

to be un-parliamentary. The effect of his remark was that he could not understand why the authorities wanted to spend millions there when there was already a naval base available in Albany. I cannot supply all the information of which I am in possession, but I may be allowed to say that the Imperial authorities badly want Albany as a naval port. I hope when the question of a dock is considered by the Government it will aim not for a dock at Fremantle, but for a dock for Western Australia. Let us not make the mistake that was made in 1910. If a State-wide attitude had been taken up then, Western Australia would have had one of the leading naval bases instead of the white elephant we had at Fremantle. I reserve any further remarks I have to make until later in the session.

On motion by Mr. Shearn, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 18th August, 1938.*

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

### QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE.

#### *Assessment for Pension.*

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: What was the amount of salary received annually by Mr. A. Berkeley during the three years, respectively, for which his average salary was assessed at £1,122 13s. 5d.?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: First year, £1,008 0s. 2d.; Second year, £1,180 0s. 0d.; Third year, £1,180 0s. 0d.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Sixth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. C. H. WITTENOOM** (South-East) [4.35]: As a preliminary, I wish to take this opportunity of congratulating you, Sir, on your re-election to the presidency of this Chamber. From your long Parliamentary experience and your occupancy of the Chair for 12 years, it will be recognised that you are very fully and ably qualified to preside over our debates and to render assistance whenever it is necessary. As the result of a good many years' experience now, I can say that you are always ready and willing to give us advice when we ask for it; indeed, Sir, you offer it frequently. This being the beginning of the session we are, as usual, spending two or three weeks on the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech. This year the Speech is rather longer than usual, but there is very little in it that is new. Apparently the object of these Speeches is to give as little information as possible. They generally consist of a report of what has taken place during the preceding session and during the recess, rather than a forecast of the legislation to be submitted during the ensuing session.

A few of the Bills mentioned in the Speech I must say are quite important. Like other members, I hope that the more important measures, especially those requiring lengthy consideration, will be brought down early, and not late in the session. The list of Bills includes a few old friends. Reference is made to an amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act, for instance. We all know that if plural voting is to be deleted, the fate of the Bill is plain; in fact, its consideration will be only a waste of time under those conditions. Much the same may be said of some other Bills. I shall try to confine my remarks to the Lieut.-Governor's Speech.

First of all, the Speech refers to the demise of three members of this Parliament—Mr. Munsie, Mr. Brockman, and Mr. Elliott. I desire to join with other members in expressing deep regret that those gentle-

men are no longer with us. They were all men who did a great deal of work for this Parliament and for the State. I observe, from the Speech, that Mr. Wolff, K.C., has been appointed a judge of the Supreme Court and also Deputy President of the Arbitration Court. The Speech then touches on revenue and expenditure for the past financial year, which resulted in quite a small deficit—£10,693. Comparatively speaking, that is an excellent result; and we may claim to have had a successful financial year, as it is certainly a matter for congratulation when any Government ends the year by almost squaring the State's ledger. Should the result be as good or better during the coming year we should all be very pleased indeed.

Unfortunately the Government is striking some difficulties at the beginning of this financial year. Firstly, there is the low price of wheat. Yesterday it was down to 2s. 6d. per bushel, and I am afraid it is not much higher to-day. The price of wool, too, is very low; wool is hardly a payable proposition now. Why that should be I do not know, in view of the fact that almost every country appears to be preparing for war, and one would think that in the ordinary course of events wool would be one of the commodities in large demand and at a good price. Droughts are prevailing in many parts of the State; already strikes have occurred and there are threats of industrial unrest. Recently a considerable increase was made in the basic wage. That, of course, is no fault whatever of the Government. I am not saying that the increase in the basic wage is not justified; no doubt good reasons exist for the increase, but I question whether there are any members of this House who do not know of cases where the services of workers have been dispensed with in an endeavour to maintain business on a paying level.

Hon. A. Thomson: Many workers are already on part time.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I know of many business houses where employees have been put off and still more put on part-time. We all desire workers to receive high wages, because obviously that has the effect of stimulating industry. The rise in the basic wage will mean less employment, and so the benefit of what might have been the increased spending power of the workers will be lost. However, we must hope for

the best. While I congratulate the Government upon an excellent financial year, I think the Government itself will admit that it has been fortunate indeed because of the tremendous increase in revenue. This increase, amounting to £632,000, was due to no effort on the part of the Government. On the other hand, there has been a big increase in expenditure, amounting to about £273,000. The Government, of course, is directly responsible for that increase. Had the Government been able to keep expenditure down, as I think it could have done, then we would have been able to congratulate it upon a very successful year indeed. I shall not say it has been a good year financially; it has been an excellent year. Let us hope the Government will this year achieve an even better result.

I have already said the Government was in no way responsible for the increase in the basic wage, over which it has no control; but, unfortunately, the Government is directly responsible for an unfortunate interference with an award of the Arbitration Court. I refer to the trouble that occurred lately at Collie; I might almost call it a calamity. Interference with awards of the Arbitration Court will, as time goes on, lead to more trouble. The Minister for Employment said the men at Collie were on the verge of a strike, but his action will result in the encouragement of strikes in other directions. Probably the Collie miners were influenced by a certain incident that occurred at Boulder. Every strike, however, cannot be averted by an ignominious disregard of Arbitration Court awards. It is a very bad thing for the State.

