, the capital cost becomes so inflated that it has to be written down. That 10s. a day is a bad system. Clearing work should be done by contract.

Hon. J. Ewing: What would you do with the migrants coming out here in the meantime?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What is the use of bringing them out before we are ready for them? Years ago I advocated that half the money being spent on group settlement should be spent in the South-West, while the other half should be devoted to the development of the wheat belt. Had that been done, instead of a 24,000,000-bushel harvest we should have had a harvest of 30,000,000 bushels. I urged the Government to call a halt in group settlement, but they would go ahead like a bolting horse until now we are badly entangled.

Hon. J. Ewing: We will get out of it.

Hon. T. Moore: Some of the settlers are getting out now.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, and getting right away. I hope the Government will not extend the group settlements until we have the present groups in good order. I hope they will call a halt—I believe they have done so.

Hon. J. Ewing: No, they have not.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They should not extend group settlement further until we have established order in the existing groups. It has been said that my opposition to the group settlements arose from the fact that Sir James Mitchell was responsible for their initiation. Nothing could be more ridiculous. For the past 25 years Sir James Mitchell and I have been close friends, and so we are to-day. I recognise in him a very able and energetic man, a man whose whole life is being given to the advancement of the State. I disagree with some of his methods. I like to see the methods of great men like Sir James Mitchell soundly based. Unfortunately, in establishing the group settlements there was no definite policy, Sir James trusting everything to his officers.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The agreement was a bad one.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It was not a good one, although perhaps the best that could be obtained at the time. I have no feeling towards Sir James Mitchell's group settlement scheme, except a desire to be helpful to it.

Hon. T. Moore: The whole scheme displays lack of method.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That has been my complaint throughout. Now let us look nearer home. With the gold yield declin-

ing, the primary producers are expected to save the State, as it were. They are working quietly to get representatives appointed on the different boards and trusts. They have had a representative on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Through the lamented death of Mr. Basil Murray, the farmers lost not only an excellent representative on the Harbour Trust, but a man whose life was given to the advancement of the primary industries. As time goes on, the farmers will find out how indefatigable he was in furthering their interests. However, when it came to filling the vacancy on the Fremantle Harbour Trust caused by the death of Mr. Murray, the Government appointed, not another representative of the primary producers, but a man from their own political camp. I take strong exception to that, because when I was controlling that department I had a bitter fight over the question of whether or not the lumpers should have a representative on the Trust. Of course members of the Trust are not supposed to represent any particular outside interest; they are representatives merely of the Government and the State. However, when the matter was brought before me I put up a strong fight to keep a representative of Labour on the Trust. Unfortunately, the present Government have not taken quite so generous a view. It is to be hoped that, when the next vacancy occurs, they will appoint to it a representative of the primary producers for, after all, the primary producers constitute the Trust's best revenue producers. I hope the Colonial Secretary will bring this matter before the Minister controlling the Harbour Trust. Another important matter being discussed at the present time is the development of light lands, of which we have very large areas of varying quality. Much of this land may be and is referred to as sandplain, but it has to be remembered that there are many varying qualities of sandplain, some being quite good country when developed. The Government have made a start with a little farm on sandplain at Wongan Hills. That is not going to carry us far, because what will be suitable at Wongan Hills may not be equally suitable in other parts of the State. Many years have elapsed since first I began to work for the development of light lands, and in the meantime practically nothing has been done. Five years ago I called a conference of good men from all parts of the

State, men who had been successful in developing light lands, but it did not bear fruit. Now the Government have started this little place at Wongan Hills. They require to go farther than that. Instead of establishing small farms, they should initiate experimental plots on existing farms. Many successful farmers are only too eager to provide the land for such experiments and, under a scientific adviser from the Agricultural Department, do the work without much cost to the Government. If the Government would but adopt that policy, there would be no necessity for the establishing of experimental farms, which, after all, are of value only to the immediate district. It was very pleasing at a deputation the other day to hear the Premier say the Government were going to spend quite a lot of money on water supplies in farming areas. Certain agricultural districts are capable of being served by extensions of the Goldfields Water Scheme.

Hon. J. Duffell: How much a thousand gallons would have to be charged for such water?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Government, in carrying out any such scheme, should be content with interest and sinking fund, which would not be too heavy a burden on the farmers. Many farmers have had their dams empty all the summer, and have to spend the greater part of a day in carting a load of water. Their dams are not full even now. But, in addition to the Goldfields Water Scheme, there are many catchment areas where supplies could be conserved for the immediate district. The Government could well advance, say, £150 each to farmers for the provision of a water supply. Even if some of the farmers, not being financially solvent, subsequently went off their farms, they could not take the land or water supplies with them. Until a water supply is provided, no man can fully develop his holding. I fail to see how a man can make wheat growing pay if he has to cart water every day from daylight to dark. I hope the Government will not hesitate to spend money on country water supplies, because the State will be fully recompensed for any such expenditure. The development in the city must be backed up by a corresponding development in our farming areas, and our city dwellers must look at the matter in that light and be prepared for money to be spent



in the country districts. Since we last met here I have done a fair amount of travelling. I find that the roads are becoming worse. It is said that no legislation can control the matter, but I think the nationalisation of our main roads will supply the remedy. Local governing bodies cannot be expected to keep all their roads in order. It would take all the revenue they possess to look after their own roads. There are many miles of roads which return no revenue to the local authorities. There is a reference in the Speech to a Bill providing for a State Labour exchange. I wonder what it means. It will prove interesting reading when it comes before us. I certainly have my suspicions as to what it will contain. I suppose it will be the usual legislation for the control of our industries by unionism. Since the Labour Government assumed office there has been an agitation for the construction of different railways, but time after time the Premier points out that there is no money available for such work. Where it can be shown that railways are necessary and are likely to be payable propositions, it is well worth the consideration of the Government to build them. Two lines have been before the public for many years. One of these was practically promised 17 years ago. More deputations have waited upon Ministers regarding the Yorkrakine line than any other three lines, but the settlers are still in the same position except that the construction has been authorised by Parliament. When will that line be built? Men have been trying to build up their farms and grow wheat 22 miles from a railway. If they can make wheat growing pay at ordinary prices, and at that distance from a railway, they are more expert at farming than I am. The land cannot be properly developed without a railway, and if one were built this district would go ahead immediately. A definite promise was given to the soldier settlers of Quelgetting that they would be given railway communication. This promise was made long before the survey was assented to, but it seems as far away from fulfilment as ever. Another line I refer to is the Armadale-Brookton railway. This would shorten the haulage to Fremantle, and reduce the grades between the agricultural districts and our principal ports. It would also open up country that is eminently suitable for dairying. No doubt, too, if a rail-

way were built many of the large estates would be cut up and devoted to this particular industry. The States of Australia that have gone ahead most are those which have taken up this industry, and it is essential, therefore, that any land that we have suitable for it should also be opened up for this purpose. If our dairying land is made available to settlers, I have no doubt that dairying will prove successful. I hope the Government will be able to build these two railways for the reasons I have stated. Wire netting supplies are badly needed, and I trust the Government will make use of every effort they can to secure supplies through the Federal Government. Applications would far exceed any supplies than could be made available. Every day I have inquiries from farmers with regard to wire netting with which to enclose their holdings. At present they can only grow a little wheat and keep a few cattle, as owing to the lack of wire netting with which to combat the dingoes they cannot make use of the feed they have by keeping sheep. Unless they can secure wire netting on reasonable terms they will have to leave their holdings unfenced. I hope the Government will follow out their bold policy, as outlined by the Premier to a deputation that waited upon him, of spending a considerable sum of money in the country districts. I understand that with the exception of an amount that will be spent in the metropolitan area most of the available funds will be spent in the country. It is intended to spend a quarter of a million pounds on the Electricity Department. No doubt the city is expanding, and the country will not oppose such an expenditure. If the Government can finance such a proposition they might go further, and electrify the railway system, to the benefit of the State in general. Such a thing would mean a tremendous saving as compared to the present system. I was opposed to the idea of the Victorian Government spending 11 million pounds on the electrification of their railways, but subsequent events proved that their advisers were right. The improvement there has been wonderful, and it is generally agreed that the results have justified the expenditure. It will take the Government of this State all their time to find the necessary capital to carry out their present obligations. A vast amount of money is involved in the group settlement scheme.

