

Works, and the employment to our own people.

The Minister for Works: The State Implement Works have turned out 100 ploughs this week.

Mr. LUTEY: I am glad to hear it; but if there had been any properly prepared scheme in connection with group settlement, the State Implement Works would have got the order for all this machinery. The existing state of affairs indicates mismanagement, or lack of patriotism to Western Australia, or perhaps even antagonism to Western Australia. Our secondary industries must be looked after, and if a man is disloyal to Western Australia as regards her secondary industries that fact outweighs his loyalty in what is perhaps an interested direction. I sincerely trust the matter to which I have drawn attention will be rectified. I am glad that already, under a Labour Government, there has been an alteration, and that ploughs for group settlers are now being supplied from our State works. There are many other questions I might touch on, but I will leave them aside this evening. I hope the Government will have money available to carry on the development of the South-West, and also development throughout Western Australia. The best means of advancing this State is the introduction of an adequate tax on unimproved land values. The expenditure on the groups alone means huge unearned increment going into the pockets of land owners in the South-West, and that will continue as the expenditure goes on. We must put an end to that evil somehow. In Sussex 12 months ago a friend of mine bought a block of land for £33. To-day he would not sell it for £100. The value of property in that district has advanced immensely, and this has been brought about solely by the expenditure of public funds. An adequate tax on unimproved land values would benefit the country enormously by enabling the people generally to share in the enhancement of land values caused by public expenditure.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.19 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 19th August, 1924.*

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

### QUESTION—WILUNA BORES, ASSAYS.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Colonial Secretary: To relieve the anxiety of the goldfields community regarding the progress and assays of the bores on the Wiluna leases, will the Government publish a progress report of the results?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Boring is still in progress at Wiluna. All cores are drawn in the presence of a supervisor appointed by the Government, kept under seal, sent in sealed and locked boxes to Kalgoorlie and deposited in care of the Union Bank at Kalgoorlie. Under an agreement no assays of the cores are being made by the Government until the company have first had their own assays and have decided that they will ask for Government assistance in their project. Up to that stage all information is the private property of the parties making the bores, and the Government have no right to obtain or disclose any report of progress. The Government is not paying any part of the cost of boring.

### BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. J. Ewing and read a first time.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Tenth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 14th August.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [4.36]: In addressing a few words to the Chair this afternoon I wish to first of all offer my congratulations to the Leader of the House upon his re-entry into the Chamber and assumption of the duties of leadership. I am sure every member of the Council is glad to see Mr. Drew back amongst us, and, as an old colleague, I can bear witness to his courtesy and to his impartiality. I sincerely hope he will have a successful term during his career as Leader. I also offer my congratulations to Mr. Hickey upon obtaining Ministerial rank, and, in common with other members, I join in extending a welcome to those who are here for their first session. Members of this Cham-

ber have something of a grievance. During the last two sessions we have not had much to criticise in connection with the occupants of the Ministerial bench. Mr. Ewing came to us last year free from Ministerial crimes. He had not occupied Ministerial office previously and members had few opportunities to criticise him. Now we have a new Government in office and we have little to criticise to date. They have no Ministerial sins, or scarcely any at present. There is one matter that appears to be giving a good deal of trouble to many people. I refer to one act of commission that the Government have been guilty of so far: the introduction of the 44-hour week. In my opinion there is a great deal of needless alarm evidenced by members and people generally concerning that question. I come from a district where two shifts in the mining industry work only 40 hours a week, and that was the rule from the inception of the mines right back to 1860. In fact, all through South Australia no men engaged in two shifts on the copper mines worked more than 40 hours a week, and in the other shift, more than 44 hours a week. The introduction of the 44-hour week was undoubtedly part of the policy of the Labour Government, and in giving effect to it I cannot see that they have done anything out of the way. There is one point about it with which I do not agree. If the 44-hour week is good for one section of the Government employees, it is good for all. If the Government intend to give that concession to only one section of the Government employees, and not to others, they will strike trouble. It should be applied in the same way. If one section of the Government workers are allowed to work 44 hours in a week of five days, then the rest of the Government employees should be allowed to do their work in five days too. There is another aspect that appeals to me particularly, and that is that men engaged in industries outside the Government service work under far worse conditions, have a more hazardous form of employment, and have to work more strenuously and, as a rule, they are the last to receive the benefit of any such concession. If it is right for Government employees to receive a 44-hour week, then it is right for all other employees in the State to receive a similar concession. In connection with the mining industry, the workers underground have a 44-hour week, but that does not apply to those working on the surface. Few will dispute that men working on the surface of a mine labour under far worse conditions than the majority of Government employees.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. E. DODD: I hope the Government will make the system universal so far as their employees are concerned, and I hope it will be made universal throughout other avenues of employment as well. Some people think that the 44-hour week will

bring ruin upon industry. It has to be remembered that labour-saving machinery is being brought into use more and more, and surely the workers are entitled to some benefit from the use of that plant as well as the employers. I do not believe we shall experience any great setback because the Government have introduced a 44-hour week. Coming to the Governor's Speech, the references therein that interest those representing mining constituencies most are those relating to the appointment of a mining commission and the Esperance railway. The Government have decided to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into all phases of mining, with a view to reviving the industry. I have not a great deal of faith in Commissions. We have had Royal Commissions galore all over Australia during the past 20 years, until we have arrived at the stage when, probably, every member has been on some Commission or other. I am afraid that the recommendations of such Commissions are, for the most part, pigeon-holed and very little notice is taken of their reports. If the Government intend to appoint a Commission to inquire into all the different phases of the mining industry and are going to wait until the Commission reports upon the whole question, I am afraid we shall wait for a very long time. I suggest that, if it is the intention of the Government to give the Commission power to inquire into all the various matters that require investigation, they should insist upon having interim reports presented, so that they may act upon them from time to time. There are many matters of interest to be dealt with such as abandoned leases, unworked leases, diamond drill borings, low grade ore reserves, tributing, water supply, the prices fixed for explosives, and, further, the question of taxation. Any one of those subjects will require much thought and a great deal of interest will be taken in them. If the Royal Commission dealt with one subject at a time, and submitted a report, the Government could then act in accordance with the report and some good might result from the investigations. I hope that that will be so. I am very glad they have already decided to make some concessions in taxation along the lines proposed by the Federal Government. I must again refer to the matter of miners' disease. Some two years ago we passed a Bill dealing with miners' phthisis. Up to date that measure has never been proclaimed. Members in this Chamber and in another place repeatedly called the attention of the late Government to it and the excuse was always made that the Federal laboratory had not been built. I do not know that the proclamation of the Miners' Phthisis Act was contingent upon the establishment of that institution in Kalgoorlie and for the

life of me I cannot see why the Act has not been proclaimed. I had hoped that the present Government would have proclaimed it when they took office. I am struck with the vast difference in the methods of dealing with some phases of our social life as compared with others. When we were faced with the possibility of a terrible calamity in the shape of rinderpest it was marvellous what celerity was exhibited by those in authority in bringing all the experts to Western Australia to determine what the disease was and the best methods to combat it. We have another pest, the miners' phthisis pest, which is equally bad as and perhaps even worse than the rinderpest. The rinderpest affects animals; the miners' phthisis affects human beings. The only trouble is that a majority of the people cannot see the effects of miners' phthisis. They could see the effects of the rinderpest and could visualise what it meant, but the ordinary individual, outside of those closely connected with mining, do not and cannot see the effect of miners' phthisis. I have no wish to belittle what the State has done. It has done a great deal. It has established a sanatorium at great cost, involving great expense for upkeep. It has supplied £30,000 or £40,000 to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, and the miners and mine-owners have done the same. But what a marked difference there is between the celerity exhibited over the rinderpest and the delay that is being exhibited in dealing with the miners' phthisis pest! For two or three years past we have been promised a laboratory, and I understand it is not yet built.