Reference is made in the Speech to the financial emergency tax. As far as I can judge, things are in a rather bad way in the State at present and are likely to continue so during the ensuing year. In my opinion, the continuance of the financial emergency taxation is necessary and is likely to be so for some time to come, though I would be very pleased if it could be dispensed with. As to the proposal to include the financial emergency tax in the income tax, all I can say is if it will afford some relief to the taxpayer, or will facilitate the collection of the tax, the proposal will have my support.

Hon. H. Seddon: You are optimistic.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Under the heading of employment, the Government has

not done badly this year. In fact, it has done quite well, but we must remember that industries were much more prosperous last year than in the previous year. I think every one will admit that. Still, can the Government explain why there has been as much unemployment in the year just ended as there was in the previous year? Much money has been spent to relieve unemployment. A great deal of the money was spent in the metropolitan area, and I hope that in future consideration will be given to the unemployed in the country districts.

Hon. G. Fraser: At least 75 per cent. of the money provided for unemployment relief has always been spent in the country.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I am very pleased to hear that. Much of the work that has been carried out in the metropolitan area has been hardly necessary; the money spent upon it could have been better used in the country.

Hon. G. Fraser: The country districts are getting 75 per cent. of the money now.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Last night, Mr. Bolton and Mr. Thomson spoke at length on the subject of boy and girl labour. At present many boys cannot get work when they leave school; they remain idle, while girls and women can get all the employment they require. Domestic labour is the hardest thing in the world to procure; it is almost impossible to get it. Lately, the W.A. Woollen Mills in Albany advertised for girls of 15 to 16 and 17 years of age, but did not receive a single application. The same remark applies to skilled female labour for the mills. Not only is that labour unobtainable here, but it is also unprocurable in the Eastern States. So short is the supply that some mills there are importing labour from England. The company to which I have referred is also giving consideration to importing labour from England, and has been informed by the Federal Government that it is prepared to pay £16 or £17 towards the fares of the workers, the total cost being £55 or £56 each. The company has tried to train local girls, but there is always a shortage of labour in the weaving, mending and other departments. Sometimes half a dozen looms are idle at the same time. The company finds that after half training the girls they leave work to get married or for other reasons. What I am leading up to is this: Would it be a

difficult matter for the Government to import domestic labour from England? I do not know whether it is procurable there; I understand it is hard to get in England. We all know, however, that when attempts are made to get labour from England, a great many apply for work and seem ready to come here. Probably they are the more adventurous spirits. The company I have mentioned inserted an advertisement in a Yorkshire paper for mill hands, and although labour is short there, many applications were received.

Reference is made in the Speech to the State's having participation in exhibitions arranged in connection with the Glasgow Empire Display and the Sesquicentenary celebrations in New South Wales. I commend the Government on its action. The displays of the State's products in various local centres have been excellent, and I am confident they tend greatly to encourage increased use of local products. I know that the display staged in New South Wales has led to a certain amount of business coming to this State. Recently a committee at Albany published a booklet dealing with the lower South-West and lower Great Southern districts, and copies were forwarded to stock agents and agricultural societies in the Eastern States, as well as to private people. Many of those who received copies have since written asking for further information about those portions of the State. One copy of the booklet reached Scotland, and the recipient has written speaking of the exhibition at Glasgow, but he pointed out that at the exhibition there were no exhibits whatever from the lower South-West or lower Great Southern districts. I refer to this matter because many other publications issued to advertise the State have omitted reference to the Great Southern, while many experts who have been sent out to lecture on the State's resources have made no reference to Mt. Barker and Albany.

The "Western Mail" this week contains a supplement dealing with the fat lamb industry. Articles have been written by Mr. J. M. Coleman, an expert of the Australian Meat Council, who recently visited Western Australia to report on the lamb and meat industry. Arrangements were made for Mr. Coleman to visit the northern farming areas, but only by the merest fluke was he taken to the lower South-West and Great Southern districts. Those districts he describes in his

report as the best part of Western Australia for the production of fat lambs, and he says that those districts will, as time goes on, produce more fat lambs than will any other part of Western Australia.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Did he say the Great Southern?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: He was speaking of the lower South-West and lower Great Southern.

Hon. L. Craig: He was referring entirely to fat lamb production.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Yes, and that is what I am speaking of. One matter to which I must make reference may be regarded as a very hardy annual, but I must speak of it, and if my remarks do no good, they will do no harm. I was greatly impressed by some remarks published in the "West Australian" a few days ago, attributed to Mr. S. B. Harry, who was described as a high official of the South Australian Tourist Bureau. In the course of a brief article dealing with Perth, Fremantle and the adjacent districts, Mr. Harry was unstinted in his praise, but he emphasised that he had seen very little literature advertising the attractions of Western Australia. I believe that only £3,000 or £4,000 is provided for the purpose each year. More money should be made available by the Government, and it should be used to advertise not only the metropolitan area but the whole State. I doubt whether the scenery of the Nornalup district can be surpassed anywhere in the world. Scenery, however, is not the main consideration. Mr. Piesse mentioned a drive taken by him through Bunbury to Nornalup and Denmark, across to Albany and back to Perth. I am satisfied that there is no drive in Western Australia, and possibly none in Australia, that can reveal more varied types of farming, production and possibilities than that section of the State.