If they can find sufficient money to carry out the bold policy they have enunciated for the agricultural areas they will be doing well, and will earn the commendation of the people of the State. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON. H. A. STEPHENSON** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.40]: The Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor was very optimistic throughout. It could not be otherwise, when we take into consideration the wonderful improvements in the State's finances during the last three or four years. I agree with Mr. Kirwan when he says that the Speech does say a lot about which we already know, but very little concerning those things about which we would like to know. One of the first items mentioned refers to immigration. I am pleased that the Premier has signed the immigration agreement entered into with the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments. It is a great improvement on the last one, but is not nearly as generous as it might have been towards Western Australia, when we consider the circumstances and the general conditions. Great Britain, as was stated last year on good authority, has a surplus population of five millions. It also has an assured number of unemployed of a million and a quarter, who are costing the Imperial Government in sustenance and doles something like £80,000.-000 a year. One would have thought, therefore, that, having so much to gain and practically nothing to lose, the Imperial Government would have been prepared to provide the necessary money free of interest for at least five years. The money would have been well spent. After all, it would have been only a business transaction, always provided that reasonable conditions were carried out by the State. The present arrangement provides that some millions of money shall be advanced to the State at one per cent. As a business man, that appeals to me very much. Business people could do a great deal with money at one per cent. I should like to have half a million of it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why not become a group settler?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: No doubt the money we shall have to spend will do a great deal in the way of populating and developing this great and wonderful State. I congratulate the Government upon their determination to carry out the immigration

and land development policy of the late Government, and to keep rolling the ball that was set in motion by Sir James Mitchell.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They could not stop it.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Now I come to the financial position. I wish to refer to an address I delivered to the Perth Chamber of Commerce not two years ago upon this subject. I was not then a member of Parliament; that was one of the things furthest from my mind at the time. I refer to that address, because the opinion I then expressed is my opinion to-day. I am convinced it was based on sound ground. In that address I said:

There is a close analogy between the affairs of State and those of many commercial enterprises during the period of their infancy. Western Australia has, so to speak, erected an elaborate business establishment in the form of Parliamentary and administrative offices, schools, hospitals, and public buildings spread over a vast territory. It has put in an expensive plant in the shape of railways, harbour works, roads, and other public utilities which are necessary to modern existence.

I think every member will agree that that is true.

The provision of this establishment and plant was justified by the prospects of the State when they were undertaken, but it entailed an enormous overhead expenditure altogether out of proportion to the value of the work that we are getting out of them. A huge sum has to be found each year for interest and sinking fund, and the revenue falls so far short of meeting these charges that for years we have been making financial leeway. On our railways alone, in which 20 millions of capital are invested, we have made an average annual loss for the last seven years of £300.

That was seven years prior to 1923. The loss in those seven years was £2,100,000.

The war and the shrinkage in the gold yield have largely contributed to this unfortunate position. The mining industry, which for 20 years was the chief source of our prosperity, declined with unexpected rapidity. A business man confronted with a serious falling-off in the turnover of his most profitable department would naturally apply his energies to exploiting some new avenue of trading to compensate him for his loss. The State did likewise. It opened up the wheat areas of the eastern districts, and in normal circumstances agricultural development would, there is reason to believe, have kept pace with the decline in mining. Up to 1916 there was a rapid and almost uninterrupted progression in agriculture. Then the great war intervened, and the loss of man power was reflected in falling

production; and we are only now beginning to recover the lost ground. There can only be one remedy for the position into which we have drifted. A commercial house burdened with an expensive establishment and plant in excess of its needs must either realise its assets and cut its loss, or enlarge its trade to find profitable employment for its plant. The State cannot go into liquidation. Such economies in administration as it was possible to effect can have only a small influence in reducing the deficit. It must therefore increase its trade; that is, its production. There is a minimum below which the administrative staffs cannot be reduced, however small the volume of business to be transacted; and with the doubling or trebling of the State's activities the increased expenditure required would be comparatively small. Our existing railways are capable of dealing with an enormously increased volume of traffic; that traffic can be found only by adding to our production, and we can only add to our production by bringing population from overseas.

I think members will agree that our existing railways are capable of handling a very much greater traffic. That contention, since these remarks were made, has been borne out by events. During last year we have had carried over our railways something like 5,000,000 bushels more than we had in the previous year. That result was brought about by the vigorous land policy which was being pursued. Since this address was delivered, something like 300,000 acres of additional land have been cleared and cultivated, and have been practically the means of bringing about that extra 5,000,000 bushels of wheat. Three hundred thousand acres at an average of 12 bushels per acre would run into something like 4,000,000 bushels.

Granted that this is the only solution of our difficulties, the immigration and land settlement policy of Sir James Mitchell and his Government demands our heartiest support and co-operation. Captious and destructive criticism will not get us anywhere. If there are defects in administration—as defects there must necessarily be in the initial stages of an enterprise of such magnitude—we should not hesitate to indicate them. But it is our duty as commercial men, deeply concerned for the well-being and progress of the State, to seek to build up rather than to pull down.

One of the greatest curses we have had in this State for many years is captious and destructive criticism. Mr. Burvill remarked some little time ago that he had not heard any constructive criticism. As a business man and a citizen of this State, I declare that I have never heard any constructive

criticism in respect of the group settlement scheme entered into some years ago. We have had people outside saying, "I told you so, I knew what would happen;" but have they ever come along with a suggestion of any assistance, a suggestion that would better the position? Not one, so far as I know.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Did I make any suggestions?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: To-night the hon. member did, but he has been here for years, and has never yet put forward anything worthy of consideration.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are not in a position to say that.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Mistakes are always being made. A business man makes mistakes, or else he does not improve his business. I should like to refer to a little mistake which happened many years ago. I only mention it to show how mistakes can be made. When a Labour Government came into power some years ago, they were flushed with their success at the polls, and they decided to do all sorts of things for the benefit of their constituents. I am quite sure they meant well. One of the first things they did was to establish fish shops and butchers' shops. The next thing they did was to bring a shipload of fat bullocks to Fremantle, with a view to entering into the wholesale butchering business. They put up some of the bullocks to auction, but unfortunately the market was against them. Although they had brought these bullocks to Fremantle for the purpose of bursting up the meat ring which they imagined was in existence, when they found it was not possible to sell those bullocks at a profit, they put their heads together and decided—what? They had a property at Jandakot called the Bullrush Swamp, and they thought to themselves, "There is that swamp. We will send these fat cattle to our pasture at Bullrush Swamp, and wait until such time as the market comes our way." The cattle were from the warm climate and plentiful feed of the North. A few months later the Government thought it was time to put some of those fat cattle on the market. When they went out to Bullrush Swamp, however, they found that the crows had had most of the cattle, and that those which the crows had not eaten were too ill to come off the estate. The taxpayers had to meet that loss, about £4,000.

