

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 6th August, 1935.

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

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to announce that in accordance with Standing Order 31A I have appointed the following members to act as temporary Chairmen of Committees during the current session, namely Hon. J. Nicholson, Hon. V. Hamersley, and Hon. E. H. Gray.

QUESTION—FRANKLAND RIVER PASTURES.

Protection of Asset.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM (for Hon. A. Thomson) asked the Chief Secretary: 1. As over £70,000 has been expended by the previous Administration in clearing land and laying down pastures at the Frankland River, West of Mt. Barker, to provide work for single men, what steps have been taken by the Government to protect the asset created and prevent those lands reverting to native bush and scrub? 2. Have the Government under consideration any scheme whereby this cleared land may be utilised, so that the State may secure some return for the capital expended in this area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1. The lands in question have recently been thrown open for selection, subject to the special condition that the selectors must maintain the existing improvements. 2. Answered by No. 1.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.43]: At the outset I desire to welcome you, Sir, on your return from the Old Country and to

congratulate you upon your good health, and also on the fact that you have again given useful service as an ambassador for this State. It is pleasing to note the good health of the Leader of the House, the Hon. Mr. Drew, and I trust that during the course of this session the Government will give full consideration to the work of Parliament with a view to seeing that it shall be better spread, so as to give the Leader of the House an opportunity to handle the business here and still maintain his good health. The enormous burden placed upon him last session had a bad effect upon his health, and all members were very pleased when he took a trip with a view to recuperation. Fortunately that trip well repaid him, for I have never seen him looking better than he does to-day. I trust that for many years he will continue to enjoy good health. It is a matter for great regret when we lose our friends. That is all the more regrettable when it occurs in the case of members of old Western Australian families. I refer particularly at the moment to the late Mr. A. E. Piesse. That gentleman came of a family which has done a great deal to build up Western Australia. The Great Southern received a wonderful impetus from the Piesse family itself. Mr. Piesse was one of Nature's gentlemen, a man in every way. He will be a great loss to the public life of the State, and particularly, of course, to his relatives and many friends. Fortunately, however, some of the younger generation of the Piesse family are coming on, and already are ably following in the footsteps of the older generation. Nevertheless we regret the loss of a good servant of the country. The name of Piesse will go down for all times as being associated with those who have done so much to make Western Australia what it is. The public life of the State has also lost a fine man in the late Mr. Harry Griffiths. Probably I knew that gentleman more intimately than most members of this Chamber. He was one of the hardest worked men I know. He took his work very seriously and strove arduously on behalf of the people he represented. No doubt the strenuous life he led greatly affected his health. Although he was not a member of this Chamber, I feel that our sympathies go out to those he left behind. He also will be a great loss to our public life. Indeed, public life exacts a heavy toll upon those who take part in it. We now have that energetic Minister, Hon. J. J.

Kenneally, laid aside. There is no doubt that if anyone has taken his position seriously and worked hard it is Mr. Kenneally. We must surely commend him for the serious manner in which he has undertaken his duties, and for the way in which he has endeavoured to improve the situation regarding unemployment. I trust it will not be long before the Minister is on the road to recovery and that in the near future he will be about again enjoying good health. Governor's Speeches, session after session, seem gradually to be weakening. The Speech now before us is mainly a repetition of things that are already known to everyone. Mr. Fraser suggested that the document should be bound and distributed to school children.

Hon. J. Cornell: God forbid!

Hon. C. F. BANTER: It may be of some value to school children, but I daresay many of them already know of the things that are referred to in the document. The Speech may be of some value as a record. Although the hon. member was serious in his suggestion, I feel that a good deal of ridicule can be attached to it from the point of view of any benefit it may be to school children. The Speech should be drawn for the benefit of the taxpayers. My conception of such a document is that it should be an account of the stewardship of the Government, their policy, and an outline of the expenditure of public funds. The Government should present a report showing the year's expenditure, and the results or prospective results of such expenditure. It should show also the prospective revenue, and whether the funds used are likely to produce interest and sinking fund. The Speech should explain the policy of the Government concerning the present financial year and the expenditure generally. Surely Governments should not consider themselves immune from having to render an account of their stewardship concerning what is the electors' business. Not the slightest reference has been made in the Speech to the heavy loss sustained as a result of the gold miners' disastrous strike. Even those who may be biassed must admit that it was a strike which reflected against the Government, inasmuch as they ignored the laws of the State. The duty of the Government is to govern the State and administer its laws, this being amongst the most important of their duties. Parliament is established by the electors to frame