I have met visitors from Singapore who have expressed themselves favourably towards Western Australia as a place for sending their children, instead of sending them to England. Nearly all the children of wealthy people in Singapore are, on reaching a certain age, sent to a country of cooler climate, usually to receive their education. We have various first-class primary, secondary, private, and church schools, and although they are not Government institutions, the Government might reasonably undertake to advertise the opportunities they offer. Such advertisements would probably

attract the attention of residents not only of Singapore but of other parts of the Malay States and of India.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Every year more and more children are coming down for that purpose.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I am pleased to have that information.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: They come from Java as well as from Singapore.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: But not very many.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Yes, quite a number.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: But probably only a small percentage of the total. I have heard that some of them consider the climate of Perth too hot in the summer, but I have pointed out that the schools at Katanning and Albany are excellent. In the course of time, these schools will certainly become fine ones. Some of those people say they do not like our Australian accent. I reply that that difficulty could be overcome by securing teachers from Oxford and Cambridge, while, for the girls' school, teachers could be obtained from Girton. We should certainly do our utmost to attract to this State more of the children who have to leave the warmer countries. If parents are prepared to send their children to England, they should be agreeable to sending them here, because Albany probably has a better climate.

I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without commending the Government, as I did last year, on the assistance rendered to pastoralists during the long and devastating drought which in parts is still continuing. Rain is yet wanted in many of the pastoral areas. There are portions of the Murchison and Gaseoyne districts that are in just as bad a condition, if not worse, than they were last year. I know many stations where there is not a bite of green feed. To a station in which I am interested, we despatched the other day 100 tons of chaff in the hope of keeping the remaining sheep alive. Members can appreciate what that means. The chaff had to be purchased, railed 300 to 400 miles and then transported by motor truck another 130 miles, and goodness knows whether we shall be able to save the sheep even now. People might ask whether it is worth while trying to save the sheep in such circumstances. Of course it is. Those sheep repre-

sent the result of 30 or 40 years of breeding. Should they die and general rains be experienced later in those areas, it will be impossible to re-stock by purchasing the same type of ewes, or, in fact, to buy any ewes at all. I hope the Government will recognise that the drought is by no means at an end, and that in many parts the situation is as serious as ever.

I would like the Government to bear in mind one other point. Years ago the stations were revalued and their rents re-appraised. Now, owing to the drought conditions that have prevailed for so long, the situation has changed entirely. In those earlier times the value of the stations was appraised on their carrying capacity, but now we read that the mulga, saltbush, and all sorts of top feed have been dying off owing to the seasonal conditions, and will not come up again. The result is that the stations will never again be able to carry as many sheep as when those properties were re-appraised for rental purposes. In due course I hope the Government will consider a further re-appraisal in view of the distressing conditions that have prevailed throughout the pastoral industry.

In the course of His Excellency's Speech, reference was made to the substantial progress made by the fat lamb industry. That is quite correct. The Speech also included the following reference:—

A loan of a further £35,000 has been made to the W.A. Meat Export Co. for extensions to its treatment works, the capacity of which was so severely taxed last year. It is confidently expected that the time is not far distant when the present record output will be doubled.

I quite appreciate that the extra financial assistance was necessary. The production of fat lambs has steadily increased, and we hope the time will not be far distant when the prediction outlined in the Speech proves to be correct. The meat works at Albany is a new concern, but here again I must admit we have no cause for complaint against the present Government. Everything possible that could be done to further the advancement of the operations was done by the Government. I am happy to say that, had it not been for the practical assistance given to us by the Chief Secretary, the Minister for Agriculture and the Honorary Minister, the concern would not be in its present satisfactory position. In the first year 35,000 lambs were treated

at the Albany works, and of that number between 12,000 and 13,000 were sent there on account of a strike at Fremantle. The next year we handled between 33,000 and 34,000 fat lambs, a far greater percentage coming from our own district. This year we anticipate handling about 40,000 lambs, which is a very substantial increase. We have started a bacon factory to deal with pigs, and I venture to assert that, with the assistance received from the Government, it will, in time, prove a successful industry. We also appreciate the assistance that has been rendered by the State Transport Board, which has helped in every way possible, and the same may be said of the Railway Department. With regard to the railways, I trust that there will be no shortage of trucks.

The Speech indicates that the volume of railway business has improved, and that should be so because, with the Transport Board operating, much of the competition previously suffered by the railways has been curtailed. Considerable improvements have been effected in the services rendered to the public, and the conditions of travel from Perth to Kalgoorlie and Wiluna, and, in fact, to practically all the centres in that part of the State, are now very satisfactory. The services have been accelerated and the trains have been made much more comfortable for the travelling public. The department has installed AZ carriages with coupe compartments, and the coaches are equipped with showers and so on. In fact, the trains should satisfy the travelling public for years to come. On the other hand, the Albany train service has retrogressed. On that line the old carriages are still being used. I have to admit, of course, that fewer people travel on that line, but, nevertheless, I do not think the Government should allow any of the services to retrogress. I trust that some of the later type of carriages will soon be built for use on the Albany line. I congratulate the Government on its appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of utilising the light lands of the State.

