

We know that the whole thing fizzled out. Neither directly nor indirectly did I do anything dishonest or obtain any illegal votes on that occasion, and I can assure hon. members that, up to the present time, I have lived as an honest man and will continue to do so whether elected to Parliament or not.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 5th August, 1924.

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

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENT.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.35]:
I move—

That it be an instruction to the Standing Orders Committee to consider the advisableness of amending the Standing Orders, especially in view of the alterations made in the Constitution Act, 1839, and the Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1899 during the session of 1921-22.

This is merely a formal motion, so I do not intend to say any more than a few words necessary to explain its purpose. In the session of 1921 it was considered advisable to alter the Constitution. Prior to that many difficulties had arisen between the two Houses of the Legislature over the interpretation of money Bills. After consultation between the Standing Orders Committees of the two Chambers, in order to make the position plain a Bill was passed through both Houses defining money Bills and also giving a clearer exposition of the relationship between the two Houses. The scope of the amendment was very extensive, probably much more so than members of either House realised at the time. I do not regard the present as a fitting occasion for dealing fully with those amend-

ments, but to those members who wish to understand the nature of the constitutional change that was effected, I recommend Quick and Garran's *Annotated Constitution of Australia*. What was done on that occasion was to repeal two sections of our Constitution and embody in our Constitution the sections of the Commonwealth Constitution dealing with money Bills and the relationship between the two Houses. As a result of that amendment whatever the analogy—if ever any existed—between the Legislative Council and the House of Lords in relation to the other House of the Legislature, it certainly does not exist any longer. The position of the Legislative Council in its relationship to the Assembly now, under our amended Constitution, is identical with the position of the Senate in its relationship to the House of Representatives in respect of money Bills. Therefore on the question of the interpretation of money Bills and the relationship between the two Houses, May's *Parliamentary Practice* has become obsolete, and we have to turn to the recognised interpretation of the Commonwealth Constitution in order to see the true position. That is found in Quick and Garran's *Annotated Constitution of Australia*. In that work it will be seen that the relationship has materially altered as the result of the amendment to our Constitution. And whilst the Constitution was amended by both Houses, no change was effected in our Standing Orders. The result is that our Standing Orders interpreting money Bills is altogether wrong. At present one Standing Order states that included amongst money Bills are Bills for imposing, altering, or repealing any tax, duty or imposition. In the amended Constitution it is provided that a Bill shall not be taken to appropriate revenue or moneys, or to impose taxation, by reason only of its containing provisions for the imposition or appropriation of fines or other pecuniary penalties, or for the demand of payment or appropriation of fees for licenses, or fees for registration or other services under the Bill. So in the very interpretation of a money Bill there is a marked inaccuracy in the Standing Orders as they are at present. The point cropped up only last session. Whilst I was acting as Deputy President the question arose as to whether or not a Bill was in order. Under our Standing Orders the Bill was not in order, but under the amended Constitution it was in order. It is for the purpose of bringing our Standing Orders into conformity with our amended Constitution in respect of money Bills and in other respects that I move this motion. Apart altogether from the all-important question of money Bills, other amendments in the Standing Orders ought to be effected. They are not so much amendments as alterations that do not change the meaning of the Standing Orders. Mr. Lovekin was kind enough to indicate some of these to me, but in addition there are several that I myself have noted in a study of the Standing Orders. In the chapter

of our Standing Orders dealing with select committees, there is a Standing Order that refers only to standing committees. That Standing Order should be embodied in another chapter, for at present it is out of place and therefore is likely to be overlooked. Then again, in another Standing Order referring to motions not open to debate, two motions are mentioned. But a study of the Standing Orders will show that there ought to be included in that Standing Order three or four additional motions that are not open to debate. I just mention these anomalies as some of the reasons why an instruction should be given to the Standing Orders Committee to take into consideration the advisableness of amending the Standing Orders.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from 31st July.

The PRESIDENT: Before the debate is resumed I should like to say it would be only fair if members came with their speeches ready. We have been sitting nearly a fortnight, yet only four speeches have been delivered. It is a little hard that country members should be brought long distances in order to hear only one speech a day.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.45]: I desire to extend to Mr. Drew, the Leader of the House, my sincere congratulations upon his elevation once more to that position. Some members have had an opportunity of sitting under his leadership. When I came into this House he had just gone out of office, and Mr. Colebatch was Leader of the House. I, therefore, had no opportunity of judging the capabilities of Mr. Drew as Leader of the House. I am told on all sides, however, by Mr. Holmes and others, that nothing more could be desired than the presence of that hon. gentleman in the matter of courtesy and consideration to members and the conduct of the business of the House. I wish the Colonial Secretary a very successful and happy session. Mr. Hickey is an old friend of mine. On many occasions during the last session he gave me great assistance. I am sure he will worthily occupy the position of Honorary Minister, do good work for Western Australia, and help us in this House to elucidate many matters of importance to the State. I am not in favour of Honorary Ministers. It would be better if the Government appointed Constitutional Ministers, if more Ministers are necessary, and I am not sure that they are. If it be necessary to have extra Ministers, either here or in another place, it would perhaps be well if the Constitution were amended so that they might be given full Cabinet rank.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They should be made Under Secretaries.

Hon. J. EWING: That would give them more authority to act than they now possess. Although the three Honorary Ministers now in the Government are excellent men, and I have been pleased to watch their work and to notice how well they have done it, I am not at all sure that it was necessary to appoint them. So far as their work and their desire to assist in the development of the State is concerned, I am sure there is very little left to be desired. On account of the absence of the Minister for Works it has been necessary for the Government to give greater authority to Mr. Cunningham, one of the Honorary Ministers. This has been done to ensure that the actions taken by the Honorary Minister during the absence of the Minister shall have the full force of law. This goes to show that although Honorary Ministers may work hard, they always have to refer to their chief for confirmation of any of their actions. It would be better in the interests of the State and of the Honorary Ministers themselves, if they are really necessary, to give them Cabinet rank, gazette them as Constitutional Ministers, and pay them the increased salary attached to the higher position. To the new members of this Chamber I extend my congratulations, and am pleased to welcome them here. I am sure they will find the environment of the House to their liking. Although some of them are opposed to this Chamber, they will find, as their knowledge of it increases, that it is one of the most effective and best institutions for the preservation of the life and prosperity of the people in Western Australia. I regret that three members have fallen by the way. You, Sir, and all of us will be sorry they were unsuccessful at the last election. I refer to Mr. Ardagh, Mr. Carroll, and Mr. Mills. There always exists a feeling of comradeship amongst members of this House that grows as they get to know each other, whether they have the same political thought or not. Whilst we are pleased to welcome the new members we all regret that the old members have dropped out. This is not a non-party House, but it is one in which we all sink our differences to a great extent. It is our custom to extend to the Government in power and the Leader of the House all the help that can be given to them. I would ask that on all questions class-consciousness should be lost sight of. The Government may, of course, introduce measures which some of us may consider class measures, but the right thing to do now is to try and cultivate a national conscience, one that is not for class alone but for the benefit of the citizens of the State. On all questions that do not affect the policy of a lifetime and my own political thoughts of a lifetime, I shall be

