

motor cars should be forfeited. The Bill is, in my opinion, well overdue. I am introducing the measure because I introduced to the Attorney General a deputation of members of the Automobile Club, and he suggested that the Bill was one which should be put up by a private member. I have accepted the responsibility.

Hon. A. McCallum: Three years without the option!

Mr. H. W. MANN: No. It is any period not exceeding three years.

Mr. Kenneally: But there must be imprisonment.

Mr. Parker: No, not under Section 19 of the Criminal Code. The court can fine up to £500, and in addition give imprisonment.

Mr. Kenneally: But the question is, can the court merely fine the accused?

Mr. Parker: Yes.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am much obliged to the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Parker) for bringing that aspect of the penalty under my notice. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 15th September, 1932.

Address-in-reply, tenth day PAGE 638

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [4.34]: Generally speaking, the Address of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor differed very little from those delivered to Parlia-

ment by many of his predecessors. It speaks, of course, of the continued progress made in production by the primary industries of the State. It speaks well for Western Australia that we can, in view of present-day circumstances, claim to be leading the way in many directions with our primary industries. There are two points in which the Speech differs materially from earlier utterances of a like character. The first is that therein we are reminded by His Majesty the King that we are celebrating the centenary of the inauguration of the Legislative Council of Western Australia. The second point is that we are passing through one of the most serious periods the State has ever experienced. For a moment, I want to endeavour to connect up the two phases. In my opinion, the last century proved to be the most wonderful in the history of civilisation. More particularly does that apply to the last quarter of the century. During the latter period, the world as a whole made greater progress than that recorded during any other similar period. As the result of the application of science we have placed achievements to our credit in many directions that 50 or 60 years ago would have been regarded as impossible. Notwithstanding that fact, we find ourselves faced with a period of grave financial stringency. That should give us cause for thought, because if there is to be any real progress made in the world, or in this State, surely the people themselves are entitled to expect at least to share in what should be the benefits of that progress. We must admit that their experience has been contrary to their expectations. Hardly one section of the community has failed to feel the effects of the seriousness of present-day conditions. The cause has been that although we are producing more than ever before in our history, there has been a breakdown in the economic machinery that will not permit our people to have those things that are considered necessary in accordance with our ideas of civilised life. When I hear people say we have turned the corner and can look forward to better times shortly, I ask myself what truth there is in their assertions. I looked through the Speech to see what justification there was for such statements, and I confess I have not been able to get much help. The figures quoted in the

Lieut.-Governor's deliverance represent a fine advertisement, particularly for the primary production of the State, but there seems to be something missing. The more I examine the position the more I am forced to the conclusion that the statements I made last year were perfectly true and have been borne out by the lapse of time. What I said then I propose to repeat. To my way of thinking, there can be no turning of the corner while we have to face an interest bill of £55,000,000 with a population in Australia of approximately 6,500,000 people. I still believe that statement to be true. Until there is some material alteration in that regard, we cannot expect to enjoy that real prosperity to which we are entitled. Let us compare the present year with 1914, when the Great War broke out. We find that the interest bill to-day is 100 per cent. larger than the total revenue of the Commonwealth plus the taxation collected by the whole of the States in 1914. That has regard for the interest bill alone and does not take into consideration money necessary to carry on the activities of government. On top of that, we find that the prices of our primary products have dropped to such an extent that the national income is considerably less than it was in 1914. In view of those circumstances, what justification is there for the statements that have been, and continue to be, made in Parliament, in the Press and elsewhere, that we have turned the corner? I realise that the success of Western Australia depends to a great extent upon the prosperity of our primary industries, and it is to them that we must direct our close attention to enable those industries to survive their present difficulties. Mention of the interest bill that the Commonwealth has to meet reminds me that approximately 8s. in every £1 paid by the State Government also represents interest. When I consider those facts, I ask myself how many private concerns are there that could continue to carry on business under such a load of indebtedness?

Hon. J. Cornell: They would reconstruct.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Of course they would; that is my point. Both last year and the previous year, I stressed the point that it was necessary for something to be done to lighten the load of interest. I did not get much support from members of this Cham-

ber. I am pleased there has been a change of opinion in that direction, and that both members of Parliament and so-called experts, who would not listen two years ago when it was suggested that the interest phase should be dealt with, are now coming round to my way of thinking. I am more than ever satisfied that there are some things that must be attended to before we can say in earnest that we have turned the corner. We must deal with the interest question, with war debts, and with reparations. I know those matters are largely outside the scope of this Parliament, but I assert that there is not only necessity for national co-operation on the part of the Commonwealth, but for international co-operation in dealing with those major problems. If they can be dealt with in a satisfactory manner, then many of our troubles will disappear. Big and difficult issues are involved, but the task should not be beyond the capabilities of those who are guiding the destinies of the civilised world to-day. Our experience during the last two or three years must surely have furnished a lesson to our statesmen, emphasising that sooner or later drastic changes must be effected, and that the sooner the issue is faced, the better for all. The sooner the representatives of the countries concerned get around the table with a view to arriving at some definite solution of the world-wide problems along the lines I have indicated, the sooner shall we enjoy that prosperity we all desire. Having referred to that phase, let me come nearer home and point out that if a private concern were in the position I have described, it would be necessary, as Mr. Cornell suggested, to reconstruct. What applies to the Commonwealth and to the State applies also to the individuals in the State. The primary producers are to all intents and purposes in a bankrupt condition, due to no fault of their own. They are suffering severe hardships, and in most instances the reason for their difficulties is the same as the reason for the difficulties being experienced by the State and the Commonwealth. The fixed charges for interest, etc., take too big a toll of the revenue each year. It will be necessary for the Government to give the primary producers far more consideration in the immediate future than has been given them in the immediate past. The Speech refers to the fact that the rate of interest charged by the Agricultural Bank has been reduced. The farming community are grateful for that