There were some 300 or 400 of the cattle, worth £16 per head when they came down. That was one little mistake. The intention was good enough, but the Government knew nothing about shrinkage of fat cattle. Then the "Kangaroo" came along. She was another mistake. She went round the world and made a lot of money, and a very good offer was made to the Government for the purchase of the vessel.

Hon. T. Moore: That offer was made to the Mitchell Government. Be honest about it.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I opened by stating that two or three mistakes had come to my mind.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You said you were going to put up something constructive.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: For the "Kangaroo" the Government were offered a very big price, but they refused to take it. They put her into dock in England, and spent several hundred thousand pounds on her, I think; I am not quite sure.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Several hundred thousand pounds?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Then they brought her out here, and she has been running at a loss ever since. When she becomes obsolete and has to be scrapped—and the time is not far off—the loss on her will be anything from a quarter of a million to half a million sterling. Now we come to the Fremantle dock, in which a quarter of a million of money was sunk. Was that the fault of the Fremantle members? Does the fact of a quarter of a million having been lost imply that Fremantle had no right to have a dock? No. It was purely a mistake—what in business is called an error of judgment. Even in things of that kind it is possible to make mistakes, and how much easier is it to make mistakes in a huge proposition like the group settlement scheme of this State!

The men in control of the government of Western Australia—

That refers to any Government, the present Government or the late Government—

are confronted with a formidable task. They have a vast territory—one-third of this great continent—to administer, with only a handful of people to carry the burden. Our main industries are handicapped by a tariff framed in the interests of Eastern States manufacturers, and we have only a small voice in framing the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth. Taxation is too high, and is stifling enterprise; too much of the money raised goes

to swell the Federal Treasury, and the State Government, upon whom falls the chief burden of rendering essential services to the people, is left with an inadequate revenue for the purpose. Until some more equitable financial arrangement is arrived at between the Commonwealth and the States, we cannot hope for any material reduction in State taxation. But with increased population and greater production, the load of taxation will be spread over a larger number of taxpayers.

I am pleased to mention, in that regard, that after I delivered this address the Commonwealth Government appointed a Royal Commission to deal with Western Australian disabilities under Federation.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. member suggest that that statement is in the Governor's Speech?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I am referring to—

The PRESIDENT: I thought we were discussing the Speech of the Governor.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Very well, Sir. I do not intend to quote any further from my address. With agricultural production we must have more extensive markets. Our local markets are indeed the best, but it will be some time before we overcome the requirements of the State in dairy products, upon which the group settlement farmers will mainly rely. We have not felt much benefit from the group settlements in relation to the production of dairy products.

Hon. T. Moore: They have been going for four years.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: According to the returns recently issued by the Government Statistician, we are still sending out something like £500,000 a year for butter. A large amount is also sent out for cheese, bacon, hams and foodstuffs of other descriptions. I am satisfied, however, that we shall commence producing those articles of food in the group settlements within the next year or two. Anyone with experience in the clearing of land such as we have in the South-West must realise the difficulties. I was pleased to hear Mr. Holmes tell us the other night that he was quite convinced that the land there is good and will grow anything. Owing to the heavily timbered nature of the country progress is slow, but there is no doubt in my mind that in the course of a few years we shall receive great benefit as the result of the dairying industry established in the group settlement areas. In my opinion within the next five or ten years we shall be producing all the butter, bacon and other

foodstuffs for which we now send out some £2,000,000 to the Eastern States annually. One cannot expect too much in so short a time as the groups have been in existence. We must get cows, make provision for feeding them and so on, and it all takes time.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We have grown the feed, but have not got the cows.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: So much the better. What I was afraid of, because of what I read in reports and so on, was that the land was so inferior that it would not grow anything. I know that the land is good, and it is pleasing to realise that we have been able to grow the feed. If we can do that, the rest is easy. We can get the cows and the work can proceed with advantage.

Hon. J. Duffell: Some excellent feed is grown there, as good as in the Eastern States.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The Governor's Speech refers to the improved trade conditions. I maintain that the improvement that has been noticed in trade, commerce, and industry has been directly and indirectly caused by the large sums of loan money expended in the State during the last few years. During the last five years 65 per cent. of the money has been loaned to farmers, and we are feeling the benefit of that form of investment through our railways and other public utilities. I intended to make a more extensive reference to land settlement. It has been remarked often that we have no more wheat land. From what I can learn from most reliable sources, we have thousands of acres of good wheat land in Western Australia still available for selection. I would like to refer to a scheme submitted by Mr. W. N. Hedges, which appealed to me. He advocated the survey of a large belt of land stretching from Southern Cross towards Esperance. He recommended cutting the land up into thousand-acre blocks and on each block two or three hundred acres were to be cleared and ploughed. In addition, a house was to be built, dams constructed, fencing and out-houses provided, all to be done by contract. When everything was ready settlers should be put on the land, and they would be in a position to produce a crop in the first year. His idea was that the work should be done by contract in large areas, so that the contractor would be able to get together a suitable plant with which to carry out such operations. The scheme is such a good one that I commend it to the Government and to members generally.

Hon. J. Duffell: We have had copies of it.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Then if hon. members will study it, and if they know anything about clearing the land and agricultural work generally, they will realise that it is an excellent pamphlet. I know something about farming and the clearing of land, and when I speak I am not beating the air. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [6.10]: I desire to associate myself with the expressions of regret regarding the death of the Hon. J. A. Greig and with the welcome extended to his successor, Mr. Glasheen. During the course of the debate optimistic speeches have been delivered, but very little has been said about the ordinary working man or the conditions confronting him in Western Australia. I propose to devote the major portion of my remarks to the problems that confront the working man to-day. I congratulate the Premier on his successful mission to London. A Labour Premier, above all others, should journey to the Old Land to mix with all classes of people and gain a definite impression of affairs as they exist there. I have no doubt that the Premier has gained considerably from his experiences there, and I believe that every member of Parliament should, if he could only make the trip for himself, go to Britain to see what is inspiring the minds of those seeking to improve the position, industrially and otherwise, in that part of the world, and also to gain a knowledge of the problems confronting the people there. If that were done, members would benefit individually by reason of such a trip. I believe that every public man should cultivate an international outlook. If members brought to bear on the affairs of the State and Commonwealth such an outlook it would help us more than anything else to an understanding of the world-wide problems, apart from anything we may have read in our own country. While much has been said about the Premier, nothing has been said about the work of the Acting Premier (Hon. W. C. Angwin).