laws for the good of the people. Governments are returned to administer the law fearlessly and justly. The present Government, however, usurped the authority of Parliament and of the Arbitration Court. When our laws are not strictly adhered to, there is always a danger that this will strike at the foundations of the safety and well-being of the people. The action of the Government with respect to the miners' strike is not the only occasion when they have transgressed. It is, however, an outstanding instance of the kind, and is the worst case of interference with the law by any Government. The Labour Party is very proud of the Arbitration Court, and a Labour Government should see that the arbitration laws are soundly administered. Apparently, only those portions of the Industrial Arbitration Act that are of benefit to Government supporters are recognised. If employers transgress ever so slightly, the Act is applied rigidly. The employees only abide by the Act and the decisions of the court if they are favourable. The Act is very definite as regards strikes and lock-outs, but when a strike occurs no action is taken. The industrial arbitration system of Western Australia is based on the assumption that the terms of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1925, and all of the other Arbitration Acts, shall be rigidly observed by the worker and employer alike. The success of arbitration rests upon its ability to hold the balance of equity and justice evenly between the parties concerned. Part 2 of the Act provides for the establishment of unions and associations of workers, and of employers. Part 9 refers to strikes and lock-outs. It provides for the prohibition of strikes and lock-outs, and for the proper observance of awards and agreements made by the court. It also provides for penalties in the case of the non-observance of determinations made in pursuance of the Act. This part of the Act makes it clear how serious a matter it is for the workers to cease their employment, and there are elaborate provisions for the prevention of such a thing. Whilst the penal sections of the Act are rigorously enforced against employers of labour, and are freely imposed, we find that in practically no case where the worker has seriously infringed the provisions of the Act, is he subjected to the penalties. An employer may be

guilty of a breach of the Act in respect of one word or merely on technical grounds, but a prosecution is absolutely certain unless he is able to effect out of court a settlement that is satisfactory to the complainant union. All unions, as well as shops and factory inspectors can prosecute employers. Every union secretary and every inspector becomes, as it were, an industrial policeman under the Act. A body of workers may commit a breach of the Act and be subject to heavy penalties, but for the lack of someone willing to issue the necessary summons, no prosecution is made.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Cannot the employers prosecute?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Employers may institute proceedings against unions or against individual workers, but surely it is not their function to vindicate the Act. Employers generally feel justified in refusing to prosecute, because such an act on their part is invariably regarded as vindictive. In cases where employers have taken that course it is known that industrial relations have been seriously affected. Surely Parliament, which conceived the arbitration system, intended that to ensure its success every part of the Act should be properly administered, so that the balance might be held evenly as between employer and employee. If this is admitted it follows that the Government of the day must accept the responsibility of seeing that their officers comply with the law without fear or favour. It should not matter to what industrial camp the delinquent belongs. In the case under review the Minister for Mines said the men were on strike. I will quote his exact words, as they appear in "The West Australian" of 4th February last. He said—

If a Labour government had not been in power every member of this union would have been in court, for in my opinion and in the opinion of the Crown Law Department the men who have stopped work on mines working two shifts a day are on strike.

That was a strong statement for the Minister to make. If another Government had been in power they would have carried out the law which the present Government would not do. The extract continues—

A voice: I think the gold mining leases of the principal mines on the Golden Mile were recommended for renewal recently. Have the leases been renewed?

Mr. Munsie: No, they were not granted.

It is a serious state of affairs if the laws made by Parliament are to be treated in this way. It is the duty of the Government to uphold the law and to instruct the Crown Law authorities to take proceedings where necessary. Instead of doing their duty they encouraged the strikers to flout the law, and the Arbitration Court which was practically of their own making. It is very interesting to read the correspondence and to see how things finished as between the Government and the mine employers. I have here an extract from "The West Australian" of the 18th February, dealing with the correspondence between the Premier and the Secretary to the Chamber of Mines, Mr. J. W. Anderton. It is as follows:—

Referring to the many interviews which have taken place during the dispute between the sub-committee of your Cabinet and the special committee of the Chamber of Mines, I am directed to say, following to-day's conference, that as you have repeatedly refused to agree to any modification whatever of the terms of settlement passed at the mass meeting of the members of the A.W.U. on Saturday last, and have not taken any action to enforce the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act against the strikers, and have further expressed the determination of your Government to assist by all means in its power, the enforcement of the union's resolve to stand for a 44-hour week, it is impossible for the members of the Chamber of Mines to continue negotiations, and I have been instructed to advise you that:—

(1) Owing to the attitude of the Government in its support of the A.W.U. mining branch in the present dispute it has become impossible for the Chamber of Mines to adhere to the stand taken by it on the question of the 40-48 hour fortnight and to maintain its rights under the recent Arbitration Court award.