Member: A waste of time.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The Royal Commission visited the Albany district and I am quite certain, from some remarks dropped by the Chairman of the Commission, and from what I have heard from other sources, that areas of the lighter

types of country will be taken up and used for farming purposes. Personally, I think that light land should be made available at very cheap rates, perhaps on improvement terms only. At Denmark, which has the only group settlement in my province, I am glad to say the conditions have improved beyond recognition. The despondency of the past has entirely disappeared, and the settlers now are quite cheerful and are doing much better. Possibly that is due to the price of butter fat having risen to 1s. 3d. a lb., whereas formerly it was 8d. or 9d. That made all the difference. The relationship between the settlers and the Agricultural Bank has been fairly happy, and the writing-down relieved the difficulties of the producers to an appreciable degree. It converted disgruntled settlers into satisfied farmers. A much better type of cow is being kept nowadays and, in general, everything seems to be quite satisfactory. On most of the farms there are good stacks, indicating that the settlers understand modern farming methods. Few of them have not got pigs, and the influence of the Agricultural Research Station has been very great and very helpful. There is one somewhat humorous phase of the operations at that farm that I may mention, for it would appear that endeavours are being made to apply the eight-hour day to the cows.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Are they instituting a five-day week?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I do not know about that. I do know that the cows are milked just before 8 a.m. and at the other end of the day milking finishes just before 5 p.m. What happens between 5 p.m. and 7.30 a.m. must be rather detrimental to the cows.

Regarding the retention, or otherwise, of the Nornalup railway, the State Transport Board heard all the arguments for and against the removal of the line. The board has long been silent, and I hope its silence means that the line will remain untouched. The people of the district would be very sorry indeed if the line were pulled up. Its disappearance would be a great blow to Denmark and Nornalup and to the settlers along the line. Such an action would block the opening up of huge timber areas, and retard progress generally. I was in the district a fortnight ago and, at a large gath-

ering held at Nornalup, one complaint voiced was that great difficulty was experienced in bringing launches alongside the river banks adjacent to the town. There are upwards of 30 launches at Nornalup, and what the people want is a short, narrow channel, deep enough to allow the launches to be moored close to the town. I do not know whether representations have been made to the Government on that matter, but I understand they will be, and I hope the Minister concerned will give favourable consideration to the request.

With regard to water supplies for the Great Southern, I do not know whether you, Mr. President, have ever been in that part of the State in the late summer months. If you have, you will know that at times you could not get a bath in the morning, or if you could, the water was exceedingly thick. The residents of that part of the State have suffered under those conditions for a long time, and during the course of the year a conference was held which representatives of the several centres attended. The whole matter was discussed and I understand that the Government is having a survey made to ascertain whether water can be secured from the Canning, Wellington or North Dandalup areas, in order to provide supplies to towns in the Great Southern districts. I hope the Government will devote serious attention to the problem. I realise we are not at the inception of a boom such as confronted Lord Forrest when he inaugurated the Goldfields Water Scheme, and that, in view of the present financial position, the State Government cannot very well undertake a huge scheme without assistance. It certainly must be carried out, however, because the situation in that part of the State is going from bad to worse. The more the population expands and the greater the activity displayed in farming operations, the heavier will be the demand upon the water supplies. I trust the Government will give immediate attention to the problem and regard it as a national undertaking, one in which at least the assistance of the Federal Government would be warranted. I trust there is no intention to require farmers anywhere near the pipeline to pay towards the cost of the scheme. I refer to those farmers who, at great expense, have provided water supplies of their own.

The Honorary Minister: You cannot have a scheme unless the people are prepared to pay for it.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: It would hardly be fair to ask farmers that do not receive any benefit from it to contribute to the cost.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You would have to extend that principle to other water schemes, too.

The Honorary Minister: The people in the metropolitan area have to pay for their water schemes.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The Government should investigate the matter. I take it that no finality will be reached until the proposition has been placed before the people who will be required to pay for it. The position of the wheatgrowers today is nearly as disastrous as it was a few years ago. At present the price of wheat is only 8d. or 9d. above the lowest level touched—1s. 6d. or 1s. 8d. a bushel. Naturally we do not wish to talk about direct action, but unless the Government does what nearly all the other Australian Governments have done, I do not know what action the farmers will take. The State Government should approach the Federal authorities and cooperate with them to arrange a fixed home consumption price for wheat used within Australia. If the price of wheat falls much lower, we can appreciate what the position will be. The farmers themselves favour the fixing of a home consumption price, and I understand the other States are quite prepared to enter into an agreement with that object in view. I trust that we shall soon be told that Western Australia has combined with the Commonwealth in providing some method by which much-needed assistance can be rendered the wheatgrowers. I hope the Government will give consideration to the provision of bulk handling facilities at Albany. The refusal of the Minister last year to meet a deputation of Great Southern members was entirely wrong. The Government states from time to time that it wishes to help the farmers, but so long as it declines to provide a satisfactory terminal at Albany, it is involving farmers in the area in a charge of something like 2d. a bushel above that borne by those having bulk handling facilities. Economy is essential, and Country Party members do not want to see farmers loaded with unessential boards and other avoidable costs. The wheatgrowers

want some control over any system that might be instituted. Money for a bulk handling plant is available, if necessary, and this fact is generally known.