Hon. J. Ewing: He did very well, everyone realises that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That emphasises the point that the present Administration is not a one-man Government. When the Premier took his departure from Perth he left a good

team in office, and we know that it is due to the sagacity and cautious administration of the Acting Premier that so much success was achieved during the last financial year. Although I have often thought that the Acting Premier was somewhat too cautious and pulled us down too rapidly when we were apt to fly in the clouds, we must admit that we have in that gentleman a very able Minister for Lands, who showed his capabilities as Acting Premier. I did not speak when the motion favouring the gold bonus was before the House, but I wish to express my gratification at Mr. Kirwan's motion having been agreed to. Although I do not know anything about gold mining, I had an opportunity of taking a trip through the goldfields and on to Leonora, Wiluna, Meekatharra, and thence back to Perth. Even to a layman the fact that there was a tremendous amount of work yet to be done must have appealed strongly. I had the privilege of travelling with one of the mining inspectors and gained much more from the trip than possibly other people did. I am satisfied from what I saw at Wiluna and elsewhere, that if the gold bonus is made available it will give a wonderful impetus to the gold mining industry. It is interesting to know that a young Fremantle pressman was the first person, I believe, to put up a good case in support of the gold bonus. He did that before the Disabilities Commission.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is quite true.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is pleasing to know that we have in the ranks of the Press such brainy and enthusiastic young men who are ready to step forward and present such a good case in the interests of the industry here. We have to thank Mr. Roy Lee—that is the name of the journalist I refer to—for putting such a splendid case in favour of the gold bonus before the Commission.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It was an instance of constructive criticism.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The speeches of hon. members seemed to indicate that they were satisfied with the work carried out by the Labour Government during the past year. The only point on which criticism appears to have been offered is with regard to the administration during the time of the hotel and restaurant employees' strike. I will refer to that point later on. If that is all that members can find to criticise the Government about it will be agreed that members of this

House, who are looked upon by a lot of people as cautious and conservative—

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Quite wrongly regarded as such.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It will be agreed that members of this Chamber recognise the good work that has been done by the Labour Government.

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

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I was referring to the good repute of the Labour Government and suggesting that members here should meet the legislation sent up to them by the Government in a courageous Australian spirit. I recognise that conflicting opinions prevail regarding the legislation to be placed before us by the Government. Every member would support it if he thought it safe to do so. I am old enough in public life to know that there are very few conscious hypocrites. Most men who hold pronounced ideas on legislative proposals hold them seriously, and while they retain their present views on life generally, they are not disposed to venture upon any progressive legislation on the ground that it would retard the progress of the State. When the Labour Government enjoy the good repute of the Commonwealth and of overseas authorities, and send to us legislation designed to make for progress, we should receive it in a liberal spirit. If members would only do that, we could look for good results from the present session. This Chamber possesses enormous power, more power in fact than does the House of Lords, upon whose constitution our constitution is based. As the power of the House of Lords has been restricted in late years, members of this Chamber should act accordingly and should not do everything possible to prevent progressive legislation being enacted.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But are we not a very progressive Chamber?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The hon. member may think so but a lot of people do not.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I am surprised.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Several members have expressed satisfaction at the progress of the State, the buoyancy of the revenue, the prosperity of the farming industry, and the recovery of the pastoral areas from the drought, but there are grave industrial problems confronting us. It is the duty of

the Government to design legislation to meet those problems. The amending Arbitration Bill is an attempt to do so. I think every member here recognises that the Minister for Labour, who is in charge of that Bill, is without peer in Australian industrial life as a student of economics and industrial requirements. No man can explain the industrial position more ably than he can; nor is there any man with greater experience of it than he possesses. He can be trusted, and if that is so, it is up to us to give him every opportunity to place the amending Arbitration Bill on the statute-book. That measure has been thoroughly discussed in both Houses, and I hope there will not be a sheaf of amendments such as we had last session which, by their very number, practically killed the Bill.

Hon. J. Ewing: Will it be the same Bill this session?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We shall see. Notwithstanding the State's progress and financial prosperity, we have a grave unemployed problem. In 1922, during the Mitchell Administration, some 3,000 migrants, mostly young men, came to this State, and ever since that stream of migrants poured in, we have had a serious unemployed problem. To-day it is acute. Even last summer, when there was so much work in the country, there was unemployment in Perth. While we shall always receive from the Old Country a proportion of "hard-doers" whom any Government would be grateful to get rid of, even their presence does not account for the acuteness of the unemployed trouble. We have to go further afield to find the solution. We have a definite unemployed problem in the country that we must endeavour to solve. A report was recently made, not by a member of the Labour Party but by the secretary of the New Settlers' League, who informed his association that after a tour of the farming districts he had found the position very serious. He said that never before during his official connection with the organisation had he found the position so bad. Everywhere were to be seen great numbers of ordinary farm hands and of skilled clearers out of work, and in their places farmers were employing southern Europeans. I do not wish to be associated with any statement regarding the immigration of Europeans that might be misunderstood. There are many industries, especially the grape and wine industry, in which southern and other Euro-

peans could do valuable development work in this State. There is any amount of room for people who would engage in such work. But I do not think we should countenance any attempt to utilise southern Europeans because they are cheap labour. There is no question that is one of the causes of the present trouble. They are being used all over the farming districts because they are cheap. It is satisfactory to know that the Government are trying to deal with the position. For two or three years there has been a constant movement of young men to and from the country. I refer not only to migrants but to young men who, owing to lack of secondary industries, cannot be absorbed. This constant moving about represents a great economic waste. The solution of this problem lies with the farmers, the labour organisations and the Government. We have to raise the standard of living of the average farm hand. I am not referring to a large number of farmers who give fair wages and good conditions to their men, and who retain their employees. Such men never have to send to the metropolitan area for farm hands. As soon as vacancies occur, there is a rush on the part of farm hands to fill them, because the employers are known to be good. But the greater proportion of farm employers do not recognise a fair standard of living for their men. I say that after eight years' experience in the farming districts. The results of this are even reflected in our prisons. For some time I have been a member of the Indeterminate Sentence Board at Fremantle, and I have noticed that there is an undue proportion of migrants amongst the prisoners in that gaol. Even allowing for men who have previously committed crimes and have managed to creep into the State, there is still too big a proportion of migrants. The cause of that I attribute to lack of employment and to bad living and working conditions in the country.

Hon. A. Burvill: Plenty of farmers cannot now afford to keep men, though they could do so a few years ago.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If a farmer cannot afford to pay his employees or to give them decent living conditions, he should not employ them.

Hon. A. Burvill: Farmers are not employing them now, although formerly they were able to do so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I should like to refer to Clause 5 of the Imperial agreement relating to the employment of migrants. It is a legacy from the previous Government that the present Government have to shoulder. It reads—