reduction, but there are other directions in which they require assistance. One direction in which assistance must be given sooner or later is in writing-down farmers' debts in the same manner as I claim there must be a writing-down of international debts, particularly war debts. What is the position of the average farmer? According to Press reports, most of the farmers are about to reap a bumper crop. They have done their best to produce to the full capacity of their land. No one can say what the price of wheat will be, but apparently it will not be very high. Apparently the proceeds to be derived from the crop this year are so tied up by creditors that the position of the farmers will be no better after this harvest than it was after last harvest.

Hon. J. Cornell: One great advantage in this State is that the land is not over-capitalised.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That is a good point, but it is not sufficient to get the farmers out of their difficulties. I have met many farmers who within recent times considered themselves fairly well off, but as a result of the drop in prices, they have lost practically all the equity they had in their properties. The Commonwealth Government came to their assistance last year by granting a bonus of 4½d. per bushel on wheat produced. In many instances the farmers had that money to use for their own purposes. They were able to buy clothes and use it for purposes for which their creditors would not make money available. I am afraid that if as has been said, no bonus will be forthcoming this year, a majority of the farmers will find themselves in greater difficulties than those of last year, notwithstanding that they have done their best to produce to the full capacity of their land. Therefore it will be necessary for the Government to give the farmers a little more genuine consideration.

Hon. J. Cornell: The farmers who might have come under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act and did not?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That Act has served a useful purpose, but it could be amended with benefit to the farmers and to the State. I come now to the large body of workers, a great proportion of whom are without employment or have only partial employment. The concluding paragraph of the Speech states—

With the loan money arranged at the last Premiers' Conference, it is anticipated that

part-time work will be found for the majority, if not all, of those now in receipt of sustenance. This should result in considerable business activity and a revival of trade generally.

Never before have there been so many workers out of employment as there are to-day. The Government claim that they are employing a larger number of men than were employed previously, but that statement needs to be qualified. While it is a fact that a large number of men are working for the Government, it cannot by any stretch of imagination be claimed that they are employed in the ordinary sense of the term. Figures produced in another place show that hundreds of men working for the Government are drawing no more than 25s. 2d. per week. No reasonable individual would claim that that was employment in the ordinary sense of the term.

Hon. J. Cornell: Working for their tucker.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Yes. Hundreds of men are receiving remuneration ranging from 25s. 2d. to £3 a week, according to their family responsibilities. Most of those men are working, not in the metropolitan area, but in the country, and consequently they have to keep two homes. That is a big handicap. While it is necessary to give attention to questions such as war debts and the interest bill, we cannot attain real progress until our people are placed in work, not at work on the pay they are getting to-day, but at remunerative rates that will enable them to purchase more than the bare necessities to keep body and soul together. Many men, particularly those who have taken work in the country, have to pay approximately £1 per week for their keep. It may be said that in some of the camps they can live for 15s. a week, but £1 a week is a fair average estimate. They are being paid only £1 per week over and above the sustenance rate, and consequently there is no improvement in their position. The purchasing power of those workers is so low that, apart from the grocer and baker, and, to a smaller extent, the butcher, they are doing practically no business with the tradespeople. It is not possible for them to buy clothing, boots, furniture, bedding or anything of that kind, and firms dealing in those lines are having a particularly lean time. On the other hand, tradesmen dealing in food and groceries are not so greatly affected. I real-

ise that the Government cannot do all that they would like to do, but we must not forget that until such time as the bulk of our people are able to buy more than the bare necessities of life, there can be no prosperity for the trading community. The Government would be well advised to consider providing full-time employment for as many of the workless men as possible. I shall be told it is impossible to do that on account of the shortage of money. That is hardly correct. The Budget is to be introduced this afternoon, and I understand the Premier is budgeting for a deficit. If the experience this year is similar to that of the past, the actual deficit at the end of the year will be greater than the estimate. Consequently the men employed by the Government should be put on full time. Although they cannot be given full-time work throughout the year, there is no reason why they should not be paid sustenance during the portion of the year when full-time employment is not available. Unless the Government do something along those lines, it is futile to talk of our having turned the corner. I have only to cite my own province as an example. At least 75 per cent. of the tradesmen in the Fremantle district are as near to bankruptcy as are the farmers. Instead of the position improving, it is becoming worse. Only this morning I had a conversation with two prominent business men at the port, and if half of what they told me is true, they and many others are within an ace of having to close their doors.