(2) The Chamber therefore is forced to accept the terms embodied in the resolution passed by the mass meeting of the A.W.U. held at Boulder on Saturday the 9th instant, as follows—

(a) All men to return to work immediately on the 40-48 hours fortnight on the conditions that a vote be taken as soon as possible—such vote to be completed within six (6) weeks—on the two alternatives provided in the award, that is to say, as to whether the standard hours should be 40-48 hours per fortnight or 44-hour week for men other than continuous workers on the surface; such vote to be arranged and taken by officers of the Electoral Department and to include all A.W.U. members only, not being salaried staffs. The decision arrived at by such vote to be binding on all parties.

- (b) That under the 40-48 hours fortnight all men so employed will be guaranteed 12 shifts' pay for 11 shifts worked, the daily payment per shift to be at the rate of one and one-eleventh shifts' pay.
- (c) That under any roster system to be used no workers shall be required to work underground in the production of ore or in development work after 4 p.m. on any Saturday.
- (d) That both sides agree to make joint application to have the decision of the ballot and the two other conditions embodied in the award.
- (3) The chamber's decision is due to the Government having accepted full responsibility for its action in compelling the chamber to take the course outlined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this letter.

Subject to your acceptance of the foregoing, the members of the Chamber of Mines propose, under protest, to re-open the mines on the terms abovementioned and which you assure us have the Government's endorsement.

The Premier's reply was as follows:—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of even date, and in reply to inform you that I can now see no bar to the mines resuming work immediately.

Thus we find that the people who have invested money in this State discover that a real danger exists, more especially when the Government openly declare that they are supporting the union in their action. Here is an extract from the "West Australian" of the 11th February, which shows what Mr. Munsie said:—

Eventually the Government has been able to get the Chamber of Mines to realise that it not only had the opposition of the union to its proposal for the 88-hour fortnight, but also the opposition of the Government.

Mr. Munsie further stated that the Labour Government had brought the Chamber to this position and "it is up to us to back them up." I do not intend to refer to the men's demands; they are beside the question. We are concerned with the administration of the laws of the country, and in the circumstances, therefore, opinions are valueless. The Arbitration Court was the authority to deal with the dispute, but the Government ignored authority and became a law unto themselves. Probably, when replying, the Chief Secretary will recite the sentences of a few persons who have declared their sympathy with the men. Such references will be worthless because the men were on strike and knowingly defied the law of the country. Furthermore, it often happens nowadays that the persons who wish to gain favours, or who may be in receipt of them,

are every ready to give support to gain advantages in the future. My contention is that this strike has done more harm to investments in this country than anything else that has ever occurred. Investors are afraid to let us have any of their money for the reason that they do not know where they stand in respect to a law that may have to be enforced. The action of the Government in not respecting the law in both the miners' strike and the Kurrawang strike has been the cause of the present foundry strike, and even on this matter they will not take action beyond expressing a few platitudes. Those platitudes have no effect whatever. The sacred duty entrusted to the Government of administering the laws has been misplaced. The action of the Government has caused uneasiness regarding what may happen in the future. A number of representative gentlemen approached the Minister for Labour regarding the present strike of foundry workers and in doing so submitted their case in writing. Those gentlemen represented the main industries of the State, and their desires were, if possible, to have the arbitration laws enforced, with a view not only of bringing the strike to an end and preventing an extension of the trouble, but of creating confidence that the State's activities and industries would be carried on legally and peacefully. To their astonishment, and the consternation of the public generally, the Minister refused to discuss the matter with the deputation unless the document setting out their case was withdrawn. He also stated that the whole matter was political and added that it was insulting as well. It was the Minister's own action that made it political. He was pressed several times to state what portion or portions were insulting, but declined to reply. Had the particulars not been furnished beforehand, he may have had grounds for complaint. I have read the document carefully and cannot find any portion that is not substantiated by facts. Mr. Fraser, in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply at the previous sitting, referred to the introduction of the Electoral Bill in the near future. As this matter received the attention of a Royal Commission of which I was a member, I do not intend to refer to it now, but to give full effect to the recommendations of the Commission, it will be necessary to amend the