The State Government agree to use their best efforts to secure that settlers are treated fairly in all respects while in private employ. That is a solemn agreement entered into by the previous Government, and all succeeding Governments have to honour it. While from the standpoint of a Nationalist Government that burden might be light, when it is imposed upon a Labour Administration, it becomes serious, and the Government must exert all their efforts to solve the problem. There is only one way in which to raise the standard of living and increase the wages of men, and that is by the methods employed by industrial workers for the last 20 or 30 years. They have had to form unions. In order to avoid the disastrous consequences of strikes they have had to refer to the Arbitration Acts that have been passed in the various States. I am of opinion that until the Government, the workers and the farmers recognise that the only way to deal with this problem is by arbitration or by round-table conferences, no good result will be achieved. I am sure there is a sufficient number of good employers in the State who will be only too glad to confer with the Government or the Labour organisations with a view to bringing about that desirable end. It is the only way by which we can get over this great economic waste that has been going on for some years. Only the other day at the Primary Producers Conference one farmer spoke of the awful result of unionism, thus showing that he had a mistaken view of the position. If a worker is protected and is given a fair standard of living, efficiency on the farm must follow. If Parliament can solve the difficulty on the lines that I have suggested, our fame as legislators will live for a long time. It is useless bringing out young migrants and treating them in the manner that we are doing at the present time. I would impress upon members that many of the young men who are coming here have no means, that in the Old Country they live, a good number of them, in slums and that the majority are descendants of the working classes—people like myself. I can quote myself as a typical instance of a son of working people. Those people have always been used to a certain standard of living, and that

standard compared with the treatment they receive on farms in Western Australia, is ahead of the conditions to which they come. It would not cost a farmer very much to do what I suggest, and to recognise that when the farm hand has done his work he should be treated as an equal and not as a hireling. Often a farm hand is obliged to sleep in a shed and to do his own washing and generally to look after himself. He should be recognised as a boarder and treated accordingly. It is admitted that farmers look after their stock very well and then get good results. If they treated their men in a similar way by giving them decent living conditions, the result would be reflected in the general work performed by the employees. That must be done before we can attempt to solve the existing problem. I do not mind how the result is brought about, whether it be by means of the Arbitration Court or by round-table conferences, so long as it is brought about. Then we shall have material progress. It is the living conditions of the present day that drive these young men from the country into the towns. I am not in sympathy with the tales that are often told about the city attractions. I have lived in both town and country and I assure members that once a man has properly imbibed the bush atmosphere, a short time in the city will satisfy him that the country is the place that he should never leave. We have no room for them in the country and it will be a long time yet before secondary industries will have developed sufficiently to permit us to absorb many more people in the city. There are a few words I should like to say with regard to the group settlement scheme. Reference has been made to the constant drain from this State to the Eastern States. I do not wish to reiterate all that has been said in this direction, but I do desire to refer to the matter in the hope of being able to suggest by which it can be reduced. The remarks I have to offer may enable us to get a proper perspective of the group settlement scheme. Our imports of dairy produce exceed a million sterling and last year's increase over that of the previous year was no less than £63,621. That is a very serious state of affairs. As Mr. Stephenson pointed out, butter imports increased last year by £33,148, the total having been £529,875. Bacon and hams accounted for £217,779, an increase of £22,052, and milk £122,800. The latter shows a decrease of £72,416. I noticed a reference in the re-



port of the Education Department on the subject of a pure milk supply to scholars, and the reference was dismissed with five lines. I have a grievance against the Education Department for the flippancy manner in which they have treated the pure milk scheme.

Hon. J. Duffell: Have you read the report of the Royal Commission on milk supply?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. There are over 35,000 children attending the schools in the metropolitan-suburban area, and they would consume, under the scheme, about 499,000 gallons per annum.

Hon. J. Duffell: Where is it all to come from?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We shall get it very shortly from the Peel Estate. That quantity would keep exactly 70 group settlers in a good livelihood, for it would mean that they would be supplying half a pint of milk per day to the 35,000 children in the metropolitan-suburban area.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Why confine it to the metropolitan area?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I would like to see every school in the State participate, but what I wish to emphasise is that the Education Department do not appear to recognise the value of the scheme. A conference was held last winter at about which time hundreds of gallons of milk were being wasted daily. The department did then issue a circular, but it by no means met the position.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: If it is necessary for the metropolitan area, it is still more necessary for the goldfields.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I would like to see the scheme applied to every school in the State. But a beginning has to be made. A number of people did try last year to make a start in the metropolitan area. In Fremantle we were signally successful. No contracts were made in the metropolitan area and the scheme was practically neglected by the education authorities. Although there is any amount of testimony to prove that in the infants' schools in the metropolitan area a half pint of milk daily per child will make a wonderful difference for the better in that child, I have never seen so much support given to a scheme by parents as is the case at Fremantle in connection with what is being done there now in that direction. The average parent is anxious to give the children a chance, and although

when the scheme was first set in motion there were various inquiries from individuals and societies, particularly women's organisations as to how the indigent children were likely to fare. Some of the parents are dependent upon the State for sustenance, but recognising the value of the scheme that was set in motion, they found the little money with which to give it support. It is much better to carry on work of this kind than to spend money on so much useless rubbish that we are accustomed to import from the Eastern States.

Hon. J. Duffell: Who launched this scheme? It was a good one, whoever was responsible for it.

Hon. G. Potter: To the hon. member who is speaking now must be given credit for a large measure of the success of the scheme.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: For the information of Mr. Duffell I would like to mention that a company is being formed, and will probably be in operation by next season, for the purpose of carrying on similar work in Perth. All the difficulties that have in the past beset the distribution of pure milk will, it is hoped, be swept away. Up to date scientific opinion is strongly in favour of milk being given to children as an article of food. When we read of the immense drain from this to the other States for the purchase of dairy products, we should feel ashamed of our past neglect of the great possibilities that exist here.

Hon. J. Duffell: Are you aware that imported bacon is being retailed to-day at ½d. per lb. less than it can be produced locally?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I cannot credit that.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is a fact.

Hon. G. Potter: That is consistent with Eastern States dumping.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I recognise that a bacon factory in the Eastern States is able to crush a small factory here, but if we tackle the problem properly, our bacon and ham industry should be able to compete with those of the East.

Hon. J. Duffell: The position here is not brought about by a shortage of bacon. It costs ½d. a lb. more to produce it here.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We should be able to cope with that. We should consider that annual drain to the Eastern States for dairy products of over £1,000,000, in relation to the group settlement scheme. The report of the Group

Settlement Commission is a valuable document, and I do not agree with Mr. Ewing's remarks upon it. On the other hand, I congratulate Mr. Willmott on his attitude towards that report, and I concur with his judgment. An outstanding feature of the report is its condemnation of the sustenance system and a demand that it should be supplanted by piecework. The statement of the Minister for Labour that group settlement must be made to succeed is a sane one, and will meet with general approval. One feature of the report was touched upon by Mr. Stewart, and deserves close consideration: I refer to the evidence given by the Conservator of Forests. Mr. Kessell disclosed a state of affairs that should not be tolerated, and Mr. Stewart made a good point when he said that the question of timber reservation should be brought to finality. Mr. Kessell's evidence before the Commission was not contradicted, and so must be allowed to stand. It demonstrates that the Government should not encroach upon our prime timber forests. I am of opinion that the sooner the wrangle between the Lands Department and the Forests Department ceases and some understanding is arrived at and our forests dedicated, the better it will be for the State. Taking Mr. Kessell's view, it is a serious mistake to put in settlement where it would be of greater advantage to leave the timber standing. Here are some questions asked of Mr. Kessell, the Conservator of Forests, by the Royal Commissioners, and Mr. Kessell's answers there-to—

3242. By the Chairman: There are no other reserves but water supply and timber reserves?—The Forests Act provides that classifications of all country which may come under the term "prime timber country" should be made with a view to dedicating State forests, which were to be inalienable timber lands, kept for the raising of timber, unless Parliament decided otherwise, and timber reserves which were to be held until the timber had been cut off. With a few exceptions there have been no State forests set apart and no timber reserves made under the Forests Act. There is merely an arrangement between the two departments. We agree with the Lands Department that certain land is prime timber country, and that certain adjoining country should be used for settlement. The process of whittling away the forest then commences. They get their area for settlement, but we do not get the forests dedicated. A small area of 200 acres of karri timber may be of no use to us because it could not be economically worked. We have agreed to setting aside fairly large tracts for timber

and other tracts for settlement. The settlement proceeds, but the Government will not dedicate the intervening forest, and consequently when they want a few blocks the forest may be whittled away. We do not know where this will end. Take the Northcliffe area, for instance: no good purpose was to be served by reserving very small patches of timber and holding them as reserves. It is necessary to work large areas on a face. The surveyors of the Lands Department subdivide Crown lands, selecting that suitable for agriculture, and we have our own classification plan. On this particular plan (plan produced) the land coloured red is timber country and seems a fair enough classification. We agreed that the land marked green should be taken for settlement. When I put it up that the red should be dedicated to State forests, no action is taken, because the Lands Department say, "we may want more." Before head office knows anything about it, part of our red country may be merged into some group, and everyone says, "We are very sorry, but we cannot shift them."