happy to assist the Leader of the House. There will be no carping criticism on my part, but I will do everything to help him that is compatible with the views I hold. I have found it necessary to give notice with reference to certain questions concerning the embargo on cattle. I want the Minister to be good enough when answering the questions to give the House a *résumé* of what has happened, so that we may judge whether the Minister in charge of this work has done what is right. No doubt he has done what he thinks is right, but there is a danger in admitting tick-infested cattle to the South-West. My reason for mentioning the subject now is that I have received a letter from the Warren Road Board conveying an emphatic protest against this action, and pointing out that in many cases Kimberley cattle were taken to the South-West through the action of a previous Government, were dipped beforehand, and that notwithstanding the dipping, one settler alone, Mr. Giblett, lost something like £200 worth of cattle in a short time. I have it on the authority of the road board that the tick did not die during the winter. I would, therefore, ask the Minister to be good enough to make inquiries with a view to giving a statement to the House, so that we may be assured there is no danger likely to follow the action of the Minister, and that the welfare of the beautiful herds in the South-West will not be jeopardised. These herds comprise Alderney and Jersey cattle, and it would be a dreadful thing if they became infected with tick. If there be any danger, I hope the Government will prevent cattle going from the Kimberleys to the South-West, even though that might make meat a little dearer for the people there.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was the policy altered by this Government?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. A deputation waited on the ex-Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Maley, and he refused to remove the embargo. The present Minister for Agriculture, however, in reply to a deputation, granted the request that cattle should be sent there after dipping. I am anxious to know whether any cattle have gone from the North-West to the South-West, and whether there is any likelihood of danger accruing to the herds there.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are the cattle dipped beforehand?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. When the embargo was raised some time ago for a little while, the cattle were dipped, and Mr. Giblett suffered the loss I have spoken of.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are the cattle from the North-West?

Hon. J. EWING: I suppose they are Kimberley cattle.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Cattle from South Australia are not admitted on the trans-Australian railway.

Hon. J. EWING: I noticed that. The Minister, in his wisdom, has now allowed cattle to go to the South-West, and I am very alarmed about the result. If our group settlements are to go ahead with their dairying, we must avoid any possibility of trouble. I fear we are running into danger in allowing these cattle to go to the South-West.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They have been going there for years, except that there was an imaginary line drawn, and this has now been extended.

Hon. J. EWING: I will show Mr. Holmes the communication I have received from the road board, from which he will see I am justified in referring to the matter. If he had received a similar letter from his constituents, I am sure he would have felt it his duty to do as I have done.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is it not a fact that tick are not injurious outside the malaria country?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know. The tick lives through the winter in the South-West, and that must constitute a danger. I merely want to give the Minister the opportunity to make a statement to the House at his convenience. I have read carefully the Governor's Speech. The present Government have been in office only three months. The acts of omission or commission during the previous nine months of the Mitchell Administration have been fully commented upon in that Speech. It is gratifying to read of the prosperity of the State, the improved finances, the improved position of the railways, the success that has attended group and land settlement; to read of the wheat yield and dairying, the abnormal advance in the timber and pastoral industries, and the fact that the water supply service initiated by the previous Government is to be carried through. The Speech is really an outline of the work of the previous Administration. I am not taking up a position opposed to the Government. They have not committed any act that calls for criticism, except the one we discussed the other day. It is my duty to place before the House and the country something of a statement with regard to the old Administration. There are some people who had no time for the Mitchell Administration. Mr. Kirwan, in speaking the other day, said that two of the greatest factors in the defeat of the Mitchell Government were Mr. Holmes and Mr. Lovekin.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I deny that.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I do not deny it, and I do not regret it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Their speeches were quoted all over the country during the election campaign.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They killed themselves.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Lovekin objects to the statement, but Mr. Holmes endorses it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I do not regret it, and I do not think the country does.

Hon. J. EWING: It is paying a great compliment to those members to say that they have had so much influence in the country. The late Government might well say, "Save us from our friends."

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They did good work.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Kirwan can blame himself.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Do not call it "blame."

Hon. J. EWING: The Minister knows I am only speaking in a spirit of helpfulness, and with a desire that the Government should make a success of their work. These gentlemen who have done so much in opposition to the late Government are supposed to be members of our own party, and are our own familiar friends.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: To which party do you belong?

Hon. J. EWING: That is Mr. Kirwan's statement. If that is so, the influence of these two members must have been wide and far-reaching.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Now we have a Western Australian Labour Government, instead of a South-West Labour Government, as we had in the past. That is the only difference.

Hon. J. EWING: That is a distinction without a difference.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: My only objection to the statement is that Mr. Kirwan does not include himself.

Hon. A. Lovekin: He is too modest to do that.

Hon. J. EWING: The Speech dealt particularly with the Geraldton and Fremantle harbours, and stated that it was hoped there would be a first-class harbour provided for Geraldton and that all that could be done for the Fremantle harbour would be attended to. I am pleased to see that such action is contemplated by the Government, but I regret that no mention has been made of harbour improvements at Bunbury. Whatever action the Government may take I trust it will be taken soon, and that no unnecessary delay will occur. I would like to know what has been done with the dredge that was bought and whether it will be in operation at Bunbury at an early date. I can assure the Minister that it is necessary that it should be sent there to carry out imperative operations. Only one new railway was mentioned in the Governor's Speech, and that referred to the lining up of the Esperance northwards railway with the main line that terminates now at Norseman. When the Bill to authorise the construction of the railway comes before us, provided the Government will be able to raise the necessary money, I will be in accord with the proposal to construct the line. When I fought my first election some 20 years ago, I opposed the railway strenuously. Since then the Esperance northward line has been constructed and the main line extended to Norseman. I do not think it is advisable to have a gap, and in the interests

of the State and the land settlement that we hope will take place in that part in the near future, it is necessary to construct the line. The Government, therefore, can depend upon my vote in that direction. Many new Bills are foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech, some of which may be controversial. I will reserve what I have to say regarding those measures till they come before us; we shall then be in a position to judge whether the Bills are in accordance with justice and equity, according to our political opinions. I wish to refer to one matter before proceeding any further, and it affects Mr. Lovekin and, to a certain extent, the present Government. When Mr. Colebatch was Leader of the House, an Arbitration Act Amendment Bill was brought before the Chamber and I think it was defeated on the question of the presidency of the Arbitration Court. Since then everyone interested in industrial matters has referred to the court as being congested. The Government, according to the Governor's Speech, have deemed it advisable to introduce a Bill to amend the Arbitration Act. The Mitchell Government saw what was necessary, and as they were anxious for all the information possible to be obtained to enable whatever Government might be in power in the future to frame a Bill worthy of the consideration of hon. members, they appointed a Royal Commission comprising Mr. Walsh, who was appointed chairman, Mr. Lovekin and Mr. McCallum, who is now the Minister for Works.

Hon. J. Cornell: This House appointed a Royal Commission 12 months ago but the then Government would not allow it to function.

Hon. J. EWING: I am sure that the members of the Commission were anxious to do their best for Western Australia respecting industrial matters, and the then Premier, Sir James Mitchell, expressed the wish that they should go to the Eastern States to collect up-to-date information as to what was being done in other parts of the Commonwealth. The Commission held a preliminary meeting, all members being present. It was mentioned that the Commission would go to the Eastern States and collect the information I have referred to. I was Minister in charge of arbitration matters at that time and knew what was going on.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is quite wrong. Nothing was decided on that question at all.

Hon. J. EWING: I am informed that the question was discussed at the preliminary meeting and agreed to.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No!

Hon. J. EWING: It was also agreed that a member of the "Hansard" staff should proceed with the Commission to Act as reporter and to attend to secretarial matters as well.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not correct.