Hon. J. Cornell: Your corner is not a right-angle one.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: No, it is a rounded corner. The Government have announced their intention to impose an unemployment tax.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you sure they call it an unemployment tax?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: According to the Press it is so called. I understand that the hospital tax is to be increased from 1½d. to 6d. in the pound, and that the whole amount is to be collected at the source.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It ought to be a six-penny unemployment tax.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Let us see how far it will go towards relieving unemployment. If the newspaper reports are correct, I say unhesitatingly that it cannot be called an unemployment tax. It is nothing

more or less than a tax imposed to assist the Treasury and to enable the Premier to reduce the amount of the deficit at the end of the financial year. Whether it be called an unemployment tax or not, it is certainly being introduced on the understanding that it is to relieve the position as far as unemployment is concerned. I believe it will relieve the Treasurer but it will not relieve the position of the unemployed. I suggest that the latter will be far worse off after the infliction of this tax than they are to-day. Originally the hospital tax was introduced with the idea of providing more money for the hospitals, and we were told that certain contributors to that so-called hospital fund would be entitled to free treatment. For a while everyone assumed that that was correct, but it was not long before they were disillusioned. We have now reached the stage that notwithstanding the fact that everybody in the State, sustenance workers and all, who are receiving an income, have to pay 1½d. in the pound as a hospital tax, no one is entitled to receive any benefit as the result of that payment. We are told that every case is treated on its merits, and that may apply in a good many cases, but I know of scores of cases where men who have not even been earning the basic wage have been called upon to pay for hospital treatment. The same thing will apply to the so-called unemployment tax that it is proposed to introduce. The Treasurer will be relieved, but the unemployed will not, as far as I can understand, receive one penny per week more than they are getting to-day, and no one can say that the sustenance rates of this State—whilst fair as compared with the rates paid elsewhere—are sufficient to allow unemployed to get enough to eat, pay rent and purchase what little they require in the way of clothing. As a matter of fact, it is only sufficient to provide for them the very bare necessities of life. That will still meet the position in respect of the unemployed, though to-day it is possible for deserving cases to get additional relief in the way of clothing, food and other necessities because of the activities of relief committees. But the moment the unemployed tax is put into operation, everyone will say, "We are now being taxed for this purpose; we are paying 1s. 6d., 2s., or perhaps 10s. a week more and therefore we are not going to contribute any further to the voluntary relief

committees." For two years I have been secretary of the relief committee at Fremantle. Last year we distributed over £7,000 at a cost of less than £10. We were able to provide a tremendous amount of relief to most deserving cases, and this year we have carried on in the same way. We have distributed hundreds of pounds to hundreds of people and have provided clothing, boots and in some cases medical attention, but I am afraid the moment this tax comes into operation our funds will automatically cease, and it will not be possible to do for the unemployed in the future what we have been able to do for them in the past. While I am not complaining about the Government increasing taxation, because I believe it is necessary, I do object to the Government claiming that this tax to relieve unemployment is an unemployment tax. Let us call it by its proper name, a revenue tax. If the Government succeed in getting this tax through, I hope they will be a little more generous than they have been in the past to certain sections of the unemployed. I am referring to families where there are children over 14 years of age. At present the Government say to the father of a family, "You are not entitled to any relief or sustenance as far as children over 14 are concerned, except of course in certain cases." In those cases relief is given to one member of the family if there happens to be two or three more in that family under the age of 14. Then the Government say to the father that the moment the son over 14 is employed, now matter for how long, so long as he is bringing in some relief, that will be taken into consideration when assessing the amount of sustenance being paid. That is not fair, and if the proposed tax comes into operation I trust the Government will be more generous in the direction I have stated. I did intend to refer to the question already mentioned by several members, namely, the encroachment on the part of the Federal Government. While listening to Sir Charles Nathan, I had hoped that we would have had some light thrown on the position. To my way of thinking very little light was shed on the situation, and as I understand it, it is no different from what I said it was by way of interjection when Sir Charles Nathan was speaking. I suggested by interjection that we must at least take note of what the Premier had said and that was that the Commonwealth had expressed the determina-

tion to have some say about the expenditure of money raised by the State Government by way of pound for pound on the money advanced by the Commonwealth. Sir Charles Nathan said he preferred in matters of this kind to look into them for himself and not to take the statement of the Premier or anyone else.

Hon. J. Cornell: Or the statement of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. T. Moore: The bailiff never does.

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: Apparently you do not know what the bailiff is.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Very definite statements were made in another place, but to my way of thinking Sir Charles Nathan has not shown that those statements are not true. The statements were made by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and they were very definite. The Premier went so far as to say that the Commonwealth Government had introduced a Bill with the object of doing that which the Leader of the Opposition had claimed they had done. This was a Bill to render it necessary for the board to approve of the expenditure of £145,000 which this State was to raise on a pound for pound basis on the amount advanced by the Commonwealth. The Leader of the Opposition said that that was the position to-day and the Premier replied, "Yes, that is so." Sir Charles Nathan set out to disprove that.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He quoted from the Bill.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The object of the hon. member was to show that the statement of the Premier was not in accordance with facts.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It was a misinterpretation of the Bill.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: We have to agree now that the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition did say what I have attributed to them. Anyway, I will leave the matter there and perhaps refer to it again at a later period. I understand that the money has been approved and all has been spent. Consequently it is no use arguing about it any further. There is one other matter to which I should like to refer. It appears to me—I may be wrong—to be just another way in which the Commonwealth Government to-day are endeavouring to put on the shoulders of the State Government an expenditure which should not be ours. In recent

weeks I have had one or two cases brought under my notice of war pensioners who have had their pensions considerably reduced without any apparent reason. The position of those men has been such that it has been necessary for the State Government to go to their assistance with a grant or a weekly payment.