Constitution Acts. As probably these amendments are now in course of preparation, I suggest that the Government give full consideration to additional amendments. Regarding a redistribution of boundaries, consideration should be given to the number of members required. At the present time members are called upon to do many things quite apart from legislating. If the position were reconstructed to revert to legislative work only, the number of members could be reduced. I suggest that the number of Assembly representatives be reduced to 30, and the Legislative Council to 20. This, however, could only give satisfaction if the alteration of duties I suggest were made. The numerical strength of portfolioed Ministers should be considered quite apart from the question referred to. At present eight portfolioed Ministers may be appointed, and this number exists with an addition of an Honorary Minister. From my experience, I say definitely there is no need for more than six Ministers holding portfolios. The need for so many Ministers occurs through the protracted absence of some members of the Government from their offices, attending to different matters affecting the welfare of the State. As a rule, visits that are paid to various parts of the State are beneficial, but the spirit of wanderlust which promotes the extensive travelling lately done by the public men of the Commonwealth is not warranted. That, however, is beside the question; the important part is that many Ministries have short lives. Ministries come and Ministries go. The persons who should travel to make investigations are the executive heads of departments. Their positions are much more stable than those of Ministers. In this way six Ministers could do full justice to the work required of them. Mr. Fraser, in the course of his remarks, referred in glowing terms to the present Government's activities in respect of the unemployed. Apparently he has been unable to analyse the change in conditions since the previous Government were in power. Has the hon. member considered the increased employment in the goldmining industry, made possible and fostered by the increased price of gold and the exchange? Is he not aware that through fear, people ceased to operate during the first few years of the crisis, that financiers tightened up and that indus-

try languished for want of knowledge in the direction of how the crisis would end? But after the operation of the Premier's Plan and other emergency legislation, as well as careful administration by Governments during the first three years of the crisis, reasonable confidence was restored. There was also the fact that the high rate of exchange to an extent prevented the transfer of money from the Commonwealth, and foreign companies began to look for avenues of investment in Australia. Building operations were increased, and other industries were stimulated. Unfortunately, however, the trade cannot now be supplied to the extent of its requirements. Timber and bricks are scarce. Those engaged in the former industry wanted the men to work overtime, but the unions objected.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There has also been an increase in the export timber trade.

Hon. C. F. BANTER: Even within the State, business has increased. A tremendous quantity of timber was heaped up, and bricks also were heaped up that could not be disposed of. There was a parcel of bricks at the brickworks that it was thought could never be disposed of, but all of those bricks have gone into buildings. Mr. Fraser should be a little considerate. Still, I suppose we cannot blame him so much, seeing that he receives his lead from his chief, the Premier. Let me quote from an illuminating circular issued under the date of 2nd August, as follows:—

Mr. Collier laid emphasis on the improvement effected in the State's financial position, pointing out that in the three years prior to Labour taking office, the deficits aggregated £3,843,000, by far the highest ever recorded in the State for such a period. The Labour Government's deficits, on the other hand, were—1933-34, £789,000; 1934-35, £167,000. After alluding to the treatment of the State's requests by the Loan Council, which, he claimed, showed that the credit of the Labour Government stands very high with that body, the Premier made extended reference to the Government's efforts to provide employment and to stimulate trade. The Government, he said, embarked on a programme of moderate loan expenditure averaging £2,710,000 a year over its term of office.

I do not know how long that can continue. The extract continued—

Many of its critics, particularly the Leader of the National Party, had accused Labour of extravagant loan expenditure.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Borrowing themselves into prosperity!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. The extract continued—

“It has also been said,” Mr. Collier stated, “that we are running the State heavily into debt and are getting nothing to show for it. During its three years in office the previous Government increased the indebtedness of the State for loan works and for deficits by £9,200,000. The increased indebtedness incurred by the Labour Government for the same purposes for our three years will be £9,340,000. The difference is only £140,000 spread over three years.

Hon. J. Cornell: It was nearly fifty-fifty.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But under an entirely different set of circumstances. This State should look to a tremendous reduction in the burden of debt piled up during the three years of crisis. I cannot reconcile the figures quoted by Mr. Collier. If his figures are correct, the figures supplied to me must be wrong.

Hon. J. Cornell: He has an election ahead.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so. The amount Mr. Collier quoted as the Labour Government's increased indebtedness was £9,340,000. The deficit for 1933-34 was £788,912 and for 1934-35, £167,029, while the estimated deficit for 1935-36 is £260,000. Loan expenditure in 1933-34 totalled £2,664,022, in 1934-35, £2,780,000, and the amount for 1935-36 is £2,860,000, a total of £9,519,000. That exceeds the amount recorded against the previous Government by £540,000, not £140,000 as stated by Mr. Collier. It would be well to analyse the financial position and ascertain whether there is any justification for the claim that the present Government have exceeded the achievement of the Mitchell Government during the years of crisis by a sum of only £140,000. The average annual expenditure during the previous Labour regime, 1924-30, on loan account was £4,173,000, and on revenue account £9,566,000, a total of £13,739,000. During the term of the Mitchell Government, 1930-33, the average annual expenditure on loan account was £1,786,000, and on revenue account £9,632,000, a total of £11,418,000. During Labour's term in 1933-35, the average annual expenditure on loan account was £2,903,000, and on revenue account £9,385,000, a total of £12,288,000. Thus the average annual expenditure during 1930-33 was £2,321,000 less than that for the 1924-30 period, and £870,000 less than for the 1933-35 period. In addition, the Labour Government in 1933-35 received special grants from the Federal Government to