Hon. J. EWING: The elections were due and it was then problematical as to whether the Mitchell Government would remain in power. There was also some doubt regarding the position of Mr. McCallum owing to his prominence in the Labour movement, and it was thought that he would probably be a Minister of the Crown if the Labour Party were returned to power. In that event it was recognised that it would be impossible for Mr. McCallum to get away with the Commission. After the election there was no question about it, as Mr. McCallum could not proceed to the Eastern States. Had Labour not succeeded he would have been one of the first to proceed to the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Nothing had been decided.

Hon. J. EWING: I make the definite statement that I am sure Mr. McCallum would have been in the Eastern States long before this to get that information in the interests of Western Australia. At the meeting I referred to, Mr. Lovekin said he would be prepared to go to the Eastern States and if he were not opposed on nomination day, the 17th April, he would catch the train that night in order to assist in the collection of that information.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No, no!

Hon. J. EWING: That is the information I have. The hon. member can combat it when he has his opportunity. I want the position cleared up. The fact remains that Mr. McCallum could not proceed to the Eastern States after the election, but Mr. Lovekin said he would go. It is within my knowledge that Mr. Lovekin was of the opinion that all the necessary information regarding arbitration matters could have been obtained in Western Australia. The clear evidence of the files and of the Chairman of the Commission goes to show that it was not possible to deal with this question unless the Commission went to the Eastern States. When the Leader of the House, in answer to a question at the last sitting of the House, said that the Royal Commission had cost £163 14s. 7d., Mr. Lovekin said that that had all been done behind the back of the Commission, and that the expenditure should never have been incurred.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is so.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member knew of this intention and discussed the matter with his colleagues on the Royal Commission, and he agreed to go to the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I deny that.

The President: Order, order!

Hon. J. EWING: He agreed to go to the Eastern States, and went so far as to say that if he were not opposed he would proceed at once.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The hon. member denies that he agreed to do so!

Hon. A. Lovekin: You are misinterpreting the whole business.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will have an opportunity of replying later on.

Hon. J. EWING: If the hon. member denies that, I will have to accept his statement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I say you are misrepresenting the position.

Hon. J. EWING: I think I am in order in making the statement.

The PRESIDENT: You have a right to put your views before hon. members.

Hon. J. EWING: At any rate, the files came before me as Minister controlling arbitration matters and that is what they showed. Later, Mr. Walsh went with my full consent and with the full consent of Cabinet.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What right had Cabinet to go behind the backs of the Commission?

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member may have some point in that question, but Cabinet were given to understand that it was the wish of the Royal Commission to go to the Eastern States. Mr. Walsh went there and Mr. Lovekin says now that he was not aware that Mr. Walsh was going. Mr. Walsh wrote him a letter on the subject, a copy of which I have.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is the date of the letter?

Hon. J. EWING: The 4th April.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is the day before he left.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I got it on the morning of the day he sailed.

Hon. J. EWING: It was decided that he should go to the Eastern States, and the Government thought Mr. Walsh should go to pave the way of the other members of the Commission.

Hon. A. Lovekin: He telephoned me on the Friday night to say that he wanted to see me about his going away next morning. I received the letter you refer to when I got to the office on the Saturday morning.

Hon. J. EWING: At any rate this is the fact:—

As you are aware I will be leaving for the Eastern States to-morrow at noon in connection with industrial matters affecting the Commission. I do not propose taking any evidence in the Eastern States unless another member of the Commission is present, but the information I can acquire by inquiring into the working of the various Acts relating to industrial matters will be of inestimable value to me as Chairman of this Commission, and to the Government in my capacity as Industrial Registrar. If the Government had not sent him—

Hon. A. Lovekin: What right had the Government to do that?

Hon. J. EWING: It was in the best interests of the country, and I trust that the evidence gathered by Mr. Walsh will be available to present Ministers. I would like to add that when Mr. Walsh was approached by the Government to take the chairmanship of the Commission he did not wish to accept it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why not make a clean breast of it and say why Mr. Walsh wanted to go to the Eastern States?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know anything about that. I know only that Cabinet decided this question and decided that in the interests of the Government in the preparation of an Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, Mr. Walsh should go to the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Lovekin: After you appointed the Commission!

Hon. J. EWING: Perhaps so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: After the Government appointed the Commission and handed the matter over to them!

Hon. J. EWING: At first Mr. Walsh refused to accept the chairmanship, but the then Premier persuaded him to act, as the Government wanted a man who would be independent of both sides and a man who had a great knowledge of industrial matters.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why was it not left to the Commission?

Hon. J. EWING: The Government arrived at that decision.

Hon. J. Cornell: Did not Mr. Walsh, as Chairman of the Commission, claim that he should go to the Eastern States?

Hon. J. EWING: It has been said that Mr. Walsh chased this position and that he wanted to go to the Eastern States. That was not so. The Government decided that he should do so.

Hon. J. Cornell: On whose initiative was that decision arrived at? That of the Government or of Mr. Walsh?

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Walsh was of opinion that the Commission should go to the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Mr. McCallum will not endorse your statement.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let the hon. member make his speech.

Hon. J. EWING: This is an important point. I wish it to be cleared up. I do not want Mr. Walsh to be under any cloud regarding this question. He acted in the best interests of the State. I believe the present Minister for Works will endorse my statement when I say that Mr. Walsh did his work thoroughly. He interviewed every President of the Arbitration Courts in the Eastern States and collated information that will be of immense advantage to the present Govern-

ment in framing their Arbitration Act Amendment Bill.

Hon. J. Duffell: He has not sent in any report.

Hon. J. EWING: The Commission could not send in any report, because it was dissolved by the present Government, who recalled Mr. Walsh from the Eastern States. A report on the work done by him is in the hands of the present Minister for Works, and I am given to understand that that report is a very good one, and contains a lot of information that will be invaluable to the new Government.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You have read a letter from Mr. Walsh sent to me; will you read the one dated the 24th May addressed to Mr. McCallum or to myself?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will have an opportunity of reading that himself when he replies.

Hon. J. EWING: I have the letter referred to. That was sent by Mr. Walsh when he returned from the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No, the wire he sent to me and the reply I sent to him.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member took great exception to Mr. Walsh having been over there, and this is the reply Mr. Walsh sent him—

Your lettergram dated 28th ult. addressed to me at Melbourne was handed to me on my arrival in Perth, having been returned undelivered. If you will refer to my telegram sent to you from Sydney, you will find I requested you to address your reply to me care of the Department of Labour, Sydney. In the first place, I may state that my visit to the Eastern States was decided on by Cabinet.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There you are! Now you want to say we decided it.

Hon. J. EWING: There was no such thing as going behind the back of the Commission; there was nothing further from the thoughts of the late Government. I intended to ask Cabinet to allow Mr. Walsh to go to the Eastern States, irrespective of whether a Commission was appointed, in order that we might have the benefit of his experience when framing our legislation.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You will see that we did not decide it.

Hon. J. EWING: The letter continues—

As far as I was personally concerned it would have been utterly futile for the Commission to have continued without my having visited the Eastern States. In view of their long and varied experience of arbitration and the elaborate systems that have been built up there as the result of that experience, those States were naturally the places to go to for information.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Does that show that we asked him to go?

Hon. J. EWING: The letter continues—The suggestion that the same results could have been as economically attained by

bringing the necessary witnesses to Western Australia was obviously impracticable. Each State has a different industrial system, and your proposal would have necessitated bringing a large number of public officers from every State, none of whom could have been spared from their duties. When I tell you that I have interviewed the President of the Arbitration Court, the Under Secretary for Labour, the Industrial Registrar of each State, to say nothing of numerous chairmen of wages boards and other individuals who have had a long and varied experience of industrial matters, and obtained most valuable information, you will realise how utterly impracticable was your suggestion that such information could have been secured in Western Australia. I have studied industrial legislation probably more than anyone else in Western Australia, but this trip has been an education to me, owing to the exceptional facilities afforded to me for getting information.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And that with a Commission existing!