Hon. J. Cornell: That has been brought about by a little man in the Repatriation Department trying to save the Commonwealth.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It is another way in which the Commonwealth are apparently trying to put on the shoulders of the State the responsibility of finding a certain amount of money annually for these people. I know of the case of a returned soldier with five children. His pension was cut down by 20 per cent., notwithstanding the fact that he had a medical certificate to prove that he is permanently incapacitated from work. The man is really very ill and I have interviewed him on several occasions recently. I found it necessary to take his and other cases to the State Child Welfare Department with a view to securing some relief. The poor fellow was practically starving and the State department had to provide a certain amount of money, no less than one guinea a week to save him from starvation. That is distinctly unfair and if it is part and parcel of the policy of the Repatriation Department or the Commonwealth Government, it is about time the State Government took up the matter and declared emphatically that this was not our responsibility. The position of the State to-day is not much different from what it was last year. I sincerely hope that as a result of international activity some material alteration will take place in our position in the near future. I should like to reiterate that there can be no material alteration in our real progress until the three or four matters to which I have referred have been attended to, the question of our interest bill, reparations, war debts, the raising of the price level and the putting into employment of the great majority of our people, realising as I do that it will probably be many years before we shall be in a position to absorb the whole of our workers. I do claim, however, that it should be possible for the State Government to find more employment than is being found to-day. They could place more men on full-time work rather than have a large number

working for sustenance payments only. I shall conclude, Sir, by extending to you my congratulations on your re-election to your high office, and I wish to add my quota to the sentiments expressed in regard to the passing of those who were members of this House, who did so much useful work on behalf of the State.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.15]: I wish to join with other members in congratulating ourselves on having re-elected you, Sir, to the position of President of the Chamber. Also with other members I join in expressing regret at the death of the Hon. Mr. Lovekin, and at the defeat of so many past members of the House, while at the same time I extend a hearty welcome to those new members who have been elected. Glancing through the Speech, I have to agree with a certain amount of what Mr. Kitson has said. It is a world problem with which we are faced, and there are certain things which the State and the Commonwealth could do but which have not yet been done. There has been a great deal of talk of unemployment, which is one of our main difficulties. Unemployment will continue while the Governments are satisfied to go on without balancing their Budgets and depend on short-term loans for their financing. During the last two years some £80,000,000 have been raised by short term loans. The sooner the financial institutions stop the credit of all the Governments, the sooner shall we get over this crisis in Australia. In my opinion it is private enterprise that will re-employ the unemployed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is very slow about it.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Some people talk of Governments as if they were supreme beings. Governments represent the taxpayers, the thrifty men of the country, but I regret to say that for a number of years past both Commonwealth and State Governments have been ruining the country for the benefit of the waster and the loafer, as against the thrifty and the honest worker. The whole method of Government has to be altered and the cost of Government has to come down. It is astounding to think of the amount it is costing to govern Australia, Commonwealth and States—£450 per minute, day and night. We have too elaborate a service; we have Ministers and heads of departments, drawing big salaries, but they never tackle their jobs as they should do. Anybody who was getting over £2,000 per

annum at the beginning of this crisis should have had his salary cut in halves. Members of Parliament should have given a lead. Last year I tried to induce the House to spread this sacrifice, instead of, as they did—and all the States did the same—bringing in a reduction of 22½ per cent.

Hon. J. Cornell: I can see all members of Parliament following your lead.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If the House had followed my lead we would not be in the position in which we are to-day. It is all very well for members to stand up and say that they who do not belong to the Labour Party do not represent the workers. I claim that every member of Parliament should represent the workers. Yet the workers' representatives, as they call themselves, were not prepared to support me in my endeavour to have bigger cuts made in the higher salaries. If only the financial institutions would refuse credit to the Governments, the unemployed would get back to work much sooner than they are likely to by the methods we have adopted. Repeatedly have I advocated the suspension of the Arbitration Court and the amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. Can we afford to pay 50 per cent. more, and even double the amount that is paid in the other States, for a finger or an eye or an arm? Because the last Government could not get their way in creating a State monopoly, they have allowed the Workers' Compensation Act to go on. The trouble is that there is too much party. Everybody should be for the country and nobody for the party. In this State we should sink all party differences. It would be a good thing if we could have proportional voting and elective ministries, and so have the best brains of the several parties to control the business of the State; and, better still, if it were possible, would it be to have business men instead of the Government to run the country.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They would ruin it in no time.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Certain remarks have been made in regard to "bailiffs" and the £145,000 that was granted to this State as a gift. When that sum was granted there were certain moneys granted to each State in the Commonwealth. At that time we had Mr. Lang in power in New South Wales, and the Commonwealth Government could not treat the other States differently from New South Wales. So they were justi-

fied in appointing a couple of men to supervise the expenditure.