Hon. J. Cornell: Once they get the laboratory going, there will be something doing.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I hope something more will be done to prevent the disease and to mitigate what has been termed in regard to rinderpest, the economic effects. These are certainly very bad as affecting the women and children who are left behind. All goldfields members are pleased at the decision of the Government to continue the Esperance railway from Salmon Gums to Norseman. It is a great pity this was not done before. When the line is linked up, I feel sure it will prove of great value to the goldfields as well as to the State. There is also the question of the Newdegate railway. In the Newdegate district the area under crop amounts to 30,000 or 40,000 acres. Newdegate is 35 miles from a railway and some of the farmers are located 10 to 14 miles still farther out. The Bill authorising the construction of the line has been passed. I know that the Government are hard pressed for funds and it is very difficult for any member to urge the Government to spend money when he knows that they have such a hard row to hoe in the

way of getting funds to carry on. I am pleased the Government have included in their policy the question of a land values tax. When the Bill comes before us, we shall no doubt have a good discussion for and against it. In the Speech there is no indication as to whether the Government intend to make any rebates of other taxation. I hope they will not make the tax an additional tax. If that be done, it will do more than anything else to set back land values taxation. Land values taxation can only be a substitutive tax in a State like Western Australia. If we are going to have land values taxation, we must grant a remission from taxation from some other source. The farmers could not possibly pay land values taxation as an additional system of taxation. When the Government are framing the measure, I hope they will pay heed to this aspect of the question. The best possible way, I think, would be to reduce railway freights, and help to pay the interest on the railways from the proceeds of the land values taxation. I hope members will not think I am indulging in any lecturing, but I should like to refer to the industrial legislation forecasted in the Governor's Speech. I have never been one to belittle this Chamber in any shape or form. Throughout my experience here I have endeavoured to show that the Legislative Council has fulfilled a useful part in dealing with the legislation of the State. We are likely to be called upon to consider some industrial Bills this session, and I hope the Council will not follow the practice adopted in the last two or three sessions in regard to some industrial measures. We have the right to reject any measure that comes before us, industrial or otherwise. I hold that we have the right to amend any measure that comes before us, but I do not think that it is politic, even if we have the right, to say to another place: "We are going to throw out your industrial measures and pass some of our own instead."

Hon. A. Lovekin: It would have been a good thing if we had done that.

Hon. J. E. DODD: If that policy is to be pursued and persisted in, I am afraid the Council will land itself in precisely the same position as the House of Lords has done. If another place, elected on an adult franchise, sends industrial measures to us, let us amend them or reject them. To contend that we should reject them and then send down measures of our own dealing with the same subjects, would to my mind be suicidal on the part of this House. I am inclined to agree with the remarks of Mr. Moore regarding interest on loans. Although I have not been pessimistic in regard to our finances, when we come to consider the high rate of interest we are paying, as a result of which in 10 or 15 years we shall have paid the amount of a loan.

in interest and still owe the principal moneys, the position certainly demands our closest attention. Sometimes I wonder how the Government are going to manage to meet their loans, interest and sinking fund. It certainly is a very difficult problem. It is a great pity something cannot be done to lessen the rate of interest we have to pay, but that of course is a matter beyond our control. I was a member of the Ministry that inaugurated a great many trading concerns, but if the present Government are wise, they will go very slow indeed before embarking upon any extension of trading concerns. Whatever we believe or do not believe, the most extreme individual on State socialism or State trading concerns must admit that we cannot afford to go on losing £80,000 or £90,000 on one concern alone every year. It will have to stop some time and somewhere. If we are going to lose money on the different trading concerns, we may have to cry a halt, no matter what our beliefs may be. So I say to the Government it would be well to go slow indeed before embarking on too many more trading concerns. Much has been said about the defeat of the Mitchell Government. Almost as many reasons have been advanced for its defeat as for the fall of the Roman Empire. Almost every member who has spoken in this House and in another place has offered a different reason, and I think every writer who has referred to the fall of the Roman Empire has ascribed a different reason for its fall. I consider Sir James Mitchell a great Western Australian. I think he is more of a patriot than a politician. He was not astute enough to be the leader of the political party. He made many mistakes, and there is a good deal of the criticism of Sir James Mitchell with which I agree. But I cannot agree with all that has been said about him. I have jotted down a few of the reasons given for his defeat, and these few do not comprise one-half of those that have been enumerated. Here are a few: His loan policy; reckless finance; Redistribution of Seats Bill; his failure in industrial affairs in restoring the 48-hour week; his inability to get rid of the trading concerns; his autocracy; his flirting with the enemy and turning down his friends; the Country Party split; his South-West and no other policy; the Northmore award on the gold-fields; the metropolitan water supply and the temperance vote. Those are some of the reasons that have been ascribed for the defeat of Sir James Mitchell.

Hon. J. Cornell: More sins than Henry VIII.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I was much interested in Mr. Kirwan's statement when he attributed the defeat of Sir James Mitchell to the speeches delivered by Mr. Holmes and Mr. Lovekin. It was said that the speeches of those gentlemen, as much as anything else, in a measure brought about the down-

fall of Sir James Mitchell. I admire the pertinacity with which Mr. Holmes tackles the financial problem. The House and the country would be the poorer by the absence of that criticism. I also admire the perseverance of Mr. Lovekin in trying to get to the bottom of things, but giving all that in, I cannot agree with all that those gentlemen had to say. Mr. Holmes declared, "If I was responsible for Sir James Mitchell's defeat, I do not regret it." Mr. Lovekin stated "I am not responsible for the defeat of Sir James Mitchell; he himself was responsible for it," and then Mr. Lovekin went on to repeat that no speech that he had made had brought about the defeat of the ex-Premier. The other day I was reading over the "Times" history of England, and Mr. Holmes struck me very much as a sort of Oliver Cromwell. You will remember, Mr. President, that when Charles I. was executed Cromwell used the words, "Oh, stern necessity." We can imagine Mr. Holmes standing over the political corpse of Sir James Mitchell and exclaiming "Oh, stern necessity; I do not regret my action in bringing about your defeat." But Mr. Lovekin takes up another attitude. I was rather sorry the other night when Dr. Saw in drawing an analogy between those hon. gentlemen and David and Saul did not go a little further along the life of David. You will remember that David had a rebellious son, a son whom he loved very much, and that he tried in every way to induce that son not to be so rebellious and so wicked. He warned the son, but the son heeded not; he entreated him, but he would not be entreated, and David tried in every way to induce Absalom to be a kinder and a better son. Eventually Absalom rebelled and in the course of the rebellion lost his life. Then came the most pathetic remark from David, "O, my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee." It strikes me that that is the position between Mr. Lovekin and Sir James Mitchell. Mr. Lovekin declared that Sir James Mitchell's agreement was of no use, that he failed with the Redistribution of Seats Bill, that he flirted with the enemy, and would have nothing to do with his friends, and that he put through all the legislation the Opposition brought forward. Then we have him stating that the Chamber of Manufacturers complained that Sir James Mitchell would not get rid of the trading concerns. Not only that, but we find that the hon. gentleman even impugned the veracity of the present Leader of the Opposition. I could almost hear Mr. Lovekin say, "Oh, my cobber, my robber, Jimmy, my cobber! Would God I had died for thee." I regard Sir James Mitchell as being something like Cardinal Wolsey. You know, Mr. President, that when Cardinal Wolsey served the King, he did so to the best of his ability. Henry VIII. got out of him all he possibly could and left the Cardinal

almost naked. The Cardinal was reported to have said, "If I had served my God with the zeal with which I have served my King, he would never have left me naked." I can imagine Sir James Mitchell, after all the criticism that has been brought to bear upon him, now that he is down and out, saying, "Had I served my friends with the same zeal that I used in placating my enemies, I would not have been left naked in the days of my adversity." Just one other matter to which I would like to refer, and I shall do so for the last time. I have referred to it on several occasions. It is the change that has come over hon. members in this House and many politicians in the State. I am induced to comment on this matter again because of a statement made by Mr. Holmes who said that Sir James had completed the nationalisation of the agricultural industry, and he added that what with group settlements, the Industries Assistance Board, the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act and the extension of the Agricultural Bank Act, the agricultural industry had become entirely nationalised. When I think what this Chamber was some 10 or 14 years ago when I first came here, one looks around the wilderness of individualism when there was hardly a member that believed in anything like State trading or socialism. Then as the years go on we can see members drifting, drifting into socialism, one member with the other getting up and preaching some form of nationalisation. Now when we have Mr. Holmes stating that Sir James Mitchell of all men has completed the nationalisation of the agricultural industry, well, I begin to think that some of us who had little leanings towards socialism, at least have something to be proud of. For quite a long time I think there was one member in this Chamber that neither Mr. Cornell nor I could reach in regard to socialism. That gentleman sat where Mr. Ewing now sits, and his was an individualism that we all used to admire, together with his eloquence of diction, his shafts of satire and the logic of his arguments. We all admired him and everyone must regret that he is not still a member of this House. But he represents a type of individualism that cannot be shifted. No matter how we assailed him, there was no shifting that type of individualism. Then we remember his collapse that came 18 months ago. With an election on the horizon we all heard with consternation the statement made by Mr. Sanderson that he had joined the Country Party, and not joined to the Country Party, but had come tumbling down over the precipice. In spite of the anathema hurled at the Country Party we found that gentleman joining the Country Party who, he said, were out to rob the many for the benefit of the few. Remembering that, I almost feel that at least Mr. Cornell and I, who came here as two lone socialists, are something akin to a great Roman general—or was he a Grecian general—who stood on

one of the seven hills of Rome and used the words, "Veni, Vidi, Vici." There was nothing left for him to conquer. When I think what this Chamber was when I first came into it 10 or 12 years ago and compare it with what it is to-day, especially in view of the collapse of Mr. Sanderson, and the speech made by Mr. Holmes, I think Mr. Cornell and I are entitled to say, "We came, We saw, We conquered."