3243. By Hon. W. D. Johnson: Has the red country been absorbed by the groups?—No, but it has not been dedicated as a State forest. In some cases there has been an overlapping in the surveying, and some of our blocks go. The Lands Department get their country, but ours is still open for selection.

3257. By the Chairman: The conditions you have explained suggest that the Forests Act is a dead letter?—The Act is not a dead letter, but one section of it is. In my annual report for the last financial year I stated:—"Forestry cannot be effectively or economically practised if it is not known from day to day whether the interests of the forester or of the settler are to be paramount over any given area." That is the position we are in.

3258. What area is held up from settlement on account of timber and forest reserves?—The proposed State forests represent 2,500,000 acres comprising the following sections:—jarrah, 2,330,000 acres, of which about 2,000,000 acres would be prime jarrah forest country; karri 149,000 acres; tingle, 6,680 acres; and tuart 5,500 acres.

I hope that before the end of the year action will be taken to dedicate our prime forests. Mr. Kessell said that in Europe and America 25 per cent. of the forest areas are dedicated to reforestation. The forest area for the Commonwealth is considered by foresters in conference to be 24½ million acres, our share being three million acres, which has been cut down to 2½ million acres. On that evidence it is sincerely to be hoped that definite action will be taken by the Government without further delay. Although I agree with many of the Group Settlement Commission's recommendations, there are others with which I am not in ac-

cord. The evidence and the report should be invaluable to the departmental officials and the Government in the future management of the scheme. Even when the Royal Commission was sitting, its work was very useful to the officials, who were following up the evidence and trying to remedy obvious defects in the scheme. Although the Commission consisted of competent and fair men of sound judgment and undoubted ability, I think the personnel suffered from having no member who was in a position to adopt the international or cosmopolitan view. As a result, the Commission did not grasp the point of view of the migrants.

Hon. T. Moore: I spent a couple of years amongst them in the Old Country.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That may be so, but in this new country the hon. member did not have an opportunity to take the migrants' viewpoint, or alternatively, if he had the opportunity, he does not appear to have seized it. If the Commission had been imbued with the cosmopolitan significance of the scheme, they would not have commented either upon the inexperience of the migrants, or the attitude of their wives.

Hon. T. Moore: We said nothing detrimental to the wives of the migrants.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Commission suggested that some of the migrants' wives were driving their husbands off the groups. My experience is that a woman on the land is the chief influence keeping her husband there; because a woman is prepared to make big sacrifices for her children, and she hangs on and wins through largely on that quality. Clauses 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Commission's report deal with the migrants and their womenfolk. I disagree as to the inexperience of the migrants. The South-West has not been properly developed, although its development has been attempted in all manner of ways. Usually the average settler finishes up by working for wages and merely putting in week-ends on his block. So it can be suggested that all previous efforts to settle the South-West have failed. I do not think the migrant has made any greater failure of it than did the Australian settler before him.

Hon. T. Moore: The migrant is not settled yet; he is still on sustenance.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: On that question, it will be admitted that the migrant arriving in this country has not a true knowledge of the Australian value of labour and estimate of wages. He may arrive at Fre-

mantle and meet a lumper who is earning £7 a week, for the time being. He then meets other unskilled labourers in Perth who are getting £4 5s. or £4 15s. a week. He has no knowledge of the value of wages. He then goes on to a group. My contention is that he is more likely to be enticed from a group by what he considers to be the high wages ruling in Perth than an Australian would be. An Australian group settler knows by experience the actual value of wages.

Hon. A. Burvill: According to the report 10 per cent. of the Australian group settlers left.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not think so. The total number of assisted migrants on groups who left was equal to 29,223 per cent., and the number of dismissals was barely 1 per cent. All things considered, when the migrant settlers are compared with the Australian settlers in the matter of activity they show up well. In the Group Settlement report statistics are given from which I have worked out the following percentages—percentage of assisted English migrants who have left groups, to total settlers 29.223; dismissals, barely 1 per cent.; Australian group settlers who have left groups, to total settlers 37 per cent.; dismissals, nearly 2 per cent.; Imperial soldiers who have left 37.7; dismissals 4.2; Australian A.I.F. settlers who have left, 39 per cent.; dismissals 3.6 per cent.

Hon. T. Moore: The foreman has no power to dismiss.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Neither has he in other industries.

Hon. J. Duffell: He can make a recommendation.

Hon. T. Moore: Settlers have been put back after their dismissal has been recommended.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is now recognised in the civil service and other industries—

Hon. T. Moore: Is the civil service an industry?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: —that men have a right to appeal to the appeal board. Within the last six months the Government have appointed appeal boards for various employees, who had nothing of the kind before. It is not reported that these have undermined the authority of those in command. The migrant should also have the right of appeal against his dismissal. Even a farmer under the I.A.B. has a right to ap-

peal to headquarters against the report of an inspector, and very often the appeal is taken notice of. I have heard Mr. Moore, Mr. Holmes, and others refer to the calibre of our migrants.

Hon. T. Moore: I have not found any fault with them, and I must ask that the hon. member withdraw that remark.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure the hon. member will withdraw it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do so. Many people hold the view that a migrant is not able to battle against the conditions in the way the Australian settler can do.

Hon. T. Moore: That is a different thing.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Will the hon. member agree to that?

Hon. T. Moore: At different occupations.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not admit it. If it were true higher wages should be paid to our skilled clearers. So long as a man has ordinary strength and not too much brains, he can do any ordinary unskilled labour.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not have the brains?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If he had the brains he would not be doing that class of work.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is a reflection on the other fellow.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Not at all.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What did you mean by your interjection that men would do better on the land than off it?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am speaking of unskilled labour. Any average man with average strength can do average unskilled work.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is an average statement, is it not?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I believe that 70 per cent. of the migrants that come here with a desire to make good are succeeding. The figures I have quoted show that they compare more than favourably with Australian unskilled workers. The migrants should not have his character taken away. He will make good despite the difficulties that lie in his path. Mr. McLarty's evidence can be relied upon, for he is an experienced man and highly qualified. In question 1895 of the report of the Commission the following appears:—

Seeing that the cost of clearing under the group settlement system is so much higher, what particular advances do you consider are to be gained from that system as compared with the settlement of individual settlers under the auspices of the Agricultural Bank?—Past

experience has shown that individual settlement has been extremely slow and heart-breaking to the settlers. The difficulties of settlement on the land in the South-West are such as to deter men from undertaking it as an individual responsibility. It was considered that that difficulty could be overcome by men working in groups. Personally, I have not the slightest doubt that the group system will be the solution of the settlement of the South-West. That has always been a problem, and no material progress has been made in land settlement there during the last 20 years. In my opinion that has been entirely due to the impossibility of individual settlers undertaking the task unless they were men possessed of special qualifications. Group conditions remove the isolation that is a material factor in the contentment of the settler. Co-operative efforts in this heavily timbered country give them a much better opportunity of making homes in a shorter period than in the case of individual effort. There is no question about the advantages of working under group conditions as compared with individual conditions.