A facility that has been requested many times is a new crane for the jetty at Albany. The one in use is out of date. The arm is too short and there are many other defects. I have already mentioned how the Government has assisted the Albany Freezing Works. That assistance has been greatly appreciated, but a new crane is badly needed. At present shipping companies are reluctant to send their vessels to Albany to lift small shipments of lambs. When there are 12,000 lambs to be taken, ships are gladly sent to the port, but sometimes only 5,000 are ready for transport, and for that number the companies hesitate to send in their boats. I was speaking the other day to the managing director in London of the Blue Star line (Mr. Trott), and he said the company was not prepared to send vessels to pick up small shipments unless improved facilities were provided. Under existing conditions a ship that calls to pick up 5,000 lambs, arriving about 5 o'clock in the morning, cannot get away until 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening. Because boats have to remain so long the company is not prepared to make Albany a port of call. If vessels could load their freight in two or three hours there would be no objection. The period that ships would be required to spend in port to pick up say 5,000 lambs, would be reduced to two or three hours if an up-to-date crane were installed. I do not know whether the type of crane required would be expensive. Lambs are at their best about October or November but, because tonnage is not available at Albany, producers have to send their lambs to Fremantle. That is not economical and the longer journey to Fremantle is bad for the lambs. If the Government provided another crane, the difficulty would be overcome. I support the motion.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.20]: I wish to make a few remarks on current subjects that concern many members. One part of the Speech with which I was greatly impressed was that dealing with the improvement in railway finances. I am pleased that at last we have an acknowledgement that the improvement was mainly due to the revenue derived from the carriage of wheat.

For many years the statement has been made in various quarters, and accepted by the community at large, that the wheat growing industry was a nuisance; that the wheat grower was always crying out for support; that the railway freight on wheat was low and that the freight on fertiliser should be increased. The statement was made that low freights on wheat and fertiliser were responsible for the inability of the railways to secure satisfactory financial results.

I have always endeavoured to point out that the freight on wheat is really very high and that wheat is the most profitable commodity transported by the railways. True, some goods are carried at higher freights, but the point is that wheat is hauled over a much greater mileage. Wheat trucks are fully loaded all the year round, and the labour involved in handling this commodity is less than is required for handling other goods. All that is needed is an engine-driver and his assistant at one end of a fully-laden train and a guard at the other end. Little booking is necessary, because only one entry is made for the whole consignment. Much higher freights are charged on other classes of goods, but those goods are not carried in the same quantity or for the same distance and many clerks are required to check off the items and keep records of the consignments. Consequently, though higher freights are obtained from such commodities, they are not as payable a proposition as is wheat. A large haulage of wheat, with super as back loading, is of considerable value to the department. Wheat is also of immense importance to the State as a whole because it is a commodity that can be shipped overseas to help pay some of the debts of this country to the outside world. When I hear complaints of the kind referred to, my mind reverts to the time when Parliament was asked to pass the Transport Bill. I regard that measure as most disgraceful; it should never have been passed, because it has put another tax on a community that can ill afford further taxes. I recall that that legislation was introduced for the purpose of assisting the railways. Parliament was asked to save the railways from the unfortunate position into which they had drifted. The Railway Department was not prepared to meet fair open competition that I believe was good for it. Fair competition should have the effect of bringing the department to its senses and of convincing

those in authority of the need to provide a better service than was being given.

Reference has been made by Mr. Witte-noom, Mr. Thomson and other speakers to the attitude of the Government to the handling of wheat, and to the appalling position in which wheatgrowers, who wish to send their commodity through their own concern, are placed. Instead of being able to do as they desire, the wheatgrowers have to permit their grain to be handled by some other body under the jurisdiction of the Government at the terminal ports. It is regrettable that the Government interfered and held up the bulk-handling scheme as long as it could. In the case of Albany, the Government has refused wheatgrowers the right to instal a terminal for themselves, thus preventing their using one of the best ports in the world. I feel greatly concerned about this matter, because I consider it extremely unfair that the Government should tell those wheatgrowers to stand aside and await its convenience in the matter of taking action. My concern is the greater because the growers have funds available for the erection of a terminal, and there is thus no necessity for the Government to go on the money market for this purpose. As a result of the Government's attitude we shall probably be asked presently to pay higher freights on wheat and super.

Another great injustice has been done to the growers—an injustice that I am surprised none of the representatives of the South-West has mentioned. I refer to the carriage of super. A lower freight is charged on super carried before a specified date. That is satisfactory up to a point, but the trouble is that during the months when the lower rate does not apply, large quantities of super are needed in certain areas to improve pastures by topdressing. I am not sure exactly how long the lower freight operates—January to April I believe—but for the rest of the year potato growers and fruitgrowers have to pay the higher rate on fertiliser, including that used for topdressing.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: It is possible to obtain an extension of the concession.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: To what date?

Hon. H. V. Piesse: An extension of many months.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have not been aware of that.



Hon. H. V. Piesse: We do not talk about it.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The department always grants the extension.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have not had the benefit of the concession.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Such conversation between members is quite irregular.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not want to do an injustice to the Railway Department. I made a statement and now, according to remarks made during the conversation to which you, Sir, have alluded, I was in error. Therefore, I withdraw what I said. I was guided by the payments I myself had made. I have had the benefit of the extension for super used for wheat-growing but not for topdressing. Apparently those who are in the know receive special consideration. The Government railways belong to the whole community, and it is very unfair that there should be any differentiation between the treatment meted out to one person and another. I fully expect that freights will be raised as a result of recent action in the industrial sphere. I know there have been difficulties at Collie. The basic wage has been increased, but the Government got itself into a disgraceful position over the trouble with the miners at Collie. No doubt the mine owners will have to increase the price of coal, and that will be passed on to the Railway Department. The good results obtained last year by the railways cannot be repeated next year unless the extra charge for coal can be recouped from someone else. It is the poor man on the land who will get it in the neck once more. I presume that the increased expenditure will come out of his pocket. I am afraid that actions of this sort will have a repercussion, and that it may even be necessary to repeal the Industrial Arbitration Act. The Speech states that an industrial arbitration Bill will be brought down, but I do not know the intentions of the Government. I hope we shall be able to insert in the Bill a provision that was originally omitted. We thought when the Act was passed that there would be no necessity to review these questions for many years. The Act, however, has been altered, and has run the gauntlet of Parliament on several occasions.