Hon. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [5.12]: I join in welcoming those hon. gentlemen who were elected to this Chamber in May last, and in expressing regret at the loss of those who fell by the wayside. At the general elections the people, through the medium of the ballot box, expressed their desire for a change of Government, and the mantle has fallen from the shoulders of Sir James Mitchell on to those of the Labour Party. We have now got back to a Cabinet composed of tradesmen, though included in the number is a journalist. From the remarks made by Mr. Lovekin the other day I am beginning to think that there is some virtue in journalism, because we find that successive Cabinets have included a journalist. It has been said by several members of the Labour Party that the Legislative Council is a bar to progress, and more recently it has been said this Chamber is useless, and, furthermore, that it is the intention of the Labour Party to make it a party House. I strongly urge the member who made those observations to quietly consider whether they, constituting six of this House of 30, really a House of review, would be doing a benefit to the State by endeavouring to make of it a party House. After seven or eight years, during which there has been a Nationalist Government in office, we might naturally look forward to the Labour Party giving expression to its principles and policies that have been outlined from time to time by conferences, that wholesale alterations might have been suggested in the Speech delivered by His Excellency. But it was a very mild utterance, chiefly concerning industrial legislation. What is conspicuous by its absence is any reference to the pink objective endorsed by the whole of the Labour Parties of Australia at the Brisbane conference in 1921. No reference to any of the important decisions reached there is embodied in His Excellency's Speech. The Speech announces that the Government endorse the policy of immigration, as adopted by the previous Government, and declares that it is of paramount importance. I am pleased to see that, particularly in view of many statements made on the public platform by members of the Labour Party who chiefly side-stepped that important question. We now know that the Government have officially announced that they support the policy of immigration.

Hon. J. R. Brown: A sane policy.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Their policy appears to be the same as that of their predecessors. They also point out in the Speech that industries are in a satisfactory condition, that trade is buoyant, and so forth, indicating that in taking over the affairs of the country from the Mitchell Government they are very well satisfied with the progress that has been made. The Speech, I am afraid, does not indicate exactly what legislation will be brought forward. According to the replies given to questions I asked during last week, some other legislation is to come down, namely that dealing with the important question of appointing a Basic Wage Commission. That was the chief topic of discussion prior to the election. Even on the goldfields the representatives of Trades Hall have been keenly inquiring into what has happened that question. We have been informed that legislation dealing with the question will be brought down during the coming session, together with legislation dealing with miners' occupational diseases. The Government's policy is to be outlined as a kind of serial story. The Minister, the other day, said the policy would be gradually unfolded to members. From a goldfields viewpoint the paragraph in the Speech relating to mining is of cardinal importance. We are told that special consideration is to be given to the mining industry and a Royal Commission appointed to investigate that industry and make recommendations. We hail with satisfaction the special consideration promised by the Government. As for the Royal Commission, I agree with Mr. Dodd, that we have had numerous such commissions, particularly on mining. Looking up the records, I find that the evidence taken by the commission on the ventilation and sanitation of mines occupied nine months, while the Miners' Phthisis Commission of 1910 occupied eight and a-half months in the taking of evidence and allowed 12 months to elapse between its appointment and its report. So the industry may die of old age before we even get the report of the proposed Royal Commission.

Hon. J. Cornell: The idea of the Commission is all right.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: But we have no idea as to whether it is to consist of one commissioner, or five or more commissioners.

Hon. J. Cornell: The more the better.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Many goldfields people suggest that what is needed is a mechanical engineer to go thoroughly into the question of how costs might be reduced by the adoption of mechanical appliances. On the other hand, some goldfields people are urging that the Commission should consist of a metallurgist, a chemist and a geologist. Whichever it may be, we should welcome an announcement of the intentions of the Government. Chiefly our trouble is the high costs of production and of extraction. Then we want to know whether any recommendations the proposed Commission

make will be adopted by the Government. The Commission might recommend that the whole of the existing milling plants be scrapped. That would involve a huge expenditure, and it would be for the companies to say whether they thought it warranted. The personnel of the Commission would be a significant factor.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Whatever is to be done, the Government should hurry up. They have now been four months in office, yet have done nothing for mining.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes. As I pointed out, it will take the Commission some 12 months to secure their evidence and submit recommendations; and if they were to suggest that the whole of the treatment plants be scrapped, by the time new machinery had been ordered and put into operation we should be a year or two further on in the history of the industry. During the recent elections a great feature was made of charging the Mitchell Government with absolute neglect of the mining industry. That charge was made by practically the whole of the Labour Party. That party's representative in Kalgoorlie, Mr. Cunningham, said the Nationalist Government were a menace to the goldfields, that they had neglected Kalgoorlie shamelessly and shamefully. Yet that electorate, except during the 12 months when the late Mr. John Boyland represented it, has been represented by Labour for many years past. Nevertheless, Mr. Cunningham, representing the electorate, spoke in those terms which, in my opinion, was rather an indictment against himself and his party.

Hon. J. Cornell: The goldfields people agreed with him on the point.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They did not agree with him on many points, as the hon. member well knows. The outstanding issue of the recent elections on the goldfields was as to whether the industry had received the treatment it should have had.

Hon. J. Cornell: No. In my experience the issue was the retaining of the Labour representatives.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Of course at election time frequently the true pros and cons are not seriously weighed by the electors. Mr. Collier, discussing the mining industry in the Assembly last session, said the Mitchell Government had shown absolute indifference to the industry. However, this must be said to the credit of the Mitchell Government, that, yielding to representations made, they reduced the price of water used in the industry. This gave the industry considerable relief. Mr. Hamilton, representing the mining companies, said the reduction from 7s. to 3s. per thousand gallons was of substantial benefit to the mining companies.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Mr. Hamilton said there were many millions of tons of low-grade ore ready for crushing, and that if they got a reduction in the price of water they would be able to treat that ore. Yet since then Mr. Hamilton has put off the

men who should have been employed treating that ore.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: At the council chamber a resident of Boulder and another of Kalgoorlie, both men holding private positions, but in public life, gave expression to those words. They said there were millions of tons of low grade ore that would be crushed if a reduction were made in the price of water.

Hon. J. R. Brown: That was said by Mr. Hamilton himself.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Pardon me. The Premier, Sir James Mitchell, seized on that point, and Mr. Hamilton stood up and said, "I think I should make this matter perfectly clear. Statements have been made regarding the millions of tons of low-grade ore that we have. We have them, certainly, but this reduction in the price of water will not bring them into value." Mr. Hamilton made it quite clear that while the reduction of the price of water was one of many things that would help the industry, it alone would not bring the millions of tons of low-grade ore into the realm of practical mining.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Mr. Hamilton said that if the reduction were made they would be able to employ a lot more men; that the companies would not derive any benefit, the overhead charges being the same.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They promised to put on a number of men at development work. That promise has been carried out by every company with legitimate development work to do. On the 17th March the Premier, Mr. Collier, speaking in Boulder, said:—

The State could afford to be generous to mining and make a courageous effort to lift it up. Their policy would be the reorganisation of the Mines Department and the establishment of mining boards throughout the goldfields. They would know the country, receive applications for assistance, and advise the executive board, consisting of mining men and Government representatives, who would travel the goldfields in order to assist the industry. In order to assist the industry properly a much greater sum should be expended than was the case to-day. In addition to the ordinary assistance to mining, a substantial sum should be available for the next five years. The Labour Party would be able to give mining a greatly increased measure of assistance. It was hard to say what amount, but whatever it was the Labour Party was prepared to give it in order to revive the life and prosperity of a failing industry. This should also apply to base metals.

This was the definite statement of the present Premier to the goldfielders. Having had these encouraging words, we can now ask for encouraging deeds. Whether they will be accomplished by Royal Commission, or

some other means, is a matter of great interest to those representing the industry. The establishment of mining boards has been suggested. In 1919 the Government established a prospecting board, and subsequently made provision for advisory boards throughout the goldfields. These boards are conversant with their own particular districts, and work in association with the mining inspectors. The suggestion may be a good one, and there may be more elasticity about these other bodies, but I do not know whether they can bring about greater development in the industry, or can gather more information than the advisory boards, which work in conjunction with the prospecting boards. We are also told there is going to be a spring-cleaning in the Mines Department. The Premier suggested that a sum of £100,000 per annum should be spent in assisting the industry for the next five years. The Government would be showing a generous spirit if they indicated clearly that they were going to do something on these lines. Because of the alleged apathy of the Mitchell Government, labourites representing goldfields constituencies suggested that a goldfields party should be formed, but since Labour assumed office nothing more has been heard of the suggestion. At any rate, we have enough parties in our Legislature already.