Hon. T. Moore: Why do not they take those men out now?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Why should they?

Hon. T. Moore: Lang has gone.

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: And so has the money.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I had the pleasure of going into one "bailiff's" office the other day, and I saw the systematic way in which the staff was working. Also I had occasion to visit a banking institution, and again I saw the systematic way in which the place was being worked. If we were to appoint those business men to go into each of the Government departments and put it on a business basis, hundreds of thousands of pounds could be saved to the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: Are those business concerns producing anything?

Hon. G. W. MILES: They are carrying on their business in a way that would astound the Government. It is a pity the electors do not realise the position. A man gets up on a soapbox and refers to the "free and intelligent electors," and asks them for their support. For years there has been a system of buying votes throughout Australia, and it has been the ruin of the country. I say definitely that democracy has failed. I have here a pamphlet on unemployment which I think is worth quoting. It reads as follows:—

Tolstoy said: "The rich will do anything for the poor, except get off their backs." It may be said of Australian politicians, "They will do anything for the workers except allow them to work." The "honest toiler" is permitted to judge for himself as to how much beer he shall drink, or tobacco he shall smoke, and how many hours of the day and night he shall spend at pictures or sports, and he can dilate with all the confidence of a banker as to the disbursement of millions of public money, and especially on his pet hobby "release of credits." Quite untrammelled he exercises the franchise, after many assurances given from off the stump by would-be members of Parliament that he is a "free and intelligent elector." In these and many other ways he is considered to be full grown and quite compositus. But if unable to find a job at award rates, and rather than that he and his family should languish indefinitely on the dole, he finds an employer with whom he can make a mutually satisfactory agreement as to wages and conditions, then the law steps in, and adopting the attitude of a sort of Master in Lunacy, treats the "free and independent elector" as though he were a moron, unable to protect himself. The result is that he is prevented from earning sustenance for his family.

I suggest that such workers should be allowed to contract themselves out of the influence of those disastrous facilities—arbitration court awards. Having nothing worse recorded against them than the Australian crime of wishing to work and keep their families from penury, men should be able to claim what might be called a "ticket of leave" issued as an act of grace by the politicians and Trades Hall to their prisoners, for though the Trades Hall is not now in office, it is always in power. Otherwise any person finding himself thus deprived by his country's laws of the right to sell his labour to best advantage should, in common justice, receive from his country's exchequer the amount of income thus denied him. We hear much in condemnation of "class hatred." Arbitration and such like courts are factories for the mass production of class hatred. How can they not be so with capital and labour pitted against one another, each trying to get the inside running, and not being over particular as to how they get it? Incidentally, there is no one in these courts to represent those who matter most—the general community. Just now a request, nay, a demand, is being made that anyone who can possibly squeeze out the money shall give employment! Many people, no doubt, would gladly try to acquiesce, but for the knowledge that under existing conditions of inflated costs of labour and materials, if they did so they would soon be on the dole themselves.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Who is the author of that?

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is headed "Sane Democracy."

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is Communism.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, it is not Communism at all.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is worse.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Government, on the 14th November, altered their method of finding employment for the unemployed, by putting them out to work for farmers at 10s. a week. It was said that some of the farmers abused the position.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A number did.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Some of them did, for they paid off certain of their workers and put on sustenance men. The Government should have prosecuted those people for that. The proper means of assisting the unemployed was to continue that 10s. a week to the farmers, who would have employed thousands of men on their farms. It would have assisted the farmers themselves, and so would have created more work for the railways and for the lumpers at Fremantle. Also it would have created more wealth, instead of having the men shifting sand all over the country. Certainly that is one

method by which more men could be put to work. Another is that instead of the Government handling this money—and I refer to all Governments when I say they are not competent to deal with the situation—it ought to be done through private citizens. Suppose a man wants to paint his house. The work is going to cost, say, £50, and he has only £25. The Government could say to the owner, "We will arrange with a private institution to finance you for that amount and spread the repayments over a term of years." Then the owner could employ a number of men painting his house. Or suppose a man with £400 wanted to build a house at a cost of £700 or £800. The Government could say to that man, "We will arrange to finance the building of your house." Then he could go ahead and so provide work for a large number of artisans and craftsmen. The private owner, and not the taxpayer, would then be responsible for the repayment. The Lyons Government have been criticised for reducing the old age pensions. No one wants to see wages reduced or old people suffer. The pension was given originally to assist thrifty people to live, and to prevent the necessity for their going into some home. In the old days the young people used to be proud to do what they could for their parents. That was so until the present socialistic policy was adopted by various Governments. This amounts to saying to the rising generation, "Spend all your money on picture shows, horse-racing and the like, and the thrifty people of the community will give you an old age pension when you are aged." This is ruining the rising generation and it is not fair to them that it should be allowed to continue. We should have some form of national insurance. People talk glibly about releasing credits and giving pensions. Do they ever think what this is costing the country? The money is not being found by half-a-dozen Ministers making up the Government, but by the thrifty people of the country.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The thrifty or otherwise.