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Lovekin professed to be surprised when the Leader of the House told us that the expenditure on the trip had been £163 17s. 4d., but the hon. member knew that Mr. Walsh was going to the Eastern States.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I knew he was going, but I did not expect the expenditure to be £160.

Hon. J. EWING: The information in my possession is that at a preliminary meeting of the Commission it was decided to visit the Eastern States. This being so, why should Mr. Lovekin manifest surprise at the expenditure and charge the then Government with having gone behind the back of the Commission?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Because it was a very large sum for what was done.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know whether the Colonial Secretary has had an opportunity to read Mr. Walsh's report and see what was done, but if the report were laid on the Table of the House, members would conclude that the expenditure had been relatively small.

Hon. J. Cornell: Mr. Walsh's trip to the Eastern States did not cost £160. There were some charges here.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not suppose it cost all that for Mr. Walsh to go East. A "Hansard" reporter was sent as secretary, which in itself was evidence of the economy the Government had in view. I mention this to elucidate the position and make clear that I did not in any way act behind the back of the Commission. Neither did the Government.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I was showing that he did the work of the Commission.

Hon. J. EWING: No, he distinctly stated in the letter I have already quoted that he was not going to take any evidence and

that he was expecting Mr. Lovekin and Mr. McCallum to join him after the elections.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He said in his letter that he had been sent by Cabinet.

Hon. J. EWING: Cabinet agreed to his going. That is not the point.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is the point.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Lovekin knows that the question of visiting the Eastern States was discussed. Had the elections resulted otherwise, the present Minister for Works would have been one to go to the Eastern States in order to gather the best possible information.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No.

Hon. J. EWING: I am sure he would have gone. Mr. Lovekin must not think he knows everything. Mr. McCallum would have gone to the Eastern States and he would have gathered information of great value to the State. Mr. Lovekin himself had arranged to go if he were not opposed at the election. Therefore no exception can be taken to Mr. Walsh's visit; on the other hand credit must be given to Mr. Walsh for the work he did. Mr. Holmes, when speaking the other day, said the crux of government was finance; if the financial position of the State were good, then all was well with the people.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is said of all Governments.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Holmes added that there had not been any sane Government since the Wilson regime. I do not give place to anyone in my admiration for the late Frank Wilson, but for the hon. member to say there has been no sane Government since that gentleman's time is quite wrong. He cannot support his statement.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Look at the deficit.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member went on to say that the finances had reached a disastrous state.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Everybody knows it.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member made a very pessimistic speech, a speech that will not do the State any good. It is not in the interests of the State to speak as the hon. member did. It is our duty to tell the truth. The hon. member said he was going to tell the truth.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Didn't I?

Hon. J. EWING: I will not say the hon. member did not, but he certainly did not enlarge upon it. The hon. member said our finances were in a hazardous and perilous condition and were going from bad to worse year by year. Yet all he told us by way of actual fact about the financial position was that the State was paying £1,000 a day interest on the deficit. That was the sum total of his statement. Why did not the hon. member go further and tell us the real position, so that members could judge whether the State was really going to the dogs? The hon. member is a successful man in business and should speak with a sense of responsibility. The Colonial Secretary has to be careful of his utterances and no

less a responsibility devolves upon members generally. That responsibility should be appreciated more, not only by the hon. member but by other members, when they criticise the actions of the Government. If I were criticising the Government I would endeavour to point out not only the wrongs they had done but also the good things they had achieved, just as Mr. Kirwan did the other night when he sang his prais of praise of the Mitchell Government.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Very qualified praise! I was looking for something in their favour.

Hon. J. EWING: It is well known to Mr. Holmes and others who study the financial position that interest and sinking fund are paid monthly from revenue.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We know that the last fifteen million pounds borrowed has paid no sinking fund at all.

Hon. J. EWING: For that money sinking fund will have to be found in four years' time and provision for it will then be made out of the increased prosperity that the State will be enjoying. So long as revenue and expenditure meet after the payment of interest and sinking fund, the State may be said to be in a good position. If I can show that this has been almost attained by the work and efforts of the late Administration, it will contradict anything said by Mr. Holmes. No doubt Mr. Holmes made what he believed to be a true statement.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I quoted from the official records and from the Auditor General's report. What more do you want?

Hon. J. EWING: I feel that a responsibility rests upon me to show that the Government of which I was a member for a short period did well. I can only hope that the present Government will do as well. The true position is that ever since Federation, the State has had only four credit balances. On various occasions the ledger has almost balanced. The deficit started with the previous Labour Administration, continued during the regime of the two National Governments and went from bad to worse. There is no necessity for me to say why that was so. Every member knows that it happened in almost every country in the world. The Mitchell Government, by most careful administration—I hardly expect Mr. Holmes to agree with that—and by a policy of progress and development, greatly changed the aspect of affairs. The improved position is shown on every hand.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is what Mr. Kirwan said.

Hon. J. EWING: The fact that the outgoing Government left the finances in such a good position should be satisfactory to the Colonial Secretary. He will find that the position when the Mitchell Government left office was greatly to their credit.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Wait till they put their hands into their pockets to get some money.

Hon. J. EWING: There have been deficits all through the Labour regime and other

regimes. The high-water mark in the way of deficits was reached in 1921, when the shortage amounted to £732,135, the highest known in Western Australia. That occurred just midway in the life of the Mitchell Administration, and just at that time Sir James Mitchell initiated his wonderful group settlement scheme. The effects of that scheme were felt so quickly that at the end of the next financial year the deficit was reduced to £405,364, a reduction in twelve months of no less than £356,771.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And there has been no production at the group settlements.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Holmes has not placed the financial position before the country. I am doing so now, as I think, fairly and truthfully and in the way Mr. Holmes desires. Will Mr. Holmes or any other member say that a reduction of £356,000 is not a great achievement?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If it was effected out of production, yes; but not if it was effected out of loan.

Hon. J. EWING: I will carry the matter much further. The deficit for 1923-24 was estimated to be about £298,000. Instead of reaching that figure, it stood at £229,158.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What was the expenditure of loan money in that year?

Hon. J. EWING: Just as much as usual, nearly three millions.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Compared with the previous financial year, there was a reduction of £176,000 in the deficit, but you collected £658,000 more than you collected in the previous year.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. When revenue and expenditure meet after interest and sinking fund have been paid from revenue every month, it must be admitted that good work has been done. Mr. Holmes said that the improvement in 1923-4 was £176,206.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I said it was £176,193.

Hon. J. EWING: We will not quarrel about a few pounds. The improvement in the years 1922-23 and 1923-24 was £502,977. Mr. Kirwan, speaking here recently, was good enough to give credit to the late Government for that fact. It is the first time I have ever heard the hon. member give the Mitchell Administration credit for anything.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It is about the only thing for which they can get credit.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Mr. Kirwan was speaking good of the dead.

Hon. J. EWING: It is all very well to talk about these things when the mischief has been done, or what appears to me to be mischief. But last year, when there was an improvement of £326,000, as a proof of what the Mitchell Government were doing, Mr. Kirwan did not tell the House about that. Had he done so, it might have helped us in the general election. Further, Mr. Holmes and Mr. Lovekin never admitted these things.