Hon. J. Cornell: A few more would not affect the position.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: When speaking in Hannan-street the present Premier said that a Labour Government would be well able to put up £100,000 a year, which would do so much to assist the industry. The Premier and some of his colleagues in the Ministry also referred to the high railway freights on mining requisites and mining products between Perth and the goldfields. It is in this direction that mining has been so adversely affected. The Premier said last session that the railway freights and charges had been increased to such an extent during the last few years that they were hindering the development of our industries. I hope the Government will remember that statement, and afford some relief to the mining industry by reducing railway freights. The Premier also said, "We must realise the enormous burden to the mining industry, whose whole requirements have to be hauled such long distances at the excessive rates that prevail." The Minister for Mines represents a goldfields constituency, and last session he said the Government had had no real regard for the mining industry for years. He also said, "In my opinion that industry has been destroyed by excessive railway freights on mining products."

Hon. J. Cornell: When did he say that?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The statement will be found on page 175 of last year's *Hansard*. The Minister further said, "The policy of increasing railway freights had been responsible for the depopulation of the back country." He referred particularly, I

believe, to his own constituency. He said the people were leaving it because of the excessive railway freights they had to pay.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is quite true.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: We now have to look to the new Minister for Mines for assistance, and I hope he will heed the claims that have been made. Last session also, when dealing with some alleged mining ramp, the Minister referred to the qualifications of some of the men who reported on mines. It was suggested by someone that, in all future flotations, approval must first be given by some representative of the Government prior to the prospectus being put before the public. In Adelaide many down-and-out companies practically live on market manipulation and share rigging, but do very little towards assisting the name of mining in Western Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: They are analogous to shepherds without sheep.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If such companies took an option over a mining lease they would be able to override any regulation that might be put forward to prevent any new company being floated without Government approval. Let me quote the Empire Extended Company. Out of 57,000 shares issued 42,000, which were forfeited, were put on the market and sold at 3d. This sale realised about £500, which was to be used for the development of the lease in question. At the time when the shares were sold the market price was 9d. or 10d. a share, but they then ran up to 3s. 8d. a share. Here was an instance of market manipulation, but there was no more than the £500 for the development of the lease. Before the lease was properly tested it was turned down. As the "Bulletin" would say, "The lease was termed a dud," whereas an insufficient amount of capital had been spent on it to prove that it was a dud. Had the lease been floated no doubt the requisite amount of money could have been found to prove it. I do not know whether legislation can do anything to stop that sort of thing, but I do know that it means a bad advertisement for the State to have so many shows taken up by small companies for market purposes, and subsequently turned down before they are proved to be valueless. The Honorary Minister, Mr. Cunningham, also said that the industry had been neglected by the previous Government, and that for some years past a request had been made for a reduction in railway freights so that the mining industry might be assisted. He said, "During the past six years no fewer than four increases had taken place in railway freights on the eastern and northern goldfields lines. If Labour were returned to power there would be a reduction in railway freights in the interests of mining." I hope he will use his influence in Cabinet to see that a substan-

tial reduction is effected. In March of this year, when appealing to the public to vote for Labour, he said that sufficient revenue would be obtained by the Labour Government to enable them to reduce railway freights, and relieve the burden in that direction. He also stated that by a reduction in the rates something would be done to stimulate the industry and encourage greater production in mining. I trust that the Ministers, whose remarks I have quoted, will stand by them and give the assistance they have promised. I am pleased to observe that the Leader of the Official Country Party (Mr. Thomson) also expressed the desire to assist the gold mining industry, and said that "a vigorous and sympathetic policy would receive the support of members of his party in the Legislature."

Hon. J. Cornell: We want money, not sympathy.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Premier practically promised £100,000 for the next five years if Labour were returned, and it has now been returned with a substantial majority. The lamentations of mining companies regarding the grade of ore treated and the cost of mining are not without some foundation. In 1914 the average grade of ore treated by the mines on the Eastern Goldfields, particularly the Golden Mile, was 38.2s. In 1919 it was 45.3s.; in 1920, 40.6s.; in 1921, 52.1s.; and in 1923, 53.6s. This shows a rapid advance in the grade of ore that companies have had to treat in order to keep pace with the increased costs they have been called upon to bear. It meant that they could use only their best ores, and therefore had to reduce their tonnage. Say a mine had ore of an average grade of 25s. per ton: then if the costs per ton went higher than 25s., the mine management had only one of two courses open to it, either close the mine or treat only the higher-grade ore. Reduction of tonnage inevitably means dismissal of men. And there is a point at which the exclusive treatment of higher-grade ores alone must stop; for it means that the hundreds of thousands of tons of low-grade ores that remain cannot be treated. In the course of the working of the mine for the higher grades only, much of the low-grade stuff is buried in the stopes, and it will never pay anyone to go back and work it. The mining companies are a valuable asset to the State, not by reason of the gold they produce, but because of the labour they employ; and it behoves everyone to push the industry along who by word or deed can effect anything towards that end.

Hon. J. Cornell: We should try to find out where the weakness is.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, and it is with a view to that. I understand, the Government are suggesting an inquiry,



by Royal Commission. References have been made to the incidence of taxation and the consequent disabilities imposed on prospectors. I will not repeat those references. A few days ago we of the goldfields had the pleasure and privilege of welcoming the new Minister for Mines, Mr. Troy. He had an enthusiastic reception, those engaged in the mining industry furnishing a fully representative gathering to welcome him. Mr. Troy listened attentively to the many requests submitted for his consideration, and we were indeed pleased when he stated, officially and on behalf of the Government, that the Collier Ministry would imitate the policy outlined by the Federal Government of relieving the mining industry of taxation so far as the prospector and his backer are concerned. Further Mr. Troy said that taxes would not be imposed on mining companies until the whole of their capital had been returned. Those statements gave great satisfaction, but I must point out that the Government's proposal, while relieving the prospector who finds something, and also relieving the man who backed him by putting up cash or taking shares, and while also relieving future mines, affords no relief in any shape or form to the mining companies that exist to-day. They are the people who complain that they have too heavy a burden of taxation to bear.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They should be granted relief too.

Hon. J. Cornell: They have all had their capital back.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Some of them have. If they all had it back, they would be very pleased. The Government would do well to consider seriously whether the proposed legislation should not be made retrospective. Retrospective legislation is justified in this case, if it ever was justified. Take the Celebration Mine, which was closed down by the taxation imposed on it. Mr. Kirwan has given the details, but I may mention that I came in contact with the promoter of the mine and others connected with it only yesterday, and they confirmed every word uttered by Mr. Kirwan. If they could get a rebate of the taxation paid in respect of the mine, the Celebration would reopen to-morrow.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Some of the men discharged from the mine are employed by the Government at making roads which will be of no use if the mine remains shut down.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Half the men employed making roads there could be employed in the Celebration mine.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is hardly fair to saddle the present Government with the responsibility for the excessive taxation on mines.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It was understood by both Houses what the Government's intentions were in this matter.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The present Government might advance to the company the taxation obtained from the mine, in order that the company might test the important developments which have taken place at the 400-foot level. That would be much better than building roads which are useless.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It would have shown commendable foresight on the part of the Government if they had even obtained a report by the local mining inspector on the new developments at the 400-foot level, which promise a new lease of life for the mine.

Hon. J. Cornell: I cannot agree with that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: At the interview with the Minister for Mines we also submitted a request for a geological survey, an important matter from the mining viewpoint. The value of gold extracted from the Eastern goldfields is reported with a wealth of information as regards the various mining companies who have worked there for 20 years, but comparatively little data is available from the aspect I have indicated. A geological survey of country, particularly where much work has been done, may be likened to the report and survey which the Government obtain when they contemplate the building of a new railway. They send out inspectors to ascertain how much of the country to be served by the proposed railway is suitable for agricultural purposes, and how much for pastoral purposes, and generally to obtain all the information available. A geological survey would be of infinite benefit to those engaged in gold mining, not only in Kalgoorlie, but in many parts of Western Australia, where, owing to faults or something of that nature, the shoot of gold has been lost and the company perhaps have not had sufficient capital to develop the property further, and so the life of the mine has been shortened. In reply to that request the Minister said he would undertake to get the best geologist available and place him at the disposal of the Kalgoorlie mining interests. We were indeed thankful to have that answer from Mr. Troy; but there are many other places in Western Australia where a geological survey would be invaluable to gold hunters. Many men are seeking gold in places which a geological survey would show to be, if not useless, at any rate such as to involve the risk of a good deal of misspent energy in searching for gold. The value of the prospector was realised by the Mitchell Government, who sent out State equipped parties on systematic prospecting tours. This was a recognition that the genuine prospector is a valuable asset to Western Australia, and I hope the present Administration will continue to assist the many parties that go out looking for something in their own interests and incidentally in the interests of the State. Looking up the mining records I found that in 1862 the Government offered a reward