Hon. G. W. MILES: In the old days thrifty people used to put a few shillings a week into a building society, and ultimately build a home for themselves and another one for letting purposes, so that they might have something to help them in their old age. The Government now put a super-tax upon those

people in order to keep the waster. The pension started at 10s. a week. As the elections were coming one party said it would be increased to 15s. Gradually the amount rose to £1 a week. Did all the Governments realise what this meant to the country? To pay this £1 a week is equal to having a capitalisation of £1,000 for every old age pensioner.

Hon. E. H. Gray: These old people deserve more than that.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Why did they not save their young days instead of squandering their money?

Hon. C. B. Williams: There was no Arbitration Court in their day.

Hon. G. W. MILES: At the reduced rate the pensions are equal to a capitalisation of £780 for each pensioner. According to Mr. Lyons the saving of half-a-crown represents a total of £1,100,000. He figures out that there are 169,000 old age pensioners. At £39 a year this is equal to a capital value of £132,000,000 that has to be found at 5 per cent.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It should be our most pleasurable task in life.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The "Bulletin" claims that there are 240,000 old age pensioners. If that is so, it means a capitalisation of £197,000,000 to pay pensioners 15s. a week.

Hon. G. Fraser: Some of them are only receiving half-a-crown a week.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The pension has been reduced from 17s. 6d. to 15s.

Hon. G. Fraser: Thousands are receiving less than that.

Hon. G. W. MILES: On the figures the statement cannot be contradicted. It is all very well to get the vote of the old people. A lot of the talk to-day amounts to paudering to them for their vote.

Hon. G. Fraser: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I say it does. A tax has been put upon the rising generation. The sooner we get men into power who have the courage to place this country on a proper business basis, the better will it be for Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: We can only get that by putting young men into Parliament.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That might be a good thing. Even in our own Parliament members say the Government should do this or that. It is costing us £16 a minute day and night to run Western

Australia, even if the Budget is balanced. How long can the country continue under such conditions? The cost of production must be brought down. It should have been tackled two years ago. The Labour Party say that the emergency tax, which the Government now propose to bring down, is an unemployment tax. It is nothing of the kind. It should be termed an income tax that is spread over the 80 per cent. of the people who are paying nothing. As Sir Edward Wittenoom has said, every man who has a vote in the country should pay some taxation.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are all paying indirectly.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Mr. Holmes said it was better to have the whole community working at £3 per week than 70 per cent. working at £4 a week. The 70 per cent. do not realise that they have to pay the extra £1. They are taxed for it and they suffer that loss. Certain members say they represent the worker. I claim to represent the worker as much as, if not more than, many who get into Parliament on the workers' vote. Were the country run as it should be, there would be work for all.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Your party has had a go for nearly three years.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have no party. I have tried to be independent in this House. The strength of the Council lies in the fact that it is a non-party House. It was non-party until the Labour Party, and then the Country Party, with all their party meetings, came into Parliament. The other section do not attend party meetings; they exercise their own discretion as to how they shall vote.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Your meetings are directors' meetings.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have some interesting figures showing the extent to which the national debt has gone up. In 1931 it went up to £1,156,000,000, from what it was in 1920, namely, £778,000,000. The interest bill has increased from £145 per head to £177.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Have we not had value for that?

Hon. G. W. MILES: A lot of the money has been squandered. Under the Premiers' Plan the deficit for Australia for 1931-32 was to have been £14,650,000. The Budget Estimate for 1931-32 was £17,531,000, and for the eight months ended in February the de-

feit was actually £21,000,000. The debt per head for the Commonwealth increased by 9s. 9d., for New South Wales by £3 19s. 2d., for Victoria by £1 18s. 3d., South Australia by £3 9s. 1d., Western Australia by £3 9s. Queensland by 32s. 5d., and Tasmania by 14s. 8d. Notwithstanding the position, loan Bills and Appropriation Bills continue to come down. We have to pass them because it is the custom to do so. This House should refuse to pass these Bills, bring about a crisis, and educate the people as to what is going on.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you quoting the Statistician's figures or the "West Australian's" figures?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The figures are taken from the Commonwealth Statistician.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you sure?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Is the document you hold issued by the Nationalist Party?

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is issued by the Citizens' League in South Australia, a body that represents all sections of the community.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I thought the figures might have emanated from the Trades Hall.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I have shown how the country can be run and the people got back to work.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member has suggested a way to do this.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If people have the courage to follow it. The trouble is that members of Parliament have not the requisite courage. We must put into Parliament men who have the courage to run the country first, and to put themselves and their party last. The curse of this country has been the principle of one man one vote and the payment of members. There is another way in which the unemployed can be assisted. I wish I had had an opportunity to discuss it with some of the authorities before they had spent the money. A great deal of good could have been achieved by utilising funds in the extermination of vermin. Pastoralists and farmers at present pay a vermin tax, and are supposed to keep down the vermin in their part of the country. The Crown lands of the State belong to the taxpayers. If the Government would increase the amount

that is allowed for the killing of dogs and foxes, hundreds of men could be employed in the destruction of vermin. This would be of tremendous good to the country itself, as well as to the men concerned. Some of the Commonwealth money should have been used in this direction. All that the Minister for Agriculture does is to put up the price that is paid from 5s. to 7s. 6d. per head. I hope the Government will take this suggestion into consideration. If any more money is forthcoming from the Commonwealth for the assistance of the unemployed, it could well be used in this direction instead of putting the men on to shift sand.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You would suggest paying according to the number of vermin secured?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, at so much per head. I agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom's remarks regarding the spending of money on the University. The grant of £25,000 or £30,000 could well be withheld for the time being. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on the stand you took as a member of the Senate concerning those professors who are away from the institution. People talk about a 30-hour week at Collie. The Collie miners are slaves compared with university professors.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about members of Parliament?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The Government should cut out that subsidy for the time being. Already we have free primary education, and bursaries and scholarships for smart children to enable them to go to the University. Nothing more is necessary. Professional men are settling in this State in order that their children may be educated at the University at the expense of the taxpayer.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is a tribute to the University.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is another tax on the few thrifty people in the community.