assist employment. Those grants consisted of £125,000 for country water supplies, £100,000 for encouragement of afforestation and £60,000 for assistance to the mining industry. The average annual receipts from petrol tax during the 1930-33 period amounted to £366,000, but the average annual amount for the 1933-35 period reached £443,000, an increase of £77,000.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you the Federal grants for the same period?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, I have mentioned some of the items.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There were others.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. The figures show that the average annual expenditure in the 1933-35 period exceeded that of the 1930-33 period by £1,090,000. Yet Mr. Collier considers that his Government have not done so badly. Let me recall a statement I made in the House in 1930, recorded in “Hansard” Vol. 1, page 596—

The deficiency in the Loan account and the deficit total £3,553,000, and the present Government must redeem the destitution of the Collier Government by raising that amount by loans. The stupendous feat of the Collier Government in spending £25,000,000 of loan money in six years was an act peculiar to their own ability, and they capped that extraordinary achievement by getting rid of £3,600,000 of loan money in the year 1929-30. An incontrovertible fact in the discomfiture of the opponents of the Government is that the public was told that the loan authorised by the February Loan Council for this State would be £2,800,000. With that amount much could be done by the Government in the employment of the people, but the amount has since been reduced to £1,750,000. That means that the Government will have nearly £2,000,000 less loan money to spend this year as against the expenditure of 1929-30.

The Mitchell Government's expenditure was £2,000,000 less in the first year, and their average in the three years was £1,000,000 less than the Government have expended in the last two years. I should like to know where all this is going to end. The Commonwealth Government are continually going on to the market for huge loans. There are people who are glad to invest their money in Government bonds. When money is borrowed by Governments in such large amounts, it means there is so much less money in the hands of investors to exploit industry. Money borrowed by Governments finds its way into channels, the majority of which will not earn interest and sinking fund. The Government are piling up the public debt and taking money from those who would get better service from it.

Where is all this going to end? Each year our interest commitments are increasing. How long shall we be able to continue borrowing as we have been doing? When borrowing is cut down, what then will be the position? We shall soon reach a stage when we shall be unable to find the requisite money with which to meet our interest commitments. Let us consider now tax collections, which form a very important part of the revenue of the country. Tax collections from all sources in 1931-32 amounted to £1,007,000, and in 1932-33 to £1,125,000. Those were the years of the Mitchell administration. Taking now the term of the Collier Government, in 1933-34, tax collections totalled £1,369,000, and in 1934-35, £1,902,000. The financial emergency tax in 1932-33 operated for only a brief period and realised £202,000. In 1933-34 that tax yielded £412,000, and in 1934-35, £685,000. That was a special tax imposed as an emergency.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You prophesied that it would reach £600,000.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. Income tax collections for the year 1931-32 totalled £260,000, for 1932-33 £169,000, for 1933-34 £173,000, and for 1934-35 £175,000. This last figure is an estimate. The revenue for 1930-31 was £8,637,000, for 1931-32 £8,035,000, for 1933-34—the first year of the Collier Government—£8,482,000, and for 1934-35 £9,331,000. So that the present Government, in their second year, had a revenue exceeding by £1,296,000 the revenue obtained in the second year of the previous Government. At the 30th June, 1934, the public debt of Western Australia amounted to £85,000,000. That debt requires a matter of £4,103,000 for payment of interest, sinking fund, and exchange. Thus it is seen that about half of our revenue is needed to pay interest, sinking fund, and exchange. Can hon. members point out to me any way in which we can escape being forced to increase taxation? Is there any other way out, unless some alteration is made with regard to the system of continuing to pile up our public debt? I greatly regret that there is still but little brightness from the aspect of most of our primary industries. Passing strange it is, too, how little has been done for those industries. In point of fact, this matter always seems to be left to the last moment. I well remember how during the last fortnight of the Parliamentary life of the Mitchell Government the

then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Collier, moved the adjournment of the House to consider the position of the farmers. That was on the 15th December, 1932. Mr. Collier's speech on that occasion, like the speech which I quoted a little while ago, attempting to justify his Government's finance, voiced the concern of the then Opposition for Western Australian producers. The motion for adjournment was moved a few months prior to the general election. Let me read some extracts from Mr. Collier's speech—

It is admitted on all sides that the position of our farmers is desperate in the extreme. Unless something more than appears at present can be done to assist these people in their difficulties, I am afraid the solvency of the State will be endangered It would not matter very much to the future solvency of the Commonwealth if a great number of city interests were to close altogether; the country would carry on. But it means all and everything to this country if the primary producers are unable to carry on. Every thinking man must have no other conclusion than that there is nothing but stark insolvency facing the Commonwealth if the primary producers are driven off their holdings by being unable to carry on. No sacrifice is too great in order that that should be avoided. The wheatgrowers of this State have had three years of distressful times, three years in which they have given their labour and time and money, only to find at the end of each of those years that their operations have shown a considerable loss.