of £500 to anyone finding gold within 50 miles of Perth. Nothing resulted from that offer, but I consider that a substantial reward might now be offered as an incentive to effort on the part of prospectors and others, some of whom have retired from that class of work since the tax legislation came into force. My idea is a reward for any payable goldfield discovered outside a given distance of known goldfields; or even a reward might be offered for a good new discovery on some field already in operation. The present regulations offer rewards only for discoveries removed not less than 10 or 12 miles from any known goldfield. If the amendment I suggest were carried into effect, some of the prospectors might be influenced sufficiently to persevere nearer by and get something. During the last 12 months a position which may be termed almost unique has arisen in two cases to which I desire to call attention. I hope the Government will endeavour to amend our mining legislation so as to meet the strange situations which have been created. That legislation provides that when a lease is forfeited a notice is to be posted on the door outside the district mining registrar's office. Immediately that posting has been done, the ground is available for selection; that is, it is open for anyone to peg again. Until quite recently it has perhaps never happened that the owner of a mining lease surrendered it to the Crown, so that the leasehold area again became Crown land. In one instance, which happened not long ago, and right in the heart of the Golden Mile, a company surrendered some ground. The fact of the surrender was published in the "Government Gazette" of the 24th September, 1923, and the surrendered leasehold area was re-pegged at half-past five that evening, presumably on telegraphic information received from Perth. Another man waited until the notice had been posted on the door of the mining registrar's office, as is customary in the case of forfeited leases. In this respect, however, the Act is silent as regards surrendered ground. The second man re-pegged the ground on the 27th September, and the matter went before the warden, and was eventually referred to the courts. A special case was stated, and then it was decided that until the notice had been posted, the area was not available for anyone to peg. The point is of importance, and it should be made perfectly clear so that future aspirants for the pegging of Crown land may know exactly what they have to do. The other case I wish to mention, refers to a metallurgist on the Golden Mile, who persevered with a process which he claimed would extract 97 per cent. of the gold in tailings. That is a most important thing. After it had gone beyond the experimental stage he selected a big tailings area that had been abandoned for the last 12 or 14 years. The party erected a plant there but only then

discovered that the Government could not give them a title to the tailings on the area. The Government could give the party the lease over the ground, but as the Act stands at present, provision is made that tailings left on abandoned leases, if not protected within a given period—I think it is six months—are forfeited to the Crown. In this instance the tailings had been abandoned for upwards of 14 years, on the old tailings area. That area had never been a lease. It was discovered therefore that the Government could not give the party any title to the tailings at all, but this was only discovered after the party had spent £600 or £700 in erecting a plant. The result was that they had to go to the men who had abandoned the tailings years before and buy the tailings from them. Such instances call for an amendment of the Act. In many areas throughout the State, abandoned tailings are to be seen and it is possible that should the process prove successful, further complications and litigation may arise.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Probably the tailings area had been re-pegged.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The area had been transferred to a second party. I know that legal opinion was taken on this matter and it was ascertained that there was a possibility that complications would arise. It was merely a fluke that the Government did not give a title to the applicants, in which case there would have been litigation for compensation on the part of those who owned the tailings and on the part of those who had been granted the lease of the tailings area. The Mine Workers' Relief Fund is an important institution associated with the mining industry. Mr. Dodd was responsible for initiating the scheme many years ago. Owing to the decline of the industry, the fund has been considerably depleted. The Mitchell Government came to the aid of those administering the fund last year, with an advance of £1,500, but with the further decline of the industry due to the closing down of the Ivanhoe mine, the fund is in a bad way now. A greater number of men are coming on the fund and this may necessitate a revision of the whole policy governing relief from the fund.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It has outlived its usefulness. Something in place of the fund is required.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If the Government can provide anything better, it will be welcomed by the people. When out of office, the members of the present Government and their supporters did not cease to denounce the Mitchell Government for the miserable dole they handed out to these men. They also pointed to the practice in South Africa where mining is on a larger scale. Labour supporters pointed out to the fund in South Africa as an example of what should be done in Western Australia. I commend the same matter to the consideration of the present Government. We

would welcome an announcement from the Government under that heading. Reverting to the question of railway freights to gold-fields centres, I would draw the attention of hon. members to the freight imposed for the carriage of bullion. The Mitchell Government reduced the charges that they had increased a year or two ago and brought the charge down from 15s. to 10s. per hundred ounces of bullion. I would particularly point that the charge was made on bullion and not on the gold contents. There is much silver in the bullion, and we contend that if the mining people were charged on the gold alone, the Government should be satisfied. Moreover, the reduced rates can only be secured when certain quantities are available for transport over the railways. That freight is charged on 40,000 ounces, which is a full load, and on that the charge is approximately £300 to bring the bullion to Perth. That, however, applies only to the Kalgoorlie goldfields. If companies operating in the Murchison wish to forward supplies and secure the benefit of the reduced rate, they have to send their consignments to Kalgoorlie to be included in the 40,000 oz. load. If they do not get their supplies to Kalgoorlie in time the decreased rate does not apply. In the interests of mining generally and of the gold producers, the people in the outer centres should be allowed to participate in the benefit as well as those on the Golden Mile.

Hon. J. Ewing: If they do not participate, what rate do they pay?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I have not the figures just now, but I know they pay a higher rate. Some little time ago copper sulphate ore was being mined at Eulaminna, near Leonora. Prior to the fire at the Gwalia mine 5,000 tons of that ore per year were being mined and brought down to Cuming Smith's superphosphate works to manufacture sulphuric acid. The rate then was 14s. 6d. per ton, which was later on increased to 16s. 6d. per ton. After the fire, however, the rate was increased to 26s. per ton, which was so high that further operations were prohibitive. Representatives of the mining company and of the district, together with a representative of Cuming Smith's, appealed to the Government to reduce the rate, but they failed to get any satisfaction. The result was that Cuming Smith's had to alter their burners and now they are importing sulphur from America.

Member: No, from Japan.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The fact remains that the Government have lost that industry and the freight they drew from that concession. The whole place is closed down and is desolate now. In addition to that Cuming Smith's have to import from Japan or America in order to continue manufacturing their superphosphates.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Government should remedy that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Owing to the high price of meat, carcases have been imported from the Eastern States to meet the gold-fields demand. It is possible to take six carcases from Perth to Kalgoorlie for £31, but twice as much can be conveyed over three times the distance across the Trans. line for that figure. Beef is killed in South Australia and therefore does not go through the Kalgoorlie abattoirs, and that trade is lost to the local concern. That represents a loss in abattoir charges of about 4s. per carcase.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And in addition the Government lose the freight over their own lines on the stock to be dealt with.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That represents about £25 12s. a week.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That was bad management on the part of the Mitchell Government.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Absolutely.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That furnishes an opportunity for the present Government to remedy the position.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If they do so they will secure the freight over the railways and they will make up the loss of £100 a month at the abattoirs which do not now handle the livestock. Mr. Dodd referred to the non-proclamation of the Miners' Phthisis Act. If that hon. member had received the latest information from the Government on that point, he would have spoken in a different strain. When delivering his policy speech at Boulder the present Premier said that the Mitchell Government were blameworthy for neglecting to bring the Miners' Phthisis Act into operation on the excuse that it was not justifiable until the laboratory had been established by the Federal Government. Every Labour candidate hotly criticised the Mitchell Government because the Miners' Phthisis Act had not been proclaimed and so brought into operation. Mr. Collier said that it did not make any difference whether the laboratory was erected or not. Last week, however, when replying to a question in another place, he said—

So soon as the laboratory is completed, immediate consideration will be given to the question of proclaiming the Miners' Phthisis Act.

When dealing with the Mitchell Government's attitude, the Premier said that that did not matter.

Hon. J. R. Brown: There was no sign of the building being erected then. To-day it is a completed job.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I was on the works at 11 o'clock yesterday morning, and a contractor told me that it would not be finished until about Christmas.

Hon. J. R. Brown: They are painting it now.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I undertake to say that the building will not be completed until the end of the year. A contract has just been let for the furnishing of the department. The staff has to be appointed and

then they will get to work. I had occasion to inquire regarding the sanitary system and I find that originally the contract provided for £175 for the provision of a septic tank for use in connection with the laboratory. That building is within the grounds of the Kalgoorlie Public Hospital, where there is a septic tank—

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That does not work.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Perhaps that is the reason why they do not intend to construct one in connection with the laboratory. The result is that we shall have the pan system operating there.

Hon. J. R. Brown: That is better than the septic tank at the hospital.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That may be so if it does not work, but it is up to the Government to see that it is attended to. Mr. Miles made reference to the delays in the carriage of dynamite to Meekatharra. It may interest hon. members to know that it takes 14 days to get timber from the South-West to Kalgoorlie. The whole of the work is hung up at times and the contractors are unable to get on with the work. I trust that when later on the laboratory is in working order, we shall see some results and I believe those results will be such as will startle the people of Western Australia. Reverting to the price of meat on the goldfields, however, prior to the elections one of the rallying cries of the Labour Party related to the lifting of the embargo on cattle from South Australia. I was one who attended a deputation to Sir James Mitchell who refused to raise the embargo. He was adversely criticised because he would not do so. I asked a question last week to ascertain what was the difference between the attitude of the Mitchell Government and that of the present regime. I got an answer that indicated that the position was the same with the Labour Government. I was informed that the cattle in South Australia were affected with pleuro and that the Government would not admit stock from that State.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Quite right, too.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You do not suggest that they should.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: No, but members of the Labour Party were not truthful. They knew that pleuro existed in South Australia.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They did not.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They did, and they used that cry for election purposes. People were staggered when they ascertained the answer to my question. They were surprised to find that the present Government gave exactly the same answer as did their predecessors.