Hon. A. Lovekin: One cannot admit what does not exist.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I made some remarks about the sinking fund in the same

connection, and the other day the late Premier admitted that I was quite right.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member was lucky to get Sir James Mitchell to admit anything like that. However, I am glad Mr. Kirwan now sees some virtue in the late Government. Had he done so a year or two earlier, we might have benefited by the utterances of so respected an authority. The hon. member might have said two or three years ago, "The Mitchell Government are doing some good; they are reducing the deficit." But he waits until the Mitchell Government are out of power, and then comes along saying, "They have done wonderful work; they have reduced the deficit by £502,000; we have to thank them for that."

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I said nothing of the sort.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Will Mr. Ewing tell us how it has been done? That is what we want to get at.

Hon. J. EWING: The explanation is apparent to every hon. member. The cause was the progressive developmental policy of the late Government. If the hon. member wants me to do so, I will add, the expenditure of loan money, by which people have been settled on the land, and properly settled, with the result that they are enabled to make good. The Mitchell Government's expenditure of loan moneys, moreover, was not much greater than that of any other Administration. There is this difference: a previous Labour Government spent loan money on State enterprises which to-day are losing propositions, but the late Government built up a settlement on the land which will last for all time. That is a very different proposition. The deficit for the last financial year was some £229,000. That is very close to the mark. When we remember that sinking fund is paid out of revenue every month, and that the sinking fund amounts to about £220,000 annually, we realise that we are very close to living within our means. It is only owing to the fact of the sinking fund being paid monthly and no credit given for it, that Western Australia has a deficit.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: On the last 15 millions of money raised there is no sinking fund as yet.

Hon. J. EWING: By the time sinking fund is required on those loans, the country should be in an excellent position owing to people coming in and developing our lands; and then there should be no difficulty in providing the additional sinking fund. For the last three months of 1922-23 the excess of revenue over expenditure was £162,000. But, rather peculiarly, for the last three months of 1923-24 the excess of revenue over expenditure was £146,910, or £15,090 less than the excess for the previous year. If greater energy had been displayed in collecting money during the last three months of the financial year just closed, then, instead of the deficit being £229,000, it would have been less than

£100,000. Of course this will be reflected during the current financial year, when all the money is got in.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is not reflected in the July returns.

Hon. J. EWING: I admit that. However, I am stating the facts so far as I am concerned. The Leader of the House will realise the position, and perhaps he will explain it to me.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You collected the money all right, because you got £100,000 more income tax that year than you got the year before.

Hon. J. EWING: I want Mr. Holmes and other critics, some of them outside this Chamber, to tell me whether that is not a fair and impartial statement of the financial position.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is quite out of order in asking other members to reply to questions.

Hon. J. EWING: I am asking the Leader of the House whether he will give due consideration to the remarks I have made, and, if he finds any fault or error in them, whether he will take an opportunity of informing the House in the way he thinks right to do so. I do not wish to ask any hon. member to speak. With the finances in their present position as regards the deficit, and with the continuance of a developmental policy, I believe that at the end of the current financial year the Leader of the House will have the pleasure and great privilege of announcing to us that the balance has struck true. I hope it may prove so. There is everything to suggest that it will be so, and there is nothing to be laid at the door of the late Government as regards their efforts to attain that end. I saw it stated in a report of remarks made by Ministers since taking office that there was no money in the Treasury when they assumed the reins, no money at all. However, I have here a statement signed by the Under Treasurer showing the financial situation as it was when the Mitchell Government went out of office. I will not weary the House by reading the whole statement, but will quote from it the cash position on the 31st March, 1924. The Under Treasurer writes:—

General: Commonwealth Bank £543,098, Eastern States £205,647, London Cash £42,078, Loan to Victorian Government to 30th April, 1924, £500,000, Loan moneys available here from Commonwealth Government 15th April, 1924, £100,000, 15th May, 1924, £100,000, 15th June, 1924, £100,000, Soldier settlement scheme £250,000; total £1,840,813—Savings Bank. Commonwealth Bank £8,834, fixed deposit Commonwealth Bank £66,666, deposit Western Australian Bank £175,000, war gratuity bonds to be cashed 31st May, 1924, £18,897; total £269,487. On the general account this provides £1,299,755 in Australia. In addition war gratuity bonds amounting to £155,307 are being cashed in Perth on 31st May next, and a

similar amount is being advanced to the trustees of our Sinking Funds in London. I think I have made the matter fairly plain.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There was three months' interest due.

Hon. J. EWING: The position which obtained when the Mitchell Administration went out of power was as I have quoted from the Under Treasurer's minute, and to say that there was no money in the Treasury is not quite correct.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That money was hypothecated.

Hon. J. EWING: If that money was not available, the Under Treasurer did not give the Mitchell Administration the true figures. The present Treasurer can easily find out whether that was so or not. The most important factor in politics at present is the Federal Loan Council. I make no apology for referring to the Loan Council, because it vitally concerns the people of Western Australia. Ever since Federation, Western Australia has been in a slough of despond, and things have been going from bad to worse, and we have not seemed to know where we were, with the Federal Government encroaching on every side.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did you say we were going from bad to worse?

Hon. J. EWING: As regards the Federal relationship I say the position is even worse now than it was last year. The situation relatively to the Commonwealth is most undesirable. The Federal Loan Council is to limit borrowing. On that subject I need quote only a few words of our present Premier, Mr. Collier, when he was considering his position, and when he did not know where he was getting his money from.

Hon. A. Lovekin: He has just told us that he has plenty of money.

Hon. J. EWING: I am talking about the money he says he requires for group settlements and development generally. He said that he wanted three or four millions more, perhaps five or six millions more to properly carry out the State's policy.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It is the policy of the previous Government that he is carrying out.

Hon. J. EWING: The Premier said he did not believe in the limitation of borrowing because it was taking away the sovereign rights of the State; the Federal Loan Council declared that only so much should be borrowed in Australia. I congratulate the Premier on the stand he has taken and I hope he has had apportioned to him enough money to see him through. But that is not the point.

Hon. J. Cornell: The State's sovereign rights were not taken away by the Loan Council; you have surrendered them under the agreement.

Hon. J. EWING: I thank the hon. member for the interjection. I ask the Colonial Secretary to inform us whether the Government are going to allow the Commonwealth to set the pace for us so far as loans are

concerned. If the Commonwealth do that we shall not know where we are.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We cannot get anything in any other way.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member is pessimistic. The Premier said that if we agreed to the proposals of the Loan Council we would be giving away the sovereign rights of Western Australia. He has, however, notified the Press that he has agreed to the Loan Council's suggestions.

Hon. A. Lovekin: He cannot help himself.

Hon. J. EWING: I desire to know whether he has given way so far as the limitation of borrowing is concerned. If so, I can only express regret that he found it necessary to do so. At all hazards he should have stood out against a policy of that kind.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They made that a condition.

Hon. J. EWING: The Loan Council has been established practically in the interests of the Eastern States. They get a far greater proportion of money than they are entitled to receive. They always did get greater consideration. I am sorry if the Premier has given way, because by doing so he has weakened his position. Suppose for the sake of argument that exchange improved—and we have reason to hope for something to come from the Reparations Conference, if a decision is come to by which the position in England and on the Continent is improved—it would then be a difficult position for the Treasurer to be in to find that he was tied down to the conditions imposed by the Federal Loan Council. It is quite on the cards that in a reasonable time exchange will improve, and in that event it will again be possible to go on the London market. But if the Treasurer has agreed to the limitation of borrowing, he has given away something that is of vital importance to the State. That kind of thing is working in one direction, a direction that I and practically every member except the Labour members have combated, namely, towards unification.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What about Mr. Angwin?