The time has arrived when we should embody in our industrial legislation a pro-

vision empowering the President of the Arbitration Court to consider the welfare of the industry that is asked to bear the additional burden. Appeals for additional wages, reduced hours, and improved conditions are brought before the court. The President should be able to take into consideration whether the industry could stand the demands made upon it. Almost on the first occasion when a matter was brought before the court, one of the parties stated that if increased wages were awarded, the industry would be ruined. The President on that occasion said, "I am not concerned about the ruination of the industry. I am not instructed by Parliament to take that into consideration. I am instructed to deal with the question at issue. It is claimed that the men must have a certain standard of living, and I have to consider that. If my award is going to kill the industry, that is not my lookout." Such a clause as I have suggested should be embodied in any Bill that is brought down. It is of the utmost importance to those who may be applying to the court for increased wages or reduced hours, and in fact to all engaged in industry. If as a result of an appeal for improved conditions an industry was obliged to close down, there would be no employment for those who had been engaged in it.

Hon. G. Fraser: Every industry would be bankrupt if such a provision were put into our legislation.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Industries must go bankrupt if we continue to shorten the hours of labour and increase wages. Already one day in the week is being knocked off all round, and I expect further demands on the part of the railway employees in this respect. Who is going to stand the expense? It usually falls on the producer. I am speaking in this strain because later on we shall have before us a Bill dealing with the Industrial Arbitration Act, and I am hinting that we should not lose the opportunity to embody in it a clause to carry out my suggestion.

Any reasonable person will agree that it is necessary for both employees and employers that the wheels of industry should be kept revolving. Already we know that various people have had to give up their businesses because of circumstances beyond their control. I recall that a furniture firm in Perth was working under an award, but it

was losing so much money that the proprietors desired to give up business. They found they could not stop because an action would have been taken against them for a lock-out. They, therefore, had to apply to the Arbitration Court for permission to stop making furniture. In the course of the evidence given, they showed that the employees were making furniture in their own time, and underselling the very people who were finding them employment. The court gave the owners of the business permission to close so that they could not be sued by the workers for creating a lock-out.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not support us last year when we wanted to put a stop to backyard factories.

Hon. J. Nicholson: This was not an instance of a backyard factory.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Often the increased costs due to higher wages can be passed on, but in the case of the railways the poor producer will have to carry the burden. He has been passing through a serious time. The price of wheat has fallen very low. Mr. Wittenoom referred to the position of the pastoralists. I have some figures showing the comparative values of the wool clip of the pastoral areas of Western Australia, calculated at the average price per pound at the Perth Auction Sales. In 1934 the total clip from the pastoral areas was 46,000,000 lbs. of wool; in 1936 the total was 22,000,000 lbs., and in 1937 it had dropped to 18,850,000 lbs. In 1934 the value of the clip was £1,755,000, in 1935 it was £2,337,427, and in 1937 it had dropped to £926,791.

Hon. A. Thomson: That represents a big economic loss to the State.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is a tremendous loss. I quote these figures to confirm the remarks of Mr. Wittenoom. The Speech would suggest to the community that everything in the garden was lovely. Quite recently, various people have suggested that we have turned the corner, and that there is no longer any depression.

Hon. A. Thomson: I am afraid we are right back to where we were. We have gone round in a circle.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Yes. Probably most people are beginning to realise that business houses in Perth are suffering and are feeling the pinch badly. The outlook is not what has been represented. Another tax about to be placed upon the shoulders of the

community by the Federal Government's national insurance scheme. According to the Speech there are only 6,500 men now unemployed. I think there will be a great increase in that number as soon as the national insurance scheme is brought into operation. It must have the effect of causing many people to endeavour to avoid some of the charges that are being imposed upon them.

Hon. A. Thomson: There is no chance of escaping it.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I may be reading into the scheme something that is not there. People are continually asking me about it. I have all the information I could get, and the more I read about it, the more I feel that many who have to contribute largely to the scheme will have no chance of deriving any benefit from it, and will take the earliest opportunity to get out of business.

The Honorary Minister: Your party introduced national insurance.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Such people will no longer be content to be employers of labour, but will make every effort to get out of business. It is a very serious matter. I should like to refer to the action of the Federal Government in banning the export of iron ore from Yampi. The Commonwealth seems to have singled out this State for the cane. Some time ago we passed a Bill providing for secession.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A Bill for a referendum of the people.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We had the referendum, but when we sent our delegates Home, their mission failed. During the progress of the referendum, Mr. Lyons visited Western Australia and made all sorts of promises conditionally upon our not persevering with the intention to secede from the Commonwealth. He said he would investigate our wrongs, but after the mission to England failed, we heard nothing further from the head of the Federal Government. I noticed in to-day's newspaper that the Agents General for the various Australian States are finding that they are being pushed aside by Australia House. This is a serious matter, but it is in keeping with the attitude of the Federal Government in trying to interfere with our efforts to develop the State.