Apparently Mr. Collier did not discover until the 15th December, 1932, a trouble which had existed for three years, the fact that these people were suffering. What Mr. Collier advocated was expressed in these words—

I will tell the Premier what I would do. I would make £100,000 available to the wheat-growers, and by doing so I would increase the deficit by that amount, making it £863,000. I would then go to the Loan Council and fight them on it.

It seems that in 1932 Mr. Collier suddenly became extremely concerned about the unfortunate producers of Western Australia. Has any alteration taken place in that respect? Has the situation improved? Of course not. The position of the farmers is now far worse than it was in 1932. Has Mr. Collier found the sum of £100,000 for them? I suggest that the Chief Secretary, in replying, should state what the present Government have done for the primary industries. The Commonwealth Government have done something. Heaven knows the suffering people could do with the £100,000, which might well have been made available

to them while there has been so much revenue coming in. The Collier Government could even have made available £50,000 above the sum indicated to succour the farmers who Mr. Collier says, and I agree with him, mean so much to the State.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Premier might have been thinking of the expenditure on bulk handling.

Hon. V. Hamersley: He could not have thought that, seeing we were so frequently told that bulk handling would not come about.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I wish to refer to a certain compulsion which has been exercised by the present Government. A great deal has been said at various times regarding unemployment, a matter with which I do not intend to deal at present. I must, however, deal with the Government's action in compelling unemployed men to join a union, an action which in my opinion is regrettable. Why force men on sustenance work, who have to submit or else starve, to pay part of what they receive—and Heaven knows it is little enough—into union funds?

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is to say, into a political fund.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In order that those contributions might be made, the families of sustenance workers could lack the necessities of life. Much of the money we have borrowed in recent years was borrowed for the purpose of succouring the unemployed. When borrowed money is being spent, it is not right to take advantage of the position to coerce men unfortunate enough to be getting only sustenance work, to pay into union funds. Such workers should have been allowed to go free of contributions for the time being. To use loan money for the purpose of paying into union funds is, I consider, out of all reason. Another matter which is highly serious and reflects on the State is the deportation of a number of British people from Western Australia. In the past we have always cried out for population. We won the goodwill of the Imperial Government in the matter of population being sent to this State. We possessed that goodwill. The Imperial Government spent money to send British people out here. Now we discover, much to our surprise, that the State Government have been finding money to send migrants back

to the British Isles. What this State wants is population.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Of the proper type, though.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Proper type! I have employed hundreds of migrants, and I know as much about the imported man as does any other member of the Chamber. I have here a report which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 1st June on the subject of repatriation of migrants. It reads—

Canberra, May 31.—The repatriation of British migrants from Western Australia was the subject of discussions to-day between the Premier of Western Australia (Mr. Collier), the Minister for the Interior (Mr. Paterson), and the representative of the British Government (Mr. E. T. Crutchley). During the past 18 months the Government of Western Australia has provided financial assistance to enable a large number of migrants who were dissatisfied with conditions in Australia to return to Britain. It is understood that this policy is strongly opposed by the British Government, whose attitude was conveyed to Mr. Collier by Mr. Crutchley and was supported in principle by the Commonwealth representative, Mr. Paterson. It was pointed out that these migrants were practically all people whose fares to Australia had been provided originally by the British and Commonwealth Governments, and also that while in many cases adults might be dissatisfied with their conditions of life in Australia, their children would, in fact, have greater opportunities here than they would in England, where they, as well as their parents, would in practically all cases become a charge on the Government. It was contended that most migrants went through periods of intense dissatisfaction with the countries of their adoption, and that this feeling naturally was aggravated in times of economic stress such as the present. In most cases, however, they got over this feeling and became, as their children almost inevitably did, good citizens of their new countries. In these circumstances it was held to be a mistake in the interests of the migrants, as well as in those of the Governments concerned, to repatriate them freely. Mr. Collier said that he would consider the views which had been expressed, but he declined to give any undertaking as to a change of his Government's policy, particularly in the case of persons who were ill and friendless in Australia, as he thought that it was desirable from every point of view to enable people in these circumstances to return to England, where they would be among relatives and friends.