Hon. J. Cornell: They do not pay.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Of course not. That is why they come here; and 12 per cent. of the taxpayers are footing the bill. The wasters expect us to educate their children for nothing.

Hon. G. Fraser: The 4 per cent. who pay get it from those who do not pay.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Not at all. There is an opportunity in this country for every one to make good if people have the courage and the backbone to work, instead of listening to trades hall secretaries, slowing down in their work, and laying 400 bricks in a day instead of 1,000. This slowing-down is one of the causes of our high rentals. Men are now willing to take on piece work instead of day labour.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you suggest that the 16,000 unemployed in this State would not do work if they could get it?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not; and if my scheme were adopted and the Arbitration Court were suspended, there would be work to-day. Why do the banks hold those large credits to which Mr. Drew referred? Simply because people are not game to invest their money. The father of one of my constituents died leaving £10,000 deposited in the Union Bank. The son asked me what he should do with it. I replied, "Let it remain where it is. The banking institutions are the only people running their businesses on business lines." Were it not for the financial institutions, Australia would go down and there would be no pay for members of Parliament. The sooner there is no pay for members of Parliament, the better will it be for Australia.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Twelve months ago you said that wages should be reduced 20 per cent.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I said nothing of the sort. I asked that wages be reduced by 33½ per cent. down to 15 per cent. instead of from 22½ per cent. to 18 per cent. I suggested to the hon. member that he should join with me in making that request, but he would not. Recently I read some statements concerning a mortgage bank. In other parts of the world it is against banking principles to advance money on mortgage, but in Australia it has been done. If the Commonwealth would establish in the Commonwealth Bank a department to advance money to agriculturists on long terms and at low rates of interest, credit would be released and the private banks would be able to extend the accommodation they grant to private enterprise. That would be one means of assisting the man on the land. As for the wheat bonus, a better scheme would be to pay a bonus on super. Then all sections would receive the benefit. From the wheat bonus the man who has poor land

and a poor crop does not derive the same advantage as the man who has rich land. The wheat bonus does not represent a fair method of assisting the farmer. The exchange question, too, should be reconsidered; that is, if Governments could be trusted to carry out their pledges. I deliberately make that qualification.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The Labour Governments observed their pledges.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No. Labour Governments are just as bad as the others. The way they acted in regard to the gold bonus makes me say that. As regards exchange, it would be better if exchange were regulated back to normal. At present the exchange is equivalent to a Customs supertax of 25 per cent. on all goods imported. Our Premier complains of the £600,000 he has had to pay in the form of exchange on this State's interest payments in London. In the case of the Commonwealth the exchange amounts to £6,000,000 or £7,000,000. The money paid by way of exchange could be used to subsidise the primary industries until prices lift. That would be better, in my opinion, than keeping up the exchange rate. In addition, various necessary commodities coming into Australia would be sold more cheaply, and the Federal Government would receive more revenue through the Customs. The matter of exchange, therefore, might well be reconsidered.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Was not the object of pegging the exchange to prevent money from going out of the country?

Hon. G. W. MILES: That may have been one of the reasons, but I think that the main reason for increasing the exchange was to assist the primary producer. We have to thank Mr. Davidson, of the Bank of New South Wales, for giving the lead in that direction. I hope the Government will amend income tax legislation so as not to charge the primary producer, the cattle grower and the sheep grower, for increase of stock upon the birth of a lamb or a calf, but to defer the collection of tax until the animals are realised upon. Then the owners would have money with which to pay the taxation. At present they have not the funds to pay tax on the increase. I hope the Leader of the House will take note of this suggestion.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Would you think it an advisable amendment to make the Taxation

Department accept the tax in kind, at their own valuation?

Hon. G. W. MILES: That is getting on to another subject. My colleague disagreed with Mr. Thomson and other new members as to reduction of the number of members of Parliament. I cannot agree with him there. I have always said that the payment to members should be reduced, and that in the Assembly 30 members and in the Council 20 members would be sufficient.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Was not that merely tickling the ears of the people?

Hon. G. W. MILES: No. To-day, at all events, I have said nothing that tickles the ears of the people. I do not mount a soapbox and ask the people to vote for me. I do not care whether I am in Parliament or not. Another matter on which the Government should approach the Commonwealth is the abolition of Federal land tax. I congratulate our Government on having cut out taxation on agricultural and pastoral lands last year. The taking of a similar step by the Commonwealth would be a relief. I know of a big company, employing thousands of men, which has been paying land taxation at the rate of £50,000 a year. The company did not earn the money, and in five years had to take a quarter of a million sterling out of capital to pay the land taxation.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Is that a company operating in Western Australia?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, in Western Australia and in other States of the Commonwealth. Mr. Drew and Mr. Kitson referred to the interest charges of the banks. However, Mr. Piesse effectively replied to both hon. members.