Hon. J. Duffell: He is not far wrong.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Mitchell Government went further than any experimental industrialists would have gone. There is no doubt men work better in company than alone, but no experienced clearers would sanction a group of 20 working together. The experience in the group settlement shows how unwise that was. I am talking of this question from a non-party point of view. My experience has been in favour of groups of three men, and there is a great deal of evidence in the report supporting this. Three men can do magnificent work in clearing operations, and sooner or later the Government will have to adopt that principle. I believe it will prove the solution of the trouble. When the I.A.B. started operations I was on the land, and was unfortunately forced to come under it. My experience was that the Labour Government, while deserving every credit for launching the scheme, put forward one which comprised many difficulties. It remained for the Wilson Government to alter the system, and make it more workable than it had been. The Mitchell Government started the group settlement scheme, and I believe the Labour Government, with the experience that has been derived, will administer the scheme better than did the previous Government. This is no reflection upon the Mitchell Government.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is fair comment.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Mr. McLarty gave certain evidence concerning the soldier settlement scheme, and it will help to restore the

migrants' reputation. Questions 1908/9 are as follows:—

Can we assume that the present group settler is in a better position than those settled under the soldier settlement scheme?—Yes, inasmuch as they are always under control and supervision.

Had that land been available for the migrant settler under group conditions, do you think you would have had better results with the land than you have had with it as a soldier settlement?—I do, for the reason that the migrant settlers would have been under close control. Better results would certainly have been achieved.

Hon. A. Burvill: The system is not perfect yet.

Hon. J. Duffell: We are making progress.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Reference has been made to the Brooklands estate. Question 1907 is as follows:—

Has the soldier settlement on the Brooklands estate been successful?—It was an unsatisfactory settlement, due to the inexperience of the settlers. It is true they were Australian soldiers but their experience was limited.

No matter whether we are Australians or migrants the settlement of the land has to be carried out by inexperienced men. Many mistakes have been made as has been shown by the report of the Royal Commission on the Peel Estate, but if the Government profit by all this experience and the Government officials act accordingly I think the South-West will be successfully settled. When Mr. Holmes was speaking of the North-West he made out a good case for something being done for that part of the State. Speaking as the result of a trip I made from Carnarvon through to Mullewa some 18 months ago, I say that unquestionably every endeavour should be made to push forward settlement in the North and also railways in the unsettled portions of the wheat belt, and that to this end we should take every advantage of the magnificent offer made by the Imperial Government. Indeed, I consider that the Government should push forward development in every part of the State, having regard to the enormous cost of settlement in the South-West. There is a definite land hunger in Western Australia. At Fremantle there are numbers of men, including returned soldiers, who have been trying for months, some for as long as a year, to get wheat lands. Therefore the Government should seize the opportunity offered by the Imperial agreement. I was pleased to hear Mr. Holmes say that he thought the Colonial

Secretary would do everything to help the settlers and pastoralists in the North-West. The proposed legislation to establish labour exchanges would help to solve the unemployment problem, and to do away with the difficulty of men in the country finding jobs. I am glad that the Government have decided upon that forward step. It is a matter of regret to me, however, that prison reform is not mentioned in the Governor's Speech. Mr. Sampson, in another place, has made a great point of this matter. The question is one that we cannot afford to neglect. True, we have an up-to-date prison system in Western Australia; but there is an enormous waste of labour and much degradation of prisoners going on by reason of the fact that convicted persons are locked up and prevented from doing any useful work. In the Old World there is a strong argument against the employment of prison labour, but there is so much to be done in this State that prisoners ought to be given agricultural or reforestation work, at wages or whatever they may be called: some return should be given them for their labour. In that way prisoners could reimburse the State the expense incurred in their conviction and detention. My desire is that prisoners should be given economic work. As regards prison farms and reformatory prisons New Zealand is much ahead of us. Upon being brought into close touch with prisoners one loses one's preconceived ideas concerning them, ideas obtained from reading. One recognises then that every effort should be made to prevent first offenders, and especially young men who have committed such offences as embezzlement or theft or forgery, from going to gaol at all. In New Zealand there is provision whereby an employer may take back a first offender, or another employer may give him a job, whereupon the time of the sentence is served in employment. That is a splendid idea, and we should imitate it. It is a pity to see a fine young man who has made one mistake brought into contact with the gaol atmosphere. Even if he is sent to a reformatory prison, he is apt to feel that his character is irretrievably lost, and so he goes forth an enemy to society. I believe in reforming prisoners rather than punishing them. Undoubtedly there are numbers of men who must be segregated, particularly men who have committed revolting crimes; but 60 per cent. of offenders could be treated on what are known as

reformatory farms. Reformatory prisoners should be given a chance to come back into society and make good. Although the system in Fremantle gaol is splendid—many people think it is too good for the prisoners—the reformatory prison is practically a gaol within a gaol, and so the officials have not the opportunity to carry the latest and best regulations into full effect. I regret that the Governor's Speech does not contain a proposal to provide this urgent need in our prison system. I am glad the Government have decided to take advantage of the Imperial Act and replace the "Bambra" and the "Eucla." Notwithstanding Mr. Stephenson's remarks, we do want a white fleet on our coast. I would be very pleased if we could cut out the unsatisfactory service now operating. I wish also to refer to the Traffic Act passed last session. In connection with that piece of legislation a serious mistake was made, and it is pleasing to know that the mistake is admitted on all sides. A grave injustice was done to proprietors of horse-driven vehicles. In fact, it was rendered impossible for many owners of such vehicles to continue operations. No one in particular is to blame for the mistake, but a curious feature is that the schedule, which the Minister himself admits is altogether too high, was framed by a select committee of another place, and that the majority of the members of that committee were Country Party representatives. It looks as if they did not bother much who paid the bill, so long as they did not pay it. Farmers and sandalwood cutters were exempted, and the whole burden was thrown upon proprietors of horse-driven vehicles in towns. However, there will be an opportunity to rectify the mistake when the amending measure comes forward. Another matter of outstanding interest is the Government's decision to commence the building of the Point Heathcote reception home. The soldiers' mental home is also in course of construction. Compared even with our prison system, our lunacy administration is very much behind the times. That is peculiarly undesirable, because it affects people who cannot help themselves. With the exception of the United States, it is a world-wide complaint that administration relating to mental patients is years behind the times. However, I am glad that a distinct improvement is being effected, and I take this opportunity of congratulating the Leader of the House,