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

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The financial question has been dealt with very exhaustively by a majority of speakers, and it is not my intention to traverse it more than to say

that I have yet to learn of the glowing prescription Mr. Collier has to overcome the economic ills of this State. The position was well explained by Sir James Mitchell in his policy speech when he said:—

We look out on times full of difficulty and trouble during which finance will be hard to deal with and the task of carrying on the work of the State will be extremely trying and complicated.

That expresses the view, but Mr. Collier in dealing with the financial position belaboured the Mitchell Government for their lack of administration, and then proceeded to say:—

They have raised all forms of taxation until now it has reached such a height as to be practically unbearable. The income tax has increased 450 per cent. since the Labour Government went out of office.

That may be so, but whether that was political bluff or the truth, I hope the new Government, in the interests of those that are taxed up to the eyebrows, will afford some relief. We have had experience of the financing of former Labour Governments, and I do not think there is anything in their administration that would favourably compare with that of the late Government. When the Scaddan Government were in power it was said of them that they spent all they could get, and in my opinion each successive Government has done likewise. Amongst the stock-in-trade of the present Government is not included a suggestion to conduct sweeps or lotteries to get some finance together, but having regard to the stringency of the money market and the persistent desire of many people to indulge in sweeps, I suggest that the Government consider the calling up of a sum of money by the issue of premium bonds. For a time at any rate we shall be confined as regards any loans that may be raised in Australia, and if the Government issued premium bonds of £5 and upwards they might be able to raise a million of money at 5 per cent. or 6 per cent., and at the same time meet the wishes of those who patronise lotteries by enabling them to invest their money within the State. They could arrange a draw say once a quarter and the lucky bondholders could be given an opportunity to exhibit their thrift by reinvesting in loans. This would assist the Government with further revenue that they might not be able to raise except through the Loan Council.

Hon. A. Burvill: Do you suggest that gambling encourages thrift?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I do not suggest that. People, however, might be invited to be thrifty in this direction, and the Government would meet the wishes of a lot of people who spend money on lotteries outside the State. At present it costs 6s. 4d. for a 5s. ticket in the Tasmanian sweeps. If the Government conducted a draw in bonds here, there would be an opportunity to save one-sixth of the

money that goes out in expenses, and the money would be kept within the State, where it is badly needed., I wish to contrast two decisions given recently by the Government, one regarding the principle of the 44-hour week for a certain section of the community, and another relating to a recommendation by the Public Service Appeal Board. The Premier definitely said that the Labour Party stood for the establishment by legislation of the 44-hour week, but on the platform he did not tell the people that he intended to give a few men the 44-hour week and that others would be taxed to help to pay for it. He left the inference that the party stood solidly for a 44-hour week and would set out to establish it by legislation, which would mean giving the whole of the members of both Houses an opportunity to express an opinion on the question.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Would you support a 44-hour Bill?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, if it were made general to the workers of Western Australia, but I am not a supporter of what the hon. member would call class legislation for one section of the community at the expense of another. I understand the members of the Tramway Union are submitting a request for a 44-hour week because it has been granted to another section. In my opinion they are quite entitled to ask for the concession. A Press report states that the Premier, when questioned regarding the grant or weekly allowance for children of public service employees, said it had been considered by Cabinet which could not agree to the recommendation of the Appeal Board. Ministers took the view that the principle was a big and important one which, if it was to be applied at all, should be applied to all workers, and not merely to a section as was involved in the recommendation. If the Government had been looking after the interests of Western Australia they would have adopted the same attitude regarding the 44-hour week.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Those men had the 44-hour week previously.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am not speaking of what they had. The present Government granted the 44-hour week to a section of the community, and when they considered a recommendation from the Public Service Appeal Board—and not from an organisation—the Government said that because the recommendation did not cover the whole of the men, it would not be wise to grant it. These instances show a flagrant inconsistency on the part of the Government. Again, we have the decision of the Government on the question of higher rates of pay for temporary employees in the Education Department. The Government see no reason to pay

temporary teachers at a higher rate than they would pay permanent teachers. The policy regarding all industrialists who go to the court is to ask for a higher rate of pay for temporary employees. It has been argued, and with a good deal of logic, that this is only fair.

Hon. E. H. Gray: For casual employees.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: What is the difference between casual employees and temporary employees?

Hon. E. H. Gray: A casual is employed by the hour, but a temporary employee may work for the Government for years.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Casual employees invariably ask for more money.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And they are entitled to it because they may get only three days' work a week.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If the rate of pay for casual and permanent labour were the same, casual work would frequently be provided, but when higher rates are demanded, work is not made available. I express the hope that with a Cabinet composed chiefly of goldfields members—

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do not forget the Fremantle members.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The mining industry will be dealt with very generously. Having regard to the support of goldfields members that the Government enjoy in another place, together with the promise of members here to support anything in the interests of the industry, we can look with confidence to the Government doing what is in their power to help the industry which was once the mainstay and which I am optimistic enough to believe will prove to be the salvation of the State. If any measures are introduced by the Government that I consider to be in the interests and welfare of the State, I shall accord them my hearty support.

Hon. A. BURVILL (South-East) [7.43]: I congratulate the Leader of the House and the Honorary Minister on their accession to Ministerial rank. According to the Governor's Speech, the Government are supporting immigration, the land settlement policy and the continuation of group settlement in the South-West as far as funds will allow. This was also the policy of the late Government. It appears to me that though we have a change of party, the new Government intend to carry on exactly the policy of which the country has given its approval.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is a poor compliment.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I also notice that we are to have a Closer Settlement Bill and an amendment to the land tax in order to encourage the utilisation of vacant land. I certainly think a tax is wanted in order to force idle lands into production, and if a measure comes before us that is fair all round, it will have my support. We have

any amount of idle land in the State. The measure it is proposed to introduce should not be a class one; it should aim at forcing into use idle lands in the city as well as in the country. We should not impose a tax on industry. Even if a Closer Settlement Bill is introduced, it seems to me that unless new country is opened up, we shall be forcing up the price of land that may be required by the Government for closer settlement purposes. I consider, therefore, that all available land should be opened up by means of railways for two reasons. The first is because of our white Australia policy. If we do not open up new areas, especially in the North-West, those areas will remain idle, and the second reason is that, if the land is not opened up, that fact in itself will mean the enhancement of the values of estates that the Government may wish to buy.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You are in favour of railways ahead of settlement?

Hon. A. BURVILL: Yes. I notice that the railways last year had a gross surplus of £882,514. Then there is a reference in the Governor's Speech to interest and sinking fund, which, when provided for, left a shortage of about £30,000. I do not consider that interest and sinking fund should be charged against the railways.

Hon. H. Seddon: Then who should pay?

Hon. A. BURVILL: The State as a whole. I do not see why the present generation should have to pay interest and sinking fund. These charges should be met in 20 or 30 years' time because then posterity will be deriving all the benefit. Therefore posterity should pay interest and sinking fund.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But interest has to be paid every year.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Yes, but the State as a whole should pay. Let me make my meaning clear. The taxpayers, and not the users of the railways, should pay the interest. As Mr. Willmott said the other evening, I do not consider that the railways should be expected to pay for the first five years.

Hon. V. Hamersley: You would make the pastoralists in the North, who have no railways, pay for those in the South who have railways.

Hon. A. BURVILL: My opinion is that railway construction in every instance should precede settlement. When Mr. Holmes was speaking the other night he referred to the Port Hedland water supply and somebody interjected, "What is the population?" A year or two ago, when the Denmark to Nornalup railway was under consideration, Mr. Holmes advanced the suggestion that the railway should be built when the groups were developed. My opinion is that such a policy is wrong. The only matter to consider is whether the land is good and whether it will carry a population. We cannot get pioneers to go out and spend half their lives in isolation,

whilst places like Canada construct railways in advance of settlement.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: In Canada the railways are privately owned.