The report also indicates that the matter was taken up in the House of Commons, and that is a most regrettable feature. I certainly realise that we had trouble with agitators, who have been common in past years. The present Government have taken advant-

age of that position to get rid of migrants who took up cries. Apparently it was only a matter of a person kicking up a row to get him a trip to the Old Country with a few shillings in his pocket. I would like a list of names of deported persons to be published, and a statement of the cost of deporting them. I think the names of the agitators I allude to would be found on that list. In former days there was a grudge here against anybody coming to Western Australia from the Eastern States. But why say that we want to get this vast State populated when we are sending back migrants? People from the Old Country are always apt to be discontented at first in Australia, especially in times of depression. Any one of us would become discontented under similar conditions. But that handicap of discontent can be lived down, and the discontented can become good citizens. It is surprising how the leaders of the present Government, when short of an argument, reflect upon this Chamber. In a statement recently the Premier remarked upon what would have been done had it not been for the action taken by the Legislative Council; and the former Minister for Works, Mr. McCallum, shortly after the termination of the session last year, launched an attack upon the Legislative Council during the course of a long statement in the Press. We were accused of holding up measures! I believe that members of this Chamber feel as I do towards the Leader of the House. We were sympathetic towards him in consequence of the way legislation was placed before this Chamber last session. Not one of us was responsible for holding up that legislation and least of all was the Chief Secretary responsible. Mr. McCallum should have conferred with the Chief Secretary before he issued that Press statement. The only time a few Bills were held up was when the Honorary Minister, Mr. Kitson, was absent in the Eastern States for three or four weeks. That was necessary in order that he might deal with his own legislation. In those circumstances, why should this Chamber have been accused of holding up the Government's legislative programme? On the contrary, members of this Chamber have been very considerate to the Government, more considerate than I desired them to be, particularly with regard to taxation. In that respect, members here have, practically speaking, refused the Government nothing.

It does not matter one iota to members of this Chamber which Government may be in power. It does not matter who Ministers may be; this Chamber will continue to scrutinise keenly the legislation submitted to them. My own experience when I was Leader of the House was that I received more opposition from members of my own political creed than from other members of the Council. I had to thank Mr. Gray and other Labour members for the support they gave me on various occasions. I am sure that that is the feeling that prevails throughout this Chamber. We are not a party, here, and it does not matter which Government may be in power; we are here to legislate in the interests of the State as a whole, irrespective of Governments. Members would have no right to pursue the course that the Premier and his former Ministerial colleague accused them of adopting. We are sent to this Chamber to deal fairly and equitably with legislation that is presented by Ministers whom the people have placed in power. On the other hand, it would not have been right had we not adopted the critical attitude that we have always pursued in the past. There is one matter regarding the northern part of the State to which I desire to refer, lest there should be any suggestion to indulge in some wildly extravagant expenditure there. I would not refer to it were it not for the fact that recently a Federal Minister toured that part of Western Australia and both he and now Mr. C. W. D. Conacher, who represents Vestey's interests in Australia and is general manager in Australia for the Blue Star Line, have stressed the necessity for the construction of a railway tapping the pastoral areas of the North and terminating at Wyndham. Other things are required in the North before a railway is constructed there, and those necessities must be attended to or production in that part of the State will cease altogether. Money is needed so that the pastoralists may effect additional improvements to their holdings. I do not include Vestey's, which firm can find all the money that is necessary for the work they require to undertake, but other holders of pastoral leases in the North are not in that happy position. They require more paddocks and additional water supplies. Furthermore, they require loans to enable them to improve the standard of their herds. It is essential that first quality beef cattle

shall be produced before we talk about marketing chilled beef.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: And our growers must compete with those of the Argentine.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so; they will have to face quite a lot of competition in oversea markets. The remedy does not lie in the construction of a railway to Wyndham, nor do I agree that a railway furnishes the best means of transport for cattle from the holding to the works. We know that when transported by rail cattle get knocked about and are bruised. What the people of the North have yet to realise is that they must provide suitable holding grounds with-in easy access of the freezing works so that their cattle may be brought in the year before they are to be put through the freezers. If that were done the beasts would recover from their overlanding and would be in prime condition for slaughtering when the season opened. It is useless to talk about trucking beasts over long distances. Unless the beef is of prime quality, it is useless for the London market. Any funds that can be provided should be made available to the pastoralists who are already on their holdings and so encourage them to breed up the right type of cattle. At the present time it is futile to talk about the construction of a railway to Wyndham. I congratulate the Government upon one step they have taken in the interests of the northern parts of the State and that is the appointment of a flying doctor. Their action in that direction fulfils a long-felt want. It is a pity that some such step was not taken many years ago, for it would have saved many lives and much suffering. I am indeed pleased that the Government have taken action along those lines and I also commend them on their appointment of the doctor. I do not know Dr. Davis very well personally, but I know him well from the standpoint of his work. The Government could not have made a better selection and members can rest assured that the service Dr. Davis will render in the interests of the State will be all that they could desire.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Dr. Davis is not the flying doctor; he is the doctor appointed to deal with the aborigines.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, that is so; I had in mind the two services. Members can rest assured that Dr. Davis will render splendid service and the Government are indeed to be congratulated upon the selection they have made. Mr. Fraser mentioned