When we entered Federation, I was under the impression that it would be left to the

States to carry on a policy for developing the country in every possible direction. We had to retain control of all the expensive departments, while the Federation took the revenue-producing ones. The latest action of the Federal Government, in my opinion, is ultra vires the Constitution, and really amounts to doing something that prevents us from developing our industries and keeping ourselves financial. Not only has that action stopped the export of iron ore from Yampi, but it has in a general way prevented the development of an extensive part of our far North. The pastoralists were looking forward to a wonderful opportunity in the way of developing trade along the coast. Many more vessels would have been leaving our shores taking away their cattle and sheep in small consignments, and after all it was the exporter of small consignments that would have reaped a big benefit. The action of the Federal Government is very much more serious than appears on the surface, because not only has a ban been placed on the export of iron ore, but the ban has, in effect, extended to exports from the pastoral areas. This country is obliged to finance on its exports, and the Federal Government should have been glad to see us export as much as possible to help to pay overseas debts. Yet action such as I have described is taken, and no explanation is given. Personally I feel that Mr. Lyons has been particularly cunning in every assertion he has made for public consumption, because seemingly there has been nothing to justify the action taken, except the statement in which he refers so very often to "economic accessibility." It looked as if the other parts of Australia were jealous of the expeditious manner in which it was proposed to handle the ore and feared the competition. That may have been one reason why the embargo was placed on the export of the ore. It may also have been that Western Australia was singled out because of our attitude of some years ago to the Federation, and other matters as well.

Like Mr. Craig, I wish to refer to a parochial matter, though not entirely parochial, since it affects the whole of the State. I refer to the section of the community that has not received fair treatment in respect of the grasshopper pest. I should like to read the remarks of Mr. Casey, the Federal Treasurer, on the grasshopper menace in the Eastern States. This is a telegram from

Melbourne published locally on the 19th July—

National plans to control the grasshopper pest in Australia were discussed to-day at a conference of Commonwealth and State Government experts. In a message read at the opening of the conference, the Minister in charge of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (Mr. Casey) stated that the economic wastage in Australia due to grasshoppers amounted to millions of pounds. Delegates to the conference were welcomed by the deputy-chairman of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (Dr. A. E. V. Richardson). He said that there was reason to believe that the grasshopper problem would become greater with the development of agriculture in Australia, especially in the marginal areas, unless adequate measures could be developed to control or prevent incipient outbreaks. The outbreak areas should be defined with greater precision and further knowledge was required of the conditions necessary for producing the swarming phase. Then it should be possible to control incipient outbreaks by making these areas unsuited for the production of the swarming phase.

My reason for quoting this report is that I have been given to understand that the Federal Government has made grants to New South Wales for the destruction of grasshoppers. When I was in the other States a little while ago, I learnt of the swarming hordes of the grasshoppers in New South Wales, and therefore I am not surprised at the action of the Federal Government in going to the aid of that State. I am just wondering whether the Western Australian Government has received similar financial assistance from the Federal Government, because if the Federal Government makes a grant to one State for the destruction of a pest which is a terrible curse, there is no reason why it should not make a grant to another similarly affected. I do not even know whether our Government has applied for funds to assist in the extermination of the grasshopper. If it has not, it should certainly have done so, and if funds have been received I do not know why further assistance has not been given to our settlers who have had a very serious time in the last two or three years. I am told that the Government is about to throw the onus for the destruction of the pest on the settlers themselves, and that it is intended to do this by declaring grasshoppers to be vermin. That is not at all fair, and in view of the remarks that I have read, showing what the Federal Government has done, I hope the State Government will be able

to get some funds from the Commonwealth. The importance of the industry justifies drastic steps being taken to destroy the grasshoppers. There is a danger of the pest finding its way into areas other than those that are agricultural; it might even extend to municipalities nearer the coast and to the gardens of private citizens.

Hon. A. Thomson: It might wake up the Government and the people if the pest did spread in that manner.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Most certainly it would. I give the Government credit for having inaugurated a scheme last year for the ploughing of abandoned areas. I understand that is to be done again this year. No doubt a considerable sum of money was spent in ploughing those breeding grounds. The effort was wonderfully good, but there are still areas that were not ploughed, and there are areas that cannot be ploughed and that are breeding grounds for the pest. All possible steps should be taken to prevent the menace getting out of hand. The idea of the Government's suddenly declaring the grasshopper to be vermin means that the Government intends to bring the pest under the Vermin Act. By the way, the tax imposed under that statute is not a general tax on the whole community; it is a voluntary tax that is borne by the agriculturists and pastoralists, who agreed in that manner to raise a fund for the destruction of foxes and dingoes—just for that purpose and certainly not for the destruction of grasshoppers. I assure the Government that the vermin boards have a difficult task to collect sufficient funds to enable them to carry out the functions imposed on them by the Act. Then we have the Vermin Act administered by the road boards. They have been able to deal with the several scourges, including rabbits, foxes, dingoes, eagles and parrots. Considerable revenue is required to destroy the parrots which are responsible for much damage when seed is first put into the ground. A much heavier toll is taken of the harvest of many settlers when all round the fences parrots are to be seen and the trees are thick with them. They are a serious menace to many people, but most serious to those who grow fruit. For the last five or six years there has been no fruit out of the orchard at my place; the parrots got the lot. We constantly tried poisoning them, but they came in flocks. Therefore the Government

should not take the action which I understand has been threatened. Many of the settlers in question have not the wherewithal to pay the tax. They are the people who need a great deal of help.