Hon. A. BURVILL: That has nothing to do with it. The railways should always precede settlement. Our process of settlement is altogether too slow. Regarding the North-West, a good deal has been said about the Japanese looking with longing eyes on that territory. I would like to know from the hon. member who is familiar with the Japanese whether he can tell me what the Japanese would do if they did get possession of the northern part of the State. Why, they would spend millions in providing harbours and means of transport before ever dreaming of sending their people there. That seems to me the most sensible thing to do. We talk about protecting our country by constructing naval bases. If only a quarter of the money that it was intended to spend on the Singapore Naval Base had been handed over for expenditure in the North-West, that would have been the best insurance possible for our nation. It is population we want, and until the Governments of the various States, and especially that of Western Australia, alter their policy and provide transport before settlement, we shall remain in the difficulty in which we now find ourselves. In the wet country transport is more necessary than anywhere else. Mr. Angwin, in his journeyings among the group settlements, has perhaps gone further than any other Minister for Lands. He has refused to sanction the establishment of further groups on account of the difficulties of transport. Let me inform hon. members that in the Denmark area the furthest group from a railway is distant 26 miles. This kind of thing will make the cost of groups very heavy. We ought to give all the groupies a chance. Let me give a couple of instances that are worth quoting to show what can be done in the Denmark country, provided, of course, the settlers are not a great distance from the railway. One man last year had 30 acres under crop. From that area he earned £1,500. He paid £300 in wages. In 1921 he had 24 acres under crop and took £1,700 worth of produce from the soil. About half that was profit. It cost him, say, £1 to earn £2. But here is the secret of the whole business. He is only one mile from a railway siding.

Hon. J. A. Greig: What was the nature of the crop?

Hon. A. BURVILL: Potatoes and vegetables. The other man to whom I would refer is only half a mile from a siding. He had 14 acres under crop last year. It was a particularly dry season and his revenue amounted to £615. In 1921, which was a normal year, he had only 10 acres cleared and his gross return was £850. Do not forget that he is only half a mile from a siding. In that part of the State the clearing is just as costly as it is where the

groupies are. The second man whose case I have quoted paid £200 to have four acres cleared and he is now free of the bank. If there had been no transport, it would have been an impossible proposition, except in very good seasons, to cart a distance of, say, five miles. If the distance happened to be 10 miles or more, the proposition would be hopeless. Another matter to be considered in connection with the construction of railways is the provision of feeder roads, which are needed more even than main roads, especially in wet country. There has been a great deal of doubt expressed about railways in this class of country being expensive to build, and when built as to whether they would pay. A year or two ago I gave some comparative statistics regarding this class of country and the wheat areas. I intend to do so again to-night and to bring my statistics up to date. I intend to compare the Denmark to Elleker line with some of those in the wheat belt. The distance from Denmark to Elleker is about 28 miles. In the year ended 30th June, 1922, 2,155 tons were taken over that line and sent to various markets. In the same period 2,206 tons were received on the line, making a total tonnage of 4,361. Besides this, £650 was paid in passenger fares. The Nyabing line, 38 miles long, carried 3,181 tons of produce and received 1,307 tons, or a total of 4,488 tons, but the passenger traffic amounted to only £400. Wheat was the principal traffic on that line. The price received for the wheat per ton mile is 1.12d., whereas on the other line the fruit and vegetables paid 1.95d. So not only was the passenger traffic far greater on the shorter line, but the goods traffic also was the better financially. Since then the Nyabing line has been run out to Pingrup, so last year its total length was 59 miles. During that time 7,922 tons of commodities were taken off the line and 4,000 tons brought on to it, or a total of 12,454 tons. The earnings from passenger traffic still remained at approximately £400. On the Elleker-Denmark line the produce increased to 2,317 tons, and the inward tonnage to 4,824 tons, while the approximate earnings from passenger traffic increased to £1,000. Another point apparent is that the wheat traffic on the Pingrup line pays per ton mile 1.04d., while the fruit and garden produce on the Denmark line pays 2.04d., or just on double. One other point: on the Pingrup line the tonnage onwards swelled a good deal on account of the dry summer, it being necessary to cart water. The water traffic paid the department handsomely, because the freight on water was just about double that paid on wheat. To give an idea of the tonnage: On the Denmark line, to 12½ miles beyond Denmark, we have approximately 60,000 acres alienated, including second class country, and 40,000 acres unalienated, or a total of 100,000 acres. That is all the line can serve. The Nyabing line, not including the

extension, has 590,000 acres, two-thirds of which is alienated; and with the Pingrup extension there is at least another 200,000 acres. So a comparison between the two classes of settlement is very much in favour of a railway paying the better in the Denmark class of country. There is very little wool freight for the railways, and the wheat freight is all over very quickly. Moreover, it does not give nearly the produce per acre that is given in a closely settled country. The railways are losing money by centralising. The lowering of freights on long distances tends to centralise certain products into one or at most two ports. They are doing that at an increasing loss to the railways, according to the tables we have from the Commissioner. Taking the item "Wheat," we find that in 1921 the average haul was 123 miles; in 1924 it was 142½ miles. The earnings per ton mile of wheat in 1921 were 1.12d. and in 1923-24 it was reduced to 1.04d. The reason for that is the extra mileage the wheat was hauled. The further you haul wheat the lower the freight; just how much, I will show from a table I have of the mileage, and the price charged. But before coming to that, I should like to point out that the ton mileage of wheat is 25.59; nearly 26 per cent. of the haulage is wheat. The total goods earnings of our railways was £2,050,707. Seeing that wheat constitutes above a quarter of the haulage, one would conclude that it represented nearly a quarter of the earnings. Instead of that, we find it is a quarter of a million short of it. I do not know whether it is the intention of the Government to reduce the freight on wheat.

Hon. E. H. Harris: All freights.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The ton mileage of timber is 16.22 per cent.

Hon. J. A. Greig: Timber has a high protection against it.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Wheat with 25 per cent. produces £233,798, whereas timber with 16.22 per cent. produces £384,711. The average haul of timber is 74½ miles, as against the average haul of wheat, 142½ miles. I do not know the exact tonnage of wheat hauled to any one port. The only indication given in this table is as to fertiliser, the average haul of fertiliser being 143.16 miles. As we know, the whole of the fertiliser manufactured in this State is manufactured in Perth or Fremantle. Therefore, the whole of it is distributed over the State from those centres. When we find that the wheat is up to the same haulage as the fertiliser, it appears that the whole of the wheat is dragged into Fremantle at a loss.

Hon. J. Cornell: Are you arguing that wheat is carried at the same rate as timber?

Hon. A. BURVILL: No, I am arguing that we should have decentralisation. Take Katanning wheat: From Katanning to Albany is 116 miles. We are charged 11s. 7d.

per ton for wheat. From Katanning to Bunbury is 159 miles, but the freight only rises to 12s. 10d. From Katanning to Fremantle is 237 miles, but the freight is only 15s. 4d. Take Borden: From Borden to Albany is 132 miles, and the wheat freight is 12s. From Borden to Bunbury is 222 miles, and the freight is 15s. From Borden to Fremantle it is 307 miles, yet the freight is only 19s. 6d. The year before last not a solitary bag of wheat left Albany.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Whose fault was that?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I do not know, but these freights encourage that sort of thing. It ought not to be the policy of the Government to haul wheat at a loss away from any one port. I believe in the zone system, but that system should be within the ambit of each port. It is not right that the whole of the wheat should be dragged to one or two ports at the expense of the country.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is too much centralisation at Fremantle.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is said that why the wheat does not go to Albany is that the wheat boats when loaded cannot get out.

Hon. A. BURVILL: They have got out for many years past just as well as they can, at Bunbury or Fremantle. A tremendous lot of wheat that ought to go to Geraldton goes to Fremantle. If the zone system were devised so that it did not go past the ambit of any port, the Minister for Railways would be justified in raising the freights rather than haul wheat at a loss. I am glad to see in the Speech that the Salmon Gums to Norseman railway is to be built. That will do away with a lot of the centralisation policy, and the wheat there produced will be shipped from Esperance, as should have been done there 30 years ago. According to Mr. Maley, the ex-Minister for Agriculture, there is down there a new wheat province to be opened up.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I hope they will expedite the building of that railway.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Yes, and of every other railway that is passed, especially those that are to run through country we want settled. I believe it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Main Roads Bill this session on the lines of the Victorian Act. A Bill of that description is long overdue. What we want more especially, however, is feeder roads. The settlement of the country can best be effected by feeder roads to railways, though I admit that we do want a Main Roads Bill. Parliament must be careful not to follow too closely the Victorian Act. Victoria is at least 50 years ahead of us in settlement. It is a small State, but is thickly populated. Western Australia, however, is sparsely populated and is of great size. We are exactly the opposite to Victoria in these respects, and yet it is proposed to

follow the legislation of that State. I know a road board that covers about 3,500 square miles, three-quarters of which is still unalienated from the Crown. There are nearly 60 miles of what would be main roads in that district. The length of the Albany to Bridgetown main road within its boundaries is 28 miles, and of the Perth main road it is 14 miles. There are also many other main roads it has to look after. In one length of 14 miles the total revenue, including all rates and taxes, is less than £25. It is absurd to expect the ratepayers to maintain the roads under those conditions. If we are to have a Main Roads Bill I hope it will be provided that in no case can any road board be taxed to a greater extent than the amount of rates and taxes that would naturally accrue to it.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Is that land suitable for cultivation?

Hon. A. BURVILL: Some of it is, but it is not cultivated. When roads are constructed probably it will be put to better use. Settlers cannot be expected to pay for the construction of main roads that they do not want. What they require is feeder roads to the nearest railway. In some cases that I know of the settlers have never seen the nearest main road, although they have lived in the district for 20 years.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The tourists are crying out for the main roads.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Yes. We must see that we do not overload some of the poorer districts when we come to deal with the Bill. A good deal has been said about group settlement, now that the settlers are coming near to the end of their term of sustenance. Questions are asked as to how many cows will be required to keep a settler, and what is going to become of him. Undoubtedly the cow is the key to the situation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And the pig.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The other produce that may be grown will be side-lines. The question should be gone into by experts. I have previously given instances of picked settlers who, without cows, have worked themselves into a favourable position. When some of the group settlers are released and are given transport facilities doubtless they, too, will soon get into good positions. Whilst it is necessary to look upon the cow as the key to the situation, every settler cannot be expected to rely upon dairying. I do not think they will require as many as 25 cows. I know of men who are making most of their money out of dairying, and they do not milk more than 15 cows at a time, but get quite a large income from the butter factory. They also breed pigs and cultivate potatoes, etc., as a side-line. Discretion will have to be used as regards the group settlers. It will be necessary to have someone on each group who thoroughly understands the business. The idea of the Minister for Lands in giving a settler one cow to begin with be-



fore he has finished drawing his sustenance is a good one.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That should have been done before.

Hon. A. BURVILL: A great many of the settlers are not dairymen, and to give them 10 cows to start off with would be a calamity. It would be far better to allow them to work up gradually to the full herd. To let them go on drawing their 10s. a day and, when it ceases, hand over to them their herds and expect them to make a success, would be a great mistake. A good deal has been said about the clearing of the land. I look upon the system adopted in the South-West as the best one. I am not referring to the general method of grubbing, etc. The present system is to have the 25-acre portion of each block cleared by the whole group, one block at a time. Many of the settlers come from the Old Country and have had no previous experience in this direction. They had to be taught how to clear their land, because they will ultimately have to clear the whole of their 160 acres, and this was the best way of teaching them. If this method has cost the settlers a little more than it might otherwise have done, in the long run the knowledge they will have gained will prove a valuable asset. I know what would happen if clearing contracts were let. Only a limited number of men are available for the efficient carrying out of this class of work, and, owing to the scarcity of competent men, no doubt the price would be put up accordingly. The Government are wise in carrying on with the present system. I am glad a Royal Commission is to be appointed, for this will lead to a lot of information being obtained that will be of great use to the Government. Unfortunately very few men with any capital are taking up land in the South-West. When Gippsland was settled some 40 years ago, great assistance was afforded to the poorer people there because of the number of moneyed men who took up land. Men who were in business in Melbourne, Ballarat, and other big towns, took up land in Gippsland with the object of retiring on it or making a country home for themselves. They spent thousands of pounds in developing the land. The poorer settlers took contracts for these men, and were greatly assisted in this way to develop their own holdings. We have nothing like that in the South-West, although there are plenty of opportunities for our wealthier citizens to do as was done in Gippsland. At Nornalup Inlet there are about 100 miles of navigable waterway, or could be made navigable without much trouble. I think there cannot be less than 150 miles of good water frontage. The land is not all of the best, but it is good land, and would be ideal for a man who desired to establish a summer residence or make a home to which he could later on retire. If that country were first opened up, it would be an inducement to people to buy there,

and this would be of tremendous help to the group settlers and their sons, who could earn money by carrying out work for the wealthy settlers.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They could make use of the gifts that nature has given us.

Hon. J. Ewing: What areas would you suggest?

Hon. A. BURVILL: Up to perhaps 200 acres. The land should not be parcelled out in large areas. With a little snagging there would be an immense water frontage rendered available along the Frankland river. In any event that land would be ideal country to attract men with money. The Governor's Speech refers to afforestation. It is high time afforestation with pine was encouraged. In the South and South-West, from Albany through to the Leeuwin, there is a great deal of second and third class land with heavy rainfall. In France, where there is a great deal of drift sand, it has been proved that the *Pinus pinaster* grows very well indeed in a climate which we possess in its very perfection. France, indeed, has made pine-growing a paying proposition, apart from the benefit of stopping the drift of sand. Our second and third class land is, of course, much better than drift sand. There have been some experiments in this connection by a development committee which received encouragement from Sir James Mitchell. I know Mr. Angwin has also viewed these experiments. They prove conclusively that the bottle-brush land, or flat land, with rainfall, once the problem of cheap clearing has been solved, will become a payable proposition. The stock-carrying capacity of that land has not yet been finally demonstrated, but we do know definitely that the land will grow grass well. The hills carrying sheoak and jarrah, hitherto regarded as useless, have been proved capable of growing subterranean clover. Just how much of that land would be required for a dairy farm I do not know. However, the land should be cleared by contract; a gang of men should be engaged to clear, say, 50 acres on each farm. None but dairy farmers should be allowed to take up land there. Clearing should be done by machinery; but as the clearing machinery needed for initial clearing and first ploughing is altogether too costly for any one person to own, either the Government should do that work, or a contractor should be employed for the purpose. The clearing of the bottle-brush land is quite different from the clearing of heavily timbered country. The growth on the former is light, and can be pulled by machinery. The bottle-brush land is damp, and therefore good summer land. Once it has been cleared and put under grass, it will grow fine fodder right through the hot season. If Mr. Greig were here he would bear out what I say. He gave careful attention in Albany to a block adjoining cleared bottle-brush country. On that block there is a piece of grass which

has been in use for 30 years. Mr. Greig watched it for the last two years, and he now says it will carry 25 sheep to the acre, and therefore is worth £125 per acre. Mr. Greig considers that land able to carry one sheep to the acre is worth £5; hence his calculation of the value of the plot to which I have referred. As members know, Mr. Greig is a sheep farmer. The bottle-brush land should be combined with hill or sheoak land in the proportions of about one-third of the former to two-thirds of the latter. That mode of subdivision would leave a good deal of land with ironstone; and hill land, which is a poor class of country, has been proved to grow the *Pinus pinaster* to perfection. The land should be surveyed into blocks immediately; the Minister for Lands has hinted that this will be done. When dairy farms of about 300 acres are established here and there amongst the hills, the hill land itself should be reserved for pine growing. The settlers who take up dairy farming would then have wood right alongside their holdings; and they could do the work required by the Forests Department. There would be 500 or 1,000-acre plantations of pines scattered among the dairy farms, and under such conditions the risk of fire would be minimised. In this instance, the Forests Department could work in well with land settlement. Pine is very much wanted in this country, because of the rate at which orchards are being planted, and also because of the rate at which our forests are being cut out. In the absence of pine afforestation our fruitgrowers will have no option but to import wood for cases. The afforestation should begin now. If the Government have not funds for the purpose, they should make provision to have areas reserved for pine afforestation; and the work of planting could proceed at the earliest possible moment. The Governor's Speech also makes mention of a new Drainage Bill. It is high time that such a measure was enacted for the South-West. Our existing drainage legislation is unworkable; indeed, the Act has been a nuisance wherever it has been applied. Under it one cannot do the same as one does under the Roads Act—define an area and proceed with one's work independently of anybody else. Under the existing law governing drainage, a few settlers who find themselves in difficulties owing to water on their land and want to form a drainage board, have first to call a meeting and secure the votes of a majority of the landowners in the district in favour of the creation of a board. What actually happens is that people on the higher reaches of creeks and rivers drain their areas on to the land of the people below them. When the meeting has been called, the people who have drained their lands refuse to agree to the constitution of a board. Only the few people who are flooded out form a drainage board, and then the expense of the work proves to be too much for them. I have seen many drainage schemes, and, with the

exception of that on the Peel Estate, I have not seen one scheme that has not been messed up by the engineers, though a good deal of the messing up is due, not to the engineers, but to the unworkableness of the existing Act, under which the work has to be done. If a drainage Bill is introduced it should cover the whole of the watershed, and main drains should be treated like main roads or railways or harbours. The settlers in the particular district should not be left to bear the cost of the main drains, which should fall on the entire community. If the cost of main drains is to fall on the settlers, it will mean that the first two generations will be asked to pay back the cost, which is an impossibility for them. I would have liked the Peel Estate Royal Commission to consider that aspect of the drainage problem. As regards the Peel Estate, there is an adjoining piece of ground, larger than the estate itself, that drains into the estate. If the cost of the main drain on the Peel Estate is to be charged to the Peel settlers, they will be so overloaded that eventually the Government will be compelled to write off part of the capitalisation. The cost of subsidiary drains should fall on the settlers. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion before the Chair.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Greig debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.41 p.m.*

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*Tuesday, 19th August, 1924.*

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

### QUESTION—ROAD CONSTRUCTION, FEDERAL GRANT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, In connection with the expenditure of the Federal grant for road construction, is it required that unemployed desirous of work should be members of the A.W.U.?