who has charge of lunacy administration. Unfortunately lunacy reform, like many other urgent matters, could not be dealt with last year. It is a sacred duty of the Government, a duty that must be discharged, to make the condition of those unfortunate people, who are drawn from all classes, as easy as possible. We have a long way to go in order to bring the Claremont institution up to the standard it should reach. The salary of the chief physician at the institution is altogether too small. I am not satisfied with the present administration, and I do not think the problems at Claremont will be solved until the Government have the courage to appoint an alienist at a very much higher salary than that being paid to the present occupant of the position. We cannot expect to get a skilled alienist, a physician who has devoted his life to the study of insanity, except at a handsome salary. The present remuneration of £900 per annum is not sufficient to attract and retain a competent man. All sorts of people, including delegates of representative bodies, have expressed themselves as utterly dissatisfied with the present administration of the asylum. I make mention of that circumstance because I believe that no improvement can be effected until we take, in this respect, the same stand as the Minister for Works took with regard to the position of Engineer-in-Chief, and offer a large salary and obtain a highly competent man. I do not wish to sound a parochial note, but I must give expression to the urgent needs of the constituency I represent. In dealing with Fremantle requirements, I do not believe in adopting the parish pump tone at all. Notwithstanding what has been said in this Chamber about the enormous Government expenditure at Fremantle, we have to face the fact that the harbour is there and that a great shipping trade is being done, and, further, that Fremantle is the nearest port to the capital of Western Australia. We should emulate the example of our forebears, who 27 years ago constructed the Fremantle harbour. We should now make preparations for future activities there. I am a firm believer in the principle which has been enunciated here that each port should receive its geographical trade, and certainly I do not want to see Fremantle boosted at the expense of other ports.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is what is being done at present.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I want to see the harbour equipped to provide for the liners and big ships that come there at present. With the construction of the Brookton-Armadale railway, the legitimate trade of Fremantle will be greatly increased. It is our duty, therefore, to make our plans so that future citizens will not have reason to complain of our lack of initiative and foresight in an endeavour to provide for the trade of future years. Unfortunately there has been a rift in the lute with reference to the Fremantle dock question. I do not think there was a dock in either Sourabaya or Singapore 25 years ago. Certainly there was no dock at Sourabaya. With business acumen, however, the Dutch Government recognised the increase in trade along the Javanese coast and built a large floating dock at Sourabaya for the accommodation of ships visiting that port. If it was business-like for the Dutch Government to do that, it should apply equally to us. Twenty-five years ago ships had to go to the Old Country to be reconditioned; to-day they can be re-conditioned at Sourabaya. Under existing conditions the shipping schedule along the North-West coast is hung up at times for long periods because our boats have to remain at Sourabaya to be overhauled. I was marooned at Carnarvon for some considerable time owing to the "Bambra" being held up because of the shipping congestion at Sourabaya. If it is good enough for the Dutch Government to prepare for their trade by providing docking facilities, it should be good enough for the Government of Western Australia. Notwithstanding that grave mistakes have been made and much money lost in the past, I do not lay the blame at the door of any individual. I think it was bad luck and misfortune; I would not attribute it to any engineer. Fremantle must have a dock, and although there are many other activities requiring the attention of the Government, I would fail in my duty if I did not point out the necessity for a dock at Fremantle. The question of the Fremantle bridges must be taken into consideration, but I think the two Ministers in the Cabinet, who come from the Fremantle area, are well aware of our requirements, and will see to it that our legitimate needs receive attention. There is necessity

for considerable repairs in connection with our Fremantle schools. Even those repairs and additions that were deemed necessary during the time Mr. Ewing was Minister for Education have not been attended to. I remember going with him to one school and he agreed that the renovations were necessary.

Hon. J. Ewing: Which school was that?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The school at Richmond.

Hon. J. Ewing: The Minister for Education will give you money for that work.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We hope to receive our due share of the funds available this year for that purpose. I believe that the action of the Government in appointing a factory superintendent at the State Implement Works was fully justified. I never fail to boast the work of that institution, and machinery has been turned out there that will compare favourably with the output anywhere else in the world. I am not exaggerating when I say that. With the advent of the factory superintendent I believe that the standard of some of the output will be improved, and I hope to see the works extended. I would like to mention the splendid work performed there in the construction of the big three-ton luffing crane which is to be placed in commission shortly. Taking into consideration the disadvantages under which the Implement Works labour, the economical construction of that crane is a matter for congratulation.

Hon. H. Seddon: The trouble is that the works are run as a general engineering establishment, instead of as implement works.

Hon. H. GRAY: That job was good enough for anything. Surely it is better to do the work there than to send £6,000 outside the State.

Hon. H. Seddon: The trouble is that the works are expected to compete with engineering firms.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I will conclude my rather lengthy remarks by referring to the main objection raised by some members to the Government's policy. The only point to which serious objection was taken was the attitude of the Government during the hotel and restaurant employees' strike. I can dismiss the contentions of Mr. Holmes by saying that I am certain he is not acquainted with the true facts. He has merely taken the published reports.

Hon. E. H. Harris: He said he was there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I interjected with a question as to whether he was there and he replied in the negative, adding that he was not an agitator.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You misunderstood him.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I was in the streets during the strike and I did not see anything that warranted the exaggerated statements appearing in the Press. I have had a long experience in industrial matters and, in my opinion, the prestige of the police has been increased, owing to the action of the Government during the strike. The fact is that up to that time the police had always taken part against the workers in industrial troubles under instructions from the Government.

Hon. J. Ewing: You ought not to say that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is my experience.

Hon. A. Burvill: It is a bit too strong.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is true.

Hon. J. Ewing: No, it is not.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: At any rate, that is my opinion and experience. In this instance, the police were absolutely neutral. When Mr. Brown interjected that it had been a bloodless strike, Dr. Saw retored, "Bloodless, owing to the anæmic action of the Government." I am sorry Dr. Saw is not present because I wished to ask him whether he was serious when he made that interjection. I thought that spirit had died out of our public life.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Dr Saw said that it was bloodless in the sense that the actions of the Government had been anæmic. He did not mean it in the way you infer.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is the only construction I could put on the interjection.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What he meant was that the Government were anæmic in their attitude towards the strike.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes, but he said it was bloodless, because of the anæmic action of the Government.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does not that bear out what I say? He did not mean what you inferred. He did not mean that he wished blood had been spilt.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: At any rate, I think mine is a commonsense interpretation to be placed upon the interjection.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I think you are quite wrong.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If hon. members say I am wrong, I shall be pleased to acknowledge it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I am sure Dr. Saw did not mean it in the way you infer.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I desired to refer to this matter because I could not believe that any public man would make such a statement. I hope Dr. Saw will take the opportunity to explain that interjection. My experience is that owing to the Governments of the day in the past not understanding the working class conditions, they always used the police against the strikers and so created trouble. That state of affairs does not now exist, and I sincerely believe that in the last industrial trouble the prestige of the police was increased and the man in the street has now a greater respect for the police force than ever before. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 18th August, 1925.*

	Page
Question: Fruit Marketing legislation ...	315
Fencing, Federal assistance ...	316
Bills: Divorce Act Amendment, 1a ...	316
Cottlesloe Municipal Beach Trust, 1a ...	316
Address-in-reply, eighth day ...	316

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

### QUESTION—FRUIT MARKETING LEGISLATION.

Mr. SAMPSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:—Is the statement relating to fruit marketing published in the "Mt. Barker District News," and which appears in this morning's issue of the