Everyone in the State must recognise that the primary producers are the backbone of the country. If they are doing well, business is brisk. On the other hand, if there is drought, or a drastic fall in prices, or loss of crops through scourges, business becomes dull and everybody talks about a depression. I agree with those who have said that something should be done for the producers of wheat and wool in the direction of marketing. To my mind, there is only one way of doing it. The Federal Government has given bonuses on so many commodities that it is up to that Government to grant a bonus on the production of wool. According to last year's figures, the average price per pound of wool was 11.8d. No one can grow wool and sell it at that price and pay his way. It is highly necessary for the woolgrowers to fall into line. They have always claimed that they do not want to do so, but how can the pastoralists any more than the agriculturists stand up to all the costs and charges which have been doubled during recent years? The Federal Government protects every secondary industry by means of tariffs and embargoes. It protects sugar, bananas, cotton, rice and so forth. It gives bonuses to foreigners to grow those things, but it is unwilling to stand by its own countrymen when the question is one of giving security to wheat and wool growers. True, the Federal Government did help the wheatgrower by a concession with respect to fertiliser; but that soon stopped. The Federal Government continues to grant bonuses for the production of fat lambs, butter, and so forth.

People who use fertiliser for topdressing still receive a bonus, but for crops other than wheat. Here again, the Federal Government has suddenly decided that it will grant that restricted bonus only to the extent of 20 tons for an individual claimant. Many growers use 100 tons and even 200 tons, but they may claim for only 20 tons. I am quite unable to understand the cheeping and paltriness inherent in such a decision. The use of fertiliser for topdressing means big trade. It helps to provide what both the Federal and the State Governments require—work for many of the

unemployed. The upshot is the development of a splendid export lamb industry, besides increased export of butter; and there is no cost to either the Federal or the State Government, because the increased production brings so much trade that the expenditure of the Governments goes back into their pockets. The more encouragement given to the use of fertiliser, the better the results obtained by growers, and the greater the quantity of overseas exports available to pay some of the debts that keep on increasing. The more fertiliser used, the better for everybody. The use of fertiliser means increased trade by successful people, instead of the creation of more paupers.

There is a good deal more that I wish to refer to, but time is limited. I see the Chief Secretary right in front of me, and that hon. gentleman will recollect some deputations that waited on him and other Ministers to plead the case of schools where better equipment is wanted—schools where the seats are not fit for the children to sit on, for instance. Mr. Wood mentioned a school at Merredin which in winter time is like a duck pond. Boards are laid on top of bricks there in an endeavour to let the children get around dry-footed. And that state of things has existed for years. Wonders can be done by the Government for schools in the metropolitan area, but country schools are left short of equipment. The excuse of the Government always is that money is short, but I do not accept that excuse. I contend that the Government does not spend its money in the right places.

As for the migration of children to this country, we do not know that those children are any better than the children that could be bred here. Under the system of child migration the Commonwealth gives 3s. 6d. per head per week as a subsidy towards the keep of the children. I understand the State Government also pays 3s. 6d. per head per week in respect of the imported children. Would it not be much more to the purpose if that bonus were offered to every family in Western Australia? It would be better to offer our own people 3s. 6d. per head per week for each of their children. Married people to-day are saying that they do not have families because they cannot afford to rear them properly. If we are prepared to let in all and sundry from the outside world and pay that subsidy per head, it is only logical to point

out that children of our own would be very much better, being already on the spot. We should encourage our own people to rear children.

Hon. A. Thomson: An excellent suggestion!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I believe I have time to refer to the question of starting-price betting. Apparently, there is little hope of getting anything done in that direction. Starting-price bookmaking is a canker. We know that racing was established here many years ago with the idea of encouraging the breed of horses. To-day we find our racing clubs going into a decline. To my way of thinking, that is a sad state of affairs. The racecourse is the place where betting should be done. Children are not allowed on racecourses.

Hon. G. Fraser: Yes, they are.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have not seen children on racecourses I have attended.

Hon. G. Fraser: You can see any number of them on racecourses all the year round.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Then the position has got worse than it was when I was younger. The racecourse caters for the better breeding of horses. A great deal of money has been embarked in the industry by people importing horses from the Old Country as sires and dams. Starting-price bookmaking is having a serious effect on them. Racing itself encourages a great many trades. However, the starting-price bookmaker is causing all that to pass away. Racing clubs cannot offer such prizes as would be possible if more people attended the racecourses. In my opinion, the racecourse is something to be encouraged, and starting-price bookmaking is a curse that should be discouraged. Starting-price bookmaking should be wiped out.

I am sorry I began my speech so late. My later remarks would have brought out some good points, which I am sure would have been appreciated. However, the time for making them is not opportune. I look forward to mentioning some of them when certain Bills forecast in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech come before us. I sincerely hope the Government will not do this time what it did last session—introduce measures during the closing hours, whereas they could have been brought down much earlier.

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

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*