Hon. J. EWING: He has always been more liberal than the others. We shall be reduced to the position of a mendicant State if we have to go to the Commonwealth for authority to do this and to do that.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Loan Council provides that money shall be borrowed in Australia.

Hon. J. EWING: In which case the Loan Council should borrow what money it can and then divide it fairly. In agreeing to that course the Premier acted wisely, but if he has agreed to the curtailment of the right to borrow outside, he has given away something that will act detrimentally to the State. If we get into the hands of the Federal Government to the extent of their controlling our financial position, we

shall have drifted into the position of a glorified municipality.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is time something was done; our interest bill went up £250,000 last year; it is time someone put the peg in.

Hon. J. EWING: I wish to refer to the railways. It will be admitted that the railways of the State have done wonderfully well of late years. In 1920 the loss amounted to £390,000, in 1921 it was £418,000, in 1922 it was reduced to £251,000, in 1923 it was further reduced to £62,000, while this year, according to the Commissioner's figures, there has been a profit of £142,391, and, after allowing for sinking fund, the net profit comes to £21,391. Hon. members will agree that this is a splendid achievement for the Railway Department.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What about the statutory sinking fund? Has that been paid?

Hon. J. EWING: Of course. On every shilling that has been borrowed interest and sinking fund have been provided, though perhaps the sinking fund has not been debited against the railways. Sinking fund and interest must be paid on all borrowed money.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How much money has been paid out of loan towards group settlements, for instance?

Hon. J. EWING: I am dealing with the railways at the present moment.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How much of that loan money has found its way into railway revenue?

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member is raising a question that it is impossible to answer. The railways have certain interest and sinking fund to pay, and certain work to perform. If that work is performed properly and a profit is shown, it is a good thing for the State. The Governor's Speech states this with reference to the railways:

The gross surplus last year was £882,514, leaving, after provision by the Treasury of interest (£787,000) and sinking fund (£126,000), a shortage of £36,486. The present Treasurer, in considering the position, thought it fair to charge the Railway Department with sinking fund amounting to £126,000, and in that way showed a deficit on the year's working of £30,486.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That has always been done in previous years.

Hon. J. EWING: It has never been done before. From the time Sir John Forrest was in power up to the present period, the railways have never been debited with sinking fund.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Or depreciation.

Hon. J. EWING: What is the other side of the picture? The surplus earnings amounted to £929,391, and the interest to £787,000, a profit thus being shown of £142,000. Even if the sinking fund be taken from that total, there still remains a profit of £21,391. In looking up the Com-

missioner's report I find that this is what he states in regard to the position:—

When comparing the figures as published by the Treasury in respect to railway finances and those in paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 of this report, it will be noticed that there is a difference between both the earnings and working expenses. The Treasury figures represent the actual cash collected and the actual cash paid out, being the equivalent of the bank pass book so far as the railways are concerned. The commercial figures (i.e., those given in paragraph 3) include the whole of the railway transactions, and are compiled in a similar manner to any private business undertaking, i.e., the whole of the earnings are taken into account, even though portion of such earnings may be uncollected at the end of the period. Similarly, in the working expenses the whole of the liabilities—whether paid or not—are shown. Also included in the earnings is an amount of £39,673, the cost of services rendered for Parliamentary and other services which were performed under instructions received from the Government, and for which no cash has been received. Of course, if the Treasury had paid for such services, the State finances would not have been affected, so that from the State point of view it is immaterial whether the Treasury gives the Railway Department a credit therefor or not.

Hon. members will thus see how the position is arrived at. In all fairness to the Commissioner, when services are rendered to the Government, credit should be given for those services. If the Commissioner gets that credit, the position will be altered from that which is set out in the Governor's Speech to what I have stated. Instead of there being a deficit as stated there will be a profit of £142,000, and if sinking fund is deducted, the profit will be £21,391.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Commissioner should get credit on account of the price he pays for Collie coal.

Hon. J. EWING: I am looking forward to the day when the cost of that commodity will be reduced. The essence of good government is low freights.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does Collie coal tend to low freights?

Hon. J. EWING: I did not say that. The hon. member seems to think that Collie coal is carried at too low a freight.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Or is it that the price paid for it by the Commissioner is too high?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not think so. Those building up the industry in Collie are doing very good work, and are asking for the coal only its legitimate value, based on the price of coal from the Eastern States. I should like to know whether it is the policy of the Government to charge the railways that sinking fund always. If it is to be done now, those who do not consider the question

carefully will be apt to think that our railways are not doing as well as they really are. The comparison with other years would not be fair, because the returns for other years make no provision for sinking fund. It would be wiser to stick to the old form, and let us see exactly how the railways have done as compared with other years; then the position will be much more valuable to the Government and to the State. I am very pleased with paragraph 3 of the Governor's Speech, in which it is declared that Ministers regard the group settlements as of paramount importance.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They say also that they are going to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into group settlement.

Hon. J. EWING: That is the spirit I expected the Government to evince. While Sir James Mitchell was in power members of the Labour party gave him great assistance in group settlement. Mr. Angwin travelled with him on many occasions. It was almost like coming events casting their shadows before.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He was acting as the Premier's lieutenant for a long time.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Angwin, as Minister for Lands and for Group Settlement, is giving excellent work to the State. He has gone into things from the beginning, and it is pleasing to note that not once since he has been Minister has he spoken a disparaging word about group settlement. It is gratifying for the late Government to know that it is Mr. Angwin who is carrying on that work and that the present Government propose to go right along with group settlement. I hope they will get the financial aid they expect, and so will be able to continue the group settlement policy.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Was there a policy? If so, it has not yet been discovered.

Hon. J. EWING: Fancy asking such a question! The development of the wheat belt is due to Sir James Mitchell. When the State was in a parlous position Sir James Mitchell pushed the interests of settlement in the wheat areas. That it has been successful is evidenced in the fact that, last year, we had an 18,000,000 bushel crop and, according to the Speech, we are to have a 20,000,000 bushel crop this year.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Don't we all give Sir James Mitchell credit for that?

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: He had very hard critics at the time.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, that is so. His only desire was to repeat the work he had done on the wheat belt. With that idea he started group settlement, visited the Old Country, and entered into an agreement with the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments.

Hon. A. Lovekin: A very stupid agreement too.

Hon. J. EWING: A very stupid agreement! I say it is not a stupid agreement. It was the best agreement that could be made at the time. The Leader of the House knows

that the Agent General has arranged with the Imperial Government that all concessions and advantages in subsequent Australian agreements shall be embodied in Sir James Mitchell's agreement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not in the agreement. Where did you get that from?

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member knows that the negotiations have been going on for some time.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member ought to address the Chair.

Hon. J. EWING: Whatever desirable clause may be in any agreement made with any other State, it is to apply to our agreement. Also, Senator Wilson has just come from the Old Country with a new agreement in his pocket. That agreement is to apply to all the States of Australia and, according to our Premier, it will greatly improve the position of group settlement in Western Australia. Sir James Mitchell started the ball rolling, and under his scheme we have saved about a million pounds through the Federal Government bringing out all migrants. Then the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments find part of the interest on the loan. That enables us to have an insurance fund of £1,200,000 to make the position safer.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You have not received a penny yet, because you cannot carry out the agreement.

Hon. J. EWING: We are doing very well. Some six months ago at Bunbury I heard Sir James Mitchell, when Premier, say that he had cabled the Home Government to secure a loan of ten millions without interest. It will pay the Imperial Government to let us have the money free of interest in order that they may send out to us those in the old country for whom no work can be found. Let us not forget that Sir James Mitchell is the father of that scheme. Let us give him credit for it. What was the position in Western Australia when he started it? Mr. Stephenson will tell you, as he told me the other day, when he said—and I was very much impressed by it—“Let us give honour where honour is due.”