Hon. J. M. Drew: I do not think so.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I know that the rate of interest in my case has come down 1½ per cent. I also know of other such cases. The reduction came without my having to go cap in hand to ask for it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You must be pretty good!

Hon. J. M. Drew: The reduction is not general.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I confirm the statement already made that the banks are playing the game. At the start they had their contracts with borrowers at certain specified rates of interest for one or two years. However, the banks came back in the rates of interest, which I understand are being still further reduced. I thank the Leader of the

House and Mr. Latham and Mr. Scaddan for having made a trip through the North-West. No doubt it was an education to them. I am glad to think that you, Mr. President, were with the Ministers during that journey. I heard both you, Sir, and Mr. Latham make speeches on the subject of the North; and I may be permitted to state that you now hold the same opinions concerning that portion of the State as I have held for a number of years. I do not wish to speak at length regarding the North, because a committee is now considering means for advancing that part of Western Australia. I ask the Leader of the House at this stage whether it is not possible to spend £200 out of funds for unemployment relief on having a landing ground for aeroplanes cleared at Wyndham. If the magnificent sum of £200 were spent in getting the Wyndham unemployed to do that work, there would be a chance of Wyndham becoming an overseas airport. I am glad the Government introduced legislation to alter the law relating to hire-purchase agreements. One of the things which have helped to ruin not only this country but also other countries, including the United States of America, is the mortgaging of the future, by buying goods on the hire-purchase or time-payment system. Not a quarter of the buildings in our suburban areas are paid for; they have been erected on the time-payment system, and furnished on time-payment, and have wireless sets, gramophones, motor cars, and what-not on time-payment. If the existing legislation is not strong enough, I hope Parliament will pass an Act to prevent time-payment or hire-purchase dealings in future. That system is one of the reasons for the present state of trade.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Do not you think the merchants were foolish to grant time-payment terms?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The merchants had security by reason of the manner in which the business was worked. The wide extension of the system is not in the best interests of the public. I blame the electors for allowing things to go on as they are going to-day. It is put up to the electors that they are free and intelligent men, but members of Parliament and the Trades Hall will not let them work. Mr. Mann criticised the attitude of Mr. Holmes in regard to Collie coal, and said that Mr. Holmes wanted coal to be brought here from Newcastle. Mr. Holmes wants nothing of the sort. Neither do I want

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anything of the kind. The Collie commodity should be delivered at a reasonable price, so as to help to bring down the cost of production. The Railway Department have not played the game in regard to freights on Collie coal, and I fail to understand why the Royal Commissioner appointed a year or so ago to go into the question did not complete his task. Now we are told that a reduction in the price of Collie coal has not yet been fixed definitely, but is being considered by an umpire, Mr. Howe. When it is definitely fixed, the mining companies, the workers and the Railway Department ought to agree between them to reduce the cost of Collie coal to the public. I am informed that the Midland Railway Company would now be using Collie coal if they could get it at a reduction of a couple of shillings or so on the current price. Mr. Holmes merely pointed out that the men at Collie were working about 30 hours per week and getting higher pay than the rest of the community during these troublous times. I merely desire to mention, in reply to Mr. Mann, that neither Mr. Holmes nor, so far as I know, any other member of the community wants Newcastle coal used here to the exclusion of Collie coal.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I understood that Mr. Holmes was merely drawing a comparison between Newcastle coal and Collie coal.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I shall not detain the House longer, as I shall have another opportunity of dealing with mining regulations. I wanted to be able to state for your information, Sir, and that of some member for the South Province, that there are small mines in that province, just as there are small mines on the Murchison, in the Central Province, and in the North Province. However, I shall leave that matter to a later date. I have the specific names of the mines, and you, Mr. President, know them, if one of your colleagues, to judge by his interjections yesterday, does not know them.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.59 p.m.

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

QUESTION—BAILIFF'S ASSISTANTS.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Police: 1, Is he aware that married men with families and thoroughly experienced and efficient in bailiff work, having been employed in the bailiff's office at Perth for a considerable period, are being retrenched owing to the shortage of work in this department? 2, Is he further aware that in certain centres, Midland Junction for instance, the sergeant of police is doing bailiff work, thus adding considerably to his income? 3, Will he have this work distributed amongst the experienced men now being retrenched from head office, in order that they may exist?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied: 1, No. Under Section 16 of the Local Courts Act the bailiff's assistants are under the bailiff's personal control, and are paid by him. 2, Yes. In many districts the police act as bailiffs. 3, No retrenchments are being made by the Government.

QUESTION—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT.

Loans advanced by University.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Attorney General: 1, Is he aware that loans provided by the University of Western Australia are not subject to the Financial Emergency Act? 2, Will he take the necessary steps to amend the Act in order to make it incumbent upon the University of Western Australia to provide that moneys advanced by it shall be subject to the same reduction as applies in other cases?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, No.