

Mr. Willcock: That is so.

The PREMIER: Then the hon. member cannot complain of the action of this House. Last year our exports were less than before, particularly with wheat and wool, but, nevertheless, we must go on with the work of development and production. We cannot do it from revenue, and so far as it is possible, the State will have to do it from the limited loan funds that will be available. The losses in connection with the railways were considerable last year. These were due, in part, I suppose, to the fact that so much of our wheat remained in the country. I hope that the carry-over will expand our exports this year, and help to restore the balance. Then again, the competition of motor facilities had an adverse effect upon the railway finances, and we propose to deal with that phase. We cannot afford to keep railways and have road competition side by side. Both represent the expenditure of large amounts necessary for upkeep, and we should not be asked to do that. I hope that the railways will show a profit in the near future. The Leader of the Opposition also referred to the cost of production and said that when people talked about it, they always thought of wages. As he pointed out, wages do not represent the only factor in making up the total cost of production. No doubt increased tariffs have led to excessive prices for commodities. While fertilisers are made locally, nearly all the machinery and so forth, which is required on a farm, is imported. Interest is high owing to the excessive Governmental borrowing in Australia, and then we have the tariff, which is ever-increasing, adding to the burden of taxation. I presume it is known to every hon. member that of the three taxing authorities in Western Australia—Federal, local and State—the takes least of all from the people. Last year the State received little more than £1,500,000 as against £1,600,000 that the local authorities collected. In the latter instance, the imposts represented almost entirely a tax against land. The Federal taxation was much higher than that of the State and local authorities combined. On top of that, there were additional charges regarding workers' compensation and so on, all of which imposed a considerable burden on the producers of this country. Thus it will be seen that when we

talk about the cost of production, wages represent merely a part, and there are other phases in connection with which we should endeavour to bring about a reduction. The tariff has placed a heavy burden on primary production and it is in that direction that we should aim at reducing costs considerably. It must be remembered that the primary producer is in competition with others in the world's markets, and that makes the position impossible for the producer in Australia. I have nothing more to say at this stage.

On motion by Mr. McCallum, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.40 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 28th August, 1930.*

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

### QUESTION—GOVERNMENT MOTOR CARS.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, How many motor cars are at present owned by the Government? 2, How many Government motor cars are not at present in use? 3, Is it a fact that the Government recently purchased two new American cars for the Group Settlement Branch, Lands and Surveys Department? 4, If so, how do they reconcile this with their economy and trade within the Empire policy?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, 140. 2, All are in use or are worn out and in process of sale. 3, Yes. 4, New cars were essential for the class of work required,

and those purchased were the cheapest proposition available. English cars are purchased where suitable and possible.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Fifth Day.*

**HON. C. H. WITTENOOM** (South-East) [4.30]: I think it was last year that I arrived here one afternoon to make my Address-in-reply speech with a very bad cold, and another member had to take my place. I am pleased to say that this afternoon at very short notice I am able to take his place. I do not propose to occupy very much of the time of the House, but there are one or two subjects to which I should like to refer. First of all, I am going to allude to almost the first few words in His Excellency's Speech, which state that His Majesty the King has been pleased to extend the appointment of His Excellency the Governor for a period of 12 months. I feel certain that every member will agree with me when I say that, although we have had many Governors here, not any of them has taken more interest in the welfare of the State, nor worked more assiduously than has His Excellency; and although several of his predecessors travelled the State extensively, none did so to a greater extent than His Excellency has done. I feel confident that, as the result of the experience and knowledge he has gained through his travels in Western Australia, he will be able to do a great deal for the State when he returns to his home again. The Speech is a very short one. It seems to me to be largely a resume of the work we have been doing during the last two or three years, instead of a forecast of the work we shall have to do during the coming session. It certainly has a cheery and optimistic note in it which, I hope, the next few years will justify. I am very pleased to see amongst the Bills mentioned an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act. I hope it will mean an extension of the powers of that bank, that its borrowing powers will be enlarged. For if ever there has been a time when the primary producers generally, the men on the land and the mining community, required help, they require it to an even greater extent at the present juncture. Another measure mentioned is the Stipendiary Magistrates Bill. I feel sure it will mean an increase in the

status of the paid magistrates. They occupy a very responsible position, they have highly responsible duties to perform, and should the Bill aim at placing them beyond the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commissioner—I think that is the officer who controls the stipendiary magistrates—if certainly will have my support. Several other Bills were mentioned in the Speech, but we have been told nothing at all about them, and so I think members will be excused if they do not altogether confine their remarks to the matters contained in the Speech. I decline to let this opportunity pass without congratulating you, Sir, on the high honour conferred on you by His Majesty the King. It is certainly an honour you have deserved very much indeed. You have always done all that you possibly could for the advancement of the State, not only in Parliament but outside Parliament as well, and I know I am voicing the opinion of every member of the Chamber when I say how greatly we have always appreciated the able, just, and fair manner in which you have presided over this Chamber. I should like a little juncture to join in the expressions of regret for the loss we have sustained by the death of Mr. J. R. Brown. He was a gentleman we all knew well, he was a good debater and a hard worker, and I am sure every member will feel his loss very much indeed. I should also like to congratulate all those who have successfully passed the rough passage of their elections and retained their seats, and to offer my best wishes to the new members. This is the first session of the fourteenth Parliament of Western Australia. I venture to say that never before in the whole history of Western Australia have the Government had to meet Parliament in such distressing circumstances, and that, I might say, with a little warning. In fact, I think members when they came to the opening of Parliament, must have been rather in a quandary as to whom to congratulate, whether the ex-Premier, Mr. Collier, or the new Premier, Sir James Mitchell. I do not think many of us would have expected two years ago that the financial position of the State would ever have been what it is to-day with our borrowing powers decreased to the extent they have been.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It was known in 1928

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Had I been able to foresee it, I would not have been

pastoralist to-day, for I would have sold my station. His Excellency's speech shows that in 1927-28 the loan expenditure was £4,680,260 whereas in the current year it will not exceed £2,800,000. Also it is shown here that three years ago the amount of Loan Funds available was £1,800,000 more than this year, and that this year the proportion to be secured will be £800,000 less than last year. That is a very serious position. I do not think that two years ago many of us thought our chief exporting products, wheat and wool, would have depreciated in the way they have done, wool to almost half the price it was.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: And sheep to-day are worth practically nothing.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That is so. I read in the newspaper this morning that wethers have been brought down overland and sold for 5s., which would not pay for bringing them down. It means that the present Cabinet have a very hard row to hoe. I think, however, we can congratulate ourselves on this point, that the Cabinet consists of keen, hard-headed business men. And not only that, but half the members of the Cabinet are practical farmers still owning their farms, and have been farming virtually all their lives. Again, the Premier himself is a farmer, is interested in the land, and is an enthusiast in point of land development. I am not going to say much this afternoon, but I wish to touch on a subject which, I take it, every member will touch upon in turn, namely, unemployment. We know the Government have been doing a lot for the relief of the unemployed; in fact, I think the Government can be congratulated upon what they have already done in this regard. But my complaint is that most of the assistance rendered is being given in the metropolitan area, and the Government are not doing all they might for the unemployed in country districts. Private people are coming to their assistance and subscribing very well indeed, but that assistance cannot go on indefinitely. On the other hand, many people are not recognising their responsibilities in this respect, are not coming forward and subscribing to the fund as they should do. I speak from personal knowledge, because down in Albany we have been doing house-to-house collecting. While very often we hoped people were going to subscribe weekly sums, instead of that they paid down 4s or 5s. and that is the end of it. It means that as time goes on there will not be any

funds at all for the unemployed. We cannot go on indefinitely helping people in distress by means of collections. The money will have to come from somewhere. I do not know whether it will come from the State Government or, as it ought, from the Federal Parliament. The money should not be paid out in the form of doles. It should be handed to municipalities and road boards, who would know best how to lay it out, and not as is being done at present at Blackboy, where the men are engaged in clearing footpaths or making roads in the National Park.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about Mr. Holmes's suggestion of clearing land in advance of settlement?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That is a practical suggestion which I hope will bear fruit. The other day I read in the "West Australian" a report indicating that the Lord Mayor's fund was on the rocks. I hope Mr. Franklin will be able to tell us that is not the case. I notice that the fund is becoming smaller every day. In Albany we are making house-to-house collections. This is the most southern of all our towns, and it is as far as people can get in that direction! Not only do we help people who are travelling by road, but we have to look after people from the groups at Denmark. I hope the Government will consider the advisability of establishing in some of the country towns camps such as they have at Blackboy.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And let the men go down there for the summer.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The Premier has been to Albany since the elections were over, as has also the Minister for Lands. We have been able to show to Ministers thousands of acres of land suitable for closer settlement, for dairying and fruit, with a rainfall of between 25 and 30 inches. A great deal of work could be found for unemployed on those areas. The fat lamb market is glutted. It is difficult now to sell fat lambs at a payable price, but in a year or two it will be impossible to do so. We should, therefore, do what we can to encourage the production of fat lambs for export. We should be doing at least as well as New Zealand in this respect, because we are nearer the European markets, and we are also on a steamer route. More important still is the fact that in the South-West and Great Southern we have the longest growing period of any part of the world with the exception of California. As time goes

on, the fat lamb industry will be a big one in this country. I would not have referred to the Fremantle harbour but for a question asked by Mr. Williams, and for certain remarks made in the Press by Mr. McCallum, and replied to by the Premier. We know that inside the harbour there is room for at least two more berths. This should be enough to last for many years until the country is more highly developed. During the peak period of the wheat season it occasionally happens that ships have to berth outside because of the lack of accommodation within the harbour. Undoubtedly we are going to increase our wheat production.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: When it pays to do so.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The previous Government expended about £450,000 on the Geraldton harbour, and quite rightly. I was surprised when Mr. Kempton said yesterday that there were only 25 feet of water there. Considering the large sum of money expended, the Government should have seen that there was a greater depth of water than 25 feet. If Mr. Kempton wants my vote for the deepening of the harbour, he will get it. The improvements effected do mean, however, that a lot of wheat can be loaded at Geraldton that otherwise would be loaded at Fremantle. That is a step in the right direction for the country north of Perth. More wheat should be diverted to the southern ports. If that were done, there would be no need for any extra harbour accommodation at Fremantle. All the wheat could be shipped from either Fremantle, Geraldton, or the southern ports. I hope greater facilities will be afforded for shipment of wheat from Albany. It would be much better to build railways through the farming areas to the ports than to lay out several millions on the Fremantle harbour. The construction of those railways would decrease the cost of producing wheat and improve the living conditions of the men on the land. I have never been to Bunbury or Esperance and know little of their harbours, but I have lived in Albany for a number of years and can say that without the expenditure of a pound at that port the largest ship afloat can come alongside the jetty and load wheat. We have 32 feet of water there, and only 1 per cent. of the world's shipping draws more than 30 feet.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is deeper inside than outside, is it not?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The depth over the bar is more than 32 feet and inside it is 34 feet. Albany is a natural harbour and requires no dredging; neither does it silt up. It is one of nature's finest harbours. The Premier has said that when considering harbour improvements the Government would not overlook the claims of the outports for increased facilities. I was glad to see that reference, and hope for better handling facilities at Albany and more railway communication. Hospital finance generally is in a bad way. Extra wards have been built and more beds provided at the Perth Public Hospital, but no further grants are available either for that institution, the Fremantle Hospital, or the Children's Hospital.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It was necessary to close one of the wards at the Children's Hospital.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I saw that stated in the Press. The following is contained in a report from the Fremantle Hospital. It is headed "Grave Financial Outlook" and says—

Unless we receive substantial support from the Government or from some other source, I consider we will have a debit balance of £5,000 to face at the end of the year.

That is a very serious position. Many of the country hospitals are confronted with the same difficulty. The position will have to be faced this year. Last year nothing was done. The money must be obtained, whether by State lotteries, premium bonds, or some other method.

Hon. A. Lovekin: A hospitals Bill.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Yes. It is time the Municipalities Act was amended. We tried to get that done the year before last and again last year, but we hope to be successful this year. The Act has hardly been altered since 1904 or 1905. It is obsolete, and requires a great deal of amendment. We think provision should be made for an alternative system of rating, either on the annual rateable value or the unimproved value, such as the road boards have. The people of Albany have asked me to bring forward the question of municipalities being permitted to impose a small rate for advertising purposes. Some of the seaside towns derive a good deal of revenue from visitors from other parts. We feel that if

we were allowed to advertise, say, in Colombo or some of the other States, we might persuade many visitors to come to our towns. This would be of benefit not only to us but to the State in general.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Cannot the money be provided from the 3 per cents?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: What then would be left for entertainment purposes? It might be difficult to get a mayor then. I represent a very large province and the people settled within it live mostly by the growing of wheat, wool and fruit. There never has been a time when the men on the land required so much assistance. They do not want assistance to get the basic wage, or anything of the kind. They want help so that they may remain on the land until either the price of their products has improved or the cost of producing them has decreased. Already there are signs of a decrease in the cost of producing wheat and wool, and I hope it will not be long before there is a definite reduction in the cost. I am pleased that the Government recognise the fact that they must not waste money in these times, and in this respect I was glad to notice a little while back that the work that has been going on in the vicinity of the Causeway, where a lot of machinery was in use, has been stopped. The object of the work was merely to beautify that locality. We cannot afford to carry on that kind of undertaking just now. A considerable sum of money has already been spent there, but of course the construction of the work was authorised at a time when money was plentiful. I am not in favour of the suggestion that money should be spent in the direction of carrying out improvements on Mount's Bay Road at the present stage. I noticed a reference in a newspaper the other day to the supposed urgency of this work. The paper advocated the construction of a retaining wall and the carrying out of a certain amount of reclamation. The road as it is has been good enough for all purposes for a considerable time past and a work of that character can be allowed to remain in abeyance. One other matter to which I wish to refer is the question of the reduction of the salaries of members of Parliament. I am certainly in favour of a reduction and I am glad that other members have alluded to the subject. I did not intend to mention it because I am one of the fortunate members who do not have to depend on their salary. I feel that I could never agree to

a reduction all round in salaries and wages unless we in Parliament set the example by first reducing our own. If it is the intention of the Government to submit a Bill having for its object a reduction of members' salaries, it will receive my support. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

On motion by Hon. W. T. Glasheen, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.4 p.m.*

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## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 28th August, 1930.*

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

### QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT.

#### *Picking-up Methods.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Industry: 1, What is the policy of the Government for picking up men for work in the country? 2, Are men to be picked up through the bureau, on the job, or around the streets? 3, How many men have been despatched to Denmark in the last few days? 4, Where were they picked up?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY replied: 1, The policy of the previous Government has not been materially changed, except that preference to unionists does not prevail. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, 25 men. 4, These men were selected by the supervisor in charge of the Nornalup Land Settlement Scheme from unemployed married men resident in the metropolitan area, to undertake preliminary work.