Hon. G. W. Miles: Nobody disputes that Sir James Mitchell made the agreement.

Hon. J. EWING: Yet there has been a great deal of carping criticism. According to some members, no good ever came out of Nazareth, “Nazareth” meaning the Mitchell Government. Mr. Angwin's only desire in respect of group settlement is to improve the position and do things that, in the ordinary course of events, would have been done by Sir James Mitchell had he remained in power. As the outcome of the policy of group settlement and land settlement generally the money expended will be returned to the State plus interest.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Does that apply to the I.A.B.?

Hon. J. EWING: I should think so.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is not expected to answer every question thrown at him.

Hon. J. EWING: But I will answer that one. I know of a man who was under the I.A.B. for many years without much hope of making good. He was in debt to the amount of £2,500, but could not see how he was ever to get square. The other day he sold his property for £5,000, making a profit of about £3,000. That is what the I.A.B. did for him. It kept him going, as it has kept many others going, until he was able to make good. Last year I saw an I.A.B. man with a crop of from 20 to 30 bushels of wheat. He, too, made good, for that one crop lifted him right out of the mire. The position in the State generally, as compared with three years ago, is splendid. Public utilities have improved, the financial position has improved, the value of land has been enhanced, and confidence has been restored.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. EWING: I have something to say about the North-West. During my brief administration of the North-West Department I came to the conclusion that this was a country of magnificent distances and sparse population, one in which a large amount of money must be spent if it is to be thoroughly developed. Ever since I became a member of this Chamber I have admired Mr. Miles and other members of the North-West, including yourself, Sir, for their advocacy of the wonderful possibilities of that vast territory. I do not claim to know anything about it except what has come before me in a departmental way. It appears to be necessary, in the best interests of the State, that the Minister for the North-West should take the earliest opportunity of visiting that part of the State and seeing it for himself. Mr. Colebatch, when Leader of the House and Minister for the North-West, took a trip up there, the outcome of which was a splendid pamphlet that he published. It was a very informative document and I understand that another is being put out by the department. We all look forward to seeing it, so that we may know what the position is and what the Minister in charge of the department thinks of it. I trust Mr. Drew will find time, with all his arduous duties, to go through that part of the country and form his own opinion of what should be done to develop it. The officers of the department are excellent men. The Commissioner of the North-West works very hard and traverses long distances. There is a good deal that might be done in the way of co-ordination and co-operation in the department. It would be better if the whole of the North-West was brought entirely under the Minister for the North-West.

Hon. G. W. Miles: One Cabinet Minister to attend to nothing else.

Hon. J. EWING: I would not go as far as that. I know the Leader of the House

must find it difficult to carry out all his duties, but I am sure he will not neglect that territory. If he thinks it advisable to go there, no doubt he will get some other Minister to look after his various departments. There should be concentration of work. Everything connected with the North-West that can be brought under that department should be brought under it. I wish to pay a tribute to the loyalty of the officers of the department while I was associated with it. They are keen men and show a great desire to advance this territory, though they are much hampered by want of funds. The cotton industry has advanced a good deal. Some three tons of cotton was sent to the Old Country with satisfactory results. Of the 25 bales that were sampled, 18 exceeded the current prices, and one from Beagle Bay brought the record price of 19.55d per lb. It may be assumed, therefore, that the quality of the North-West cotton is satisfactory and will meet with all the demands required by the London market. What struck me more than anything else was that everyone seemed to know exactly where all the good land was in the North-West. They would specify some particular portion of the North-West, and say that there was any amount of country there. There was, however, no real knowledge of the country. I thought it better, with the consent of my chief, to appoint a Commission to investigate. This Commission went to the North-West. It comprised Mr. Brockman, Mr. Wise, Mr. Easton, Mr. Haly, and Mr. Brown. Mr. Wise is the tropical adviser, and Mr. Easton has travelled through this territory before. The reports of the Commission were most satisfactory. The work was concentrated on certain portions of the North-West as being suitable for certain things. The record should be in the hands of the Lands Department and will doubtless be sent to the Minister for the North-West. From the reports he will know that there are 50,000 acres of first-class cotton and peanut land at Elephant Hill, and that on the Ord River there are 10,000 acres that are now being surveyed and will be available for early settlement.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. EWING: I am rather proud of that. The Commission was my own idea, and I think members will think it was a good idea. It was no use saying we have millions of acres here or there. So much depends upon the lay of the land, the soil, the climate, and other matters that have to be considered. The Minister cannot, without the plans and the classification of the land, know what country he has at his disposal for settlement. The Commission was satisfactory in every way and its reports will be of great assistance to the Minister. In the first instance the Commission made a survey of the ap-

proaches to Wyndham with regard to navigation. I expected they would stay there longer, and was disappointed to learn that they had returned. Possibly this was due to Mr. Easton having accepted another appointment. I wanted them to stay at Wyndham and proceed to Drysdale and other centres, so that the fullest possible information might be obtained concerning the territory. This, however, was not done. I hope the Minister will at an early date see that this work is carried on so that he may know what he has to administer and what he can do. Mr. Easton recommends the development of Elephant Hill before Port Drysdale. The Elephant Hill country is very good. It comprises 150,000 acres of first-class and 30,000 acres of second-class land. Mr. Wise stated that the land was admirably suited for cotton and peanut growing. I spoke at considerable length on this subject last session. Mr. Wise emphasises the great possibilities of peanut growing. It is gratifying to know that cotton land is there. From that point of view everything is satisfactory.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There are 120,000 people growing peanuts in America.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. It is gratifying to know that the Commission found a good waterway between Wyndham and the lands outback, and recommended it as satisfactory. Mr. Haly is connected with the Wyndham Meatworks and is the chief buyer of cattle there. He met these people after they had returned from the hinterland. I will read one paragraph of his report to show what he thinks of the matter—

The remainder of that day and the next were spent in traversing various waterways in the launch to ascertain if several landings located by the land party were accessible for vessels of medium draught. A distance of over 100 miles was traversed in this network of wonderful waterways, indicating an average depth of over three fathoms at half tide; and four good landings were located.

Members will be pleased to hear that. This shows that transport by water will be an easy matter for future settlers. Mr. Brockman, Mr. Easton and Mr. Wise also had something to say on the same subject. Water carriage is by far the cheapest form of transport, and will be available to the settlers in the district. I regret that Mr. Wise is leaving the department. He entered it some 12 months ago and greatly impressed me. His work has been good and he is a man who knows his business. He seems to fear nothing. He tells the unvarnished truth and places facts before his Minister. He is under the Department of Agriculture, and this, I think, is wrong, for the Minister will go into that question. I am sure he will see the wisdom of bringing

Mr. Wise, or his successor, under his own department, so that he may know what is going on throughout the territory. At present the reports go first to the Agricultural Department, whereas the first man to deal with them should be the Minister for the North-West. I understand Mr. Wise is going away for private reasons. He is not dissatisfied with his position, nor is he asking the Government to augment his salary. That has been done to a certain extent since his arrival. It is not a question of money with him. If a man is good and an expert in his work, and we can induce him to stay, well and good. I am sure Mr. Wise must have a full and sufficient reason for doing so.