in the course of his speech in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, that he hoped most of the financial emergency legislation would go by the board. It may be that later on we shall ask him to give effect to his hopes particularly with regard to the financial emergency tax. I take it that his views are tending in that direction, and I am certainly glad that I have at least one convert. With regard to the bulk handling of wheat, I am pleased that, according to appearances, that much-debated question has at last been settled. I think it was in 1917 or 1918 that the first step was taken in this State towards securing a bulk handling system in Western Australia. Perhaps some members of this Chamber know that a Bill for that purpose was defeated in the Legislative Council by one vote. It was rather disappointing at the time because a free grant of £364,000 had been made available by the Federal Government of the day in order to establish a system of bulk storage in this State. Naturally the bulk storage scheme would have developed into a bulk handling proposition. Had the Council accepted the legislation at that time, there is no doubt that we would have gone a long way with bulk handling in this State, and we would have had the terminals erected by now without any cost to the State. Unfortunately that free grant of £364,000 was definitely lost to us. Since that time, year after year there have been Royal Commissions, select committees, inquiries of all sorts dealing with various phases of bulk handling; deputations have waited upon Ministers; experts and others have visited the Eastern States in order to examine the systems operating there. I commend the members of the latest Royal Commission who have reported on the bulk handling of wheat, and I congratulate them upon the splendid manner in which they have carried out their work. I confess that at the outset I was somewhat doubtful, but I am now confident that their recommendations are right and that they point the way to securing a profit on the handling of wheat in this State. I trust that the Government will not delay very long before they give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. I realise that it is a tremendous problem, and I appreciate the unfortunate position of the Government to-day. The Minister for Works has been taken seriously ill when the ses-

sion has just commenced. Despite the difficulties that confront the Government, I trust it will not be long before Parliament will be given an opportunity to tackle the problem and that the whole question will be dealt with finally before the session ends. I trust that the future will see more consideration extended by the Government to the producers. During the past two and a half years, there has not been too much consideration extended to them. Although some measures have been placed before Parliament, in the interests of the producers, the Government can well afford to give further serious consideration to the position of the agricultural industry. Hundreds of settlers have left their properties during the past year and many of them were really good men who would have succeeded had they had a reasonable opportunity to do so. If land settlement is to continue in Western Australia, that condition of affairs will make for difficulties in the future. Should there be a revival of agricultural activities, it may be found that suitable men will be scarce in the future. I trust that the work of the present session will be in the best interests of the taxpayers as a whole, and that the future of the State will be brighter and more prosperous than it has been during the past few years.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1) £2,200,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION.

As to Reinstatement of Order.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting that the consideration of a Bill for an Act relating to the qualification and registration of builders, to constitute a board in relation thereto, and for other purposes connected therewith, which lapsed during last session of Parliament, might be resumed by the Legislative Council.

House adjourned at 6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 6th August, 1935.

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

MOTIONS (2)—CONDOLENCE.

The late Mr. H. A. C. Griffiths, M.L.A., and the late Mr. A. E. Piesse, M.L.A.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.32]: Since the House met last session we have experienced two sad losses. In the death of Messrs. Griffiths and Piesse we have lost two old and valued friends. Mr. Griffiths represented York from 1914 to 1921 and represented Avon from 1924 until his death. Mr. Griffiths was a most conscientious, industrious member of this House. He always had the interests of the State at heart, and I think it will be agreed that he never spared himself in the service of the State. Mr. Piesse succeeded his brother, Mr. F. H. Piesse, in 1909 as member for Katanning. He represented Katanning until 1914, was re-elected in 1930, and held the seat until his death. To those of us who have been in the House for long, long years, the name of Piesse is familiar. Since responsible Government, in 1890, I think there has always been a member of the family either in this House or in another place. The first member of the family to be elected to the Parliament of this State, Mr. F. H. Piesse, whom I remember so well when I entered this House as a young man, he then occupying a seat on the cross-benches, was returned to the first of our Parliaments in 1890. He was appointed a Minister in 1896, and remained in Parliament until 1909. Mr. C. A. Piesse, familiarly and popularly known as Charlie Piesse, was a member of another place for many years. He was