Hon. G. W. Miles: For private reasons.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. I hope he will be successful in his activities elsewhere. It is very difficult to know, from reading the reports that have come down from time to time, what is best to be done with the North-West. It contains wonderful rivers and wonderful possibilities of irrigation and expansion, but it all boils down to one thing, namely, money. I agree with Mr. Miles and other members of the North-West, that something should be done to populate this territory. It is not going to be a question of thousands but of millions.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Of 20 millions at least.

Hon. J. EWING: It is a matter that should be looked upon from the Imperial point of view.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is so.

Hon. J. EWING: Of course there is a difficulty. I am sure this Government will assist in every possible way, and that the Minister will do all he can. Perhaps the State could set aside, with the assistance of the Commonwealth and Imperial Governments, some 10 million or 15 million pounds for the development of that portion of the State. That will surely appeal to everyone. The money must not be mixed up with group settlement or land settlement but be a thing apart, administered by the Minister and his officers. That is a correct attitude to adopt, and I do not think there will be as much difficulty as hon. members appear to think in getting the necessary funds. The time has arrived when the Imperial Government are determined upon the development of the Dominions and increased population of other parts of the Empire. The northern part of Australia is a danger to the Commonwealth; it is sparsely populated and close to hordes of Asiatic races. In these circumstances it is a vulnerable point. If a united effort were made, I believe the Commonwealth and the Imperial Governments would provide the money necessary for the development of our vast northern territory. It is not possible for Western Australia with her small population to find the necessary money for many years to come. That is not good for the South-West, nor for the

people at present residing in the North-West. Nor is it good for the Empire as a whole, that our North should lie idle. It has great mineral wealth yet undeveloped and I believe every assistance should be afforded to open up that part of the State. The progress of the pastoral industry has been wonderful, and Mr. Holmes stated the other night that the interests of that industry came first and that if they were conserved, the development of the mineral resources, cotton growing and tropical agriculture would follow. I do not believe that altogether. I recognise that the object of our efforts should be to maintain the pastoral industry and secure its development throughout the great North-West, but I believe we can go in for other industries as well. I will conclude my references to the North-West by stating that I hope the Minister will see the wisdom of continuing the expeditions into various parts of the North-West. He should keep them at work so that every portion of the territory may be traversed and mapped out properly, and so that we may know for what purpose each portion is best suited. The expenditure will not be very heavy and the House, I believe, will give the Government every assistance in the development of the North-West. If that be done the desired end will be achieved at no distant date. Referring to the Wyndham Meat Works, it is recognised that Mr. Holmes, Mr. Lovekin, and other members of the Chamber have taken a keen interest in that concern. It is not necessary to state how the works were started and what they have cost. We know that the works are heavily over-capitalised. At this point I would like to clearly declare my position regarding State trading. When I occupied a position as Minister of the Crown, I was condemned by some hon. members because I was associated with a Government that did not sell the trading concerns. I gave what answer I could at the time and I do not know whether it was satisfactory or not. The fact remains, however, that the State trading concerns are still going ahead and are likely to be augmented. Although I was a member of a Government that could not abolish the State trading concerns because they could not get the consent of Parliament—

Hon. E. H. Harris: They did not seriously try to do so.

Hon. J. EWING: Perhaps it is not necessary to refer to the attitude of another place, but I do not think it was possible in the last Parliament, and I know it is not possible now to secure such a decision. Irrespective of whether the State trading concerns pay or do not pay, it is against my policy that they should continue. I regard them as an infringement of the rights of the citizens and I maintain that we have no right to interfere with private interests. From that standpoint I have always opposed the principle of State trading. Hon.

members will find me always strenuously opposing anything in that direction. Mr. Holmes was good enough to speak of his visit to the Wyndham Meat Works and he enlisted the services of Mr. Fowle, the works manager. I know Mr. Fowle is an excellent officer, but I wish Mr. Holmes had mentioned Mr. McGhie and other officers of the department. I do not know what is the experience of the present Minister, but from what I learned as a Minister in the Mitchell Government, I am satisfied that there is no better officer in the service of Western Australia than Mr. McGhie. He is thoroughly conversant with his work and desires to make the best of a bad job. We know that the concern he has to manage is over-capitalised and that losses have had to be piled on losses and re-capitalised every year. That, however, is not his fault. He was not responsible for the works during their early history. His record of management, the manner in which he watches the market and his clear insight into the whole business stamp him as a very valuable officer.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No one suggested otherwise.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Holmes mentioned Mr. Fowle, who is a good officer and suited for the work he is doing, but I am sorry that he did not mention Mr. McGhie's excellent services.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And those of Mr. Tipping and others.

Hon. J. EWING: They are all doing good work, but Mr. McGhie is the head of the department and he is the officer to whom we look for the success or failure of the work. In 1921 Mr. Lovekin, Mr. Holmes and others were appointed as a select committee to inquire into the operations of the Wyndham Meat Works. They reported in favour of closing down those works. That recommendation was not agreed to by the Mitchell Government and the Minister for the North-West, Mr. Colebatch, decided to carry on operations during the succeeding year. The operations during 1922 justified the action taken. In 1923, the year I happened to be Minister in charge of the works, the position was much better and more than ever justified the decision arrived at by the Mitchell Government, to continue operations.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Have you any figures showing the losses?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, and I will give them to the House. Some difficulty was experienced at the start, but this was overcome. We endeavoured to use Western Australian woods for casks, and I do not know how that move succeeded. I initiated it and I hope it has been successful. However, in 1923 operations were carried out against the advice of the select committee of 1921. The result of the operations that year disclosed a surplus of £6,623 without taking into account interest, sinking fund or depreciation. We had to pay

out of revenue £2,565 on account of doubtful debts that had been incurred prior to that year. Those debts should have been credited to revenue, but there was no revenue available and the amount had to be added to the expenditure for next year. One result of operating was that it became necessary to provide certain replacements of plant and to do some re-roofing. This would not have been necessary had the works remained idle. Operations during that year had to be capitalised accordingly. The net result was that we were £12,350 better off, representing the profits made, bad debts paid for, and work such as the re-roofing and replacement of machinery as well. I have a short statement contrasting the position of the works had they remained idle, with that disclosed by the operations. The interest to be paid would be the same in both instances, namely £75,174. Fire insurances and other charges under that heading gave a total of £5,806 when the works were idle, leaving a total under the heading of "idle" of £80,980. It has been stated in the Press that no provision was made that year for fire insurances and other costs debited against the previous year. The whole of that £5,806 was paid out of revenue as work proceeded. This was done because the concern was operating. The position was therefore that idle, the works cost £80,980 and active, £75,174. If we take off the £12,350 I have already referred to, it gives a result of £18,156 which makes the position better still. That sum was saved by carrying on operations as compared with the expenditure that would have been necessary if the works had remained idle. Thus we have a big saving. No hon. member will contend that the Government were wrong in deciding to carry on. In addition to that, it is always better to work machinery, for while it remains idle the depreciation is heavier than when it is in working order.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Surely not.

Hon. J. EWING: I believe the works are in an excellent condition, quite up to date, and well looked after.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Will you explain why the loss was so much greater in the year they did not work?

Hon. J. EWING: That was accounted for by the fact that such a large quantity of meat had to be kept in the refrigerating chambers as we could not sell the produce. I am sorry Mr. Holmes is not here.

The PRESIDENT: I think you ought to be pleased he is not, for you can get on much better without him.

Hon. J. EWING: I wanted to tell him some things.

The PRESIDENT: He will read them in "Hansard."

Hon. J. EWING: I hope so. He said that the Mitchell Government had gone in for the nationalisation of land as well as of industry, and he was against such a policy. He said they believed in the alienation of

Crown lands as against the Labour Party's policy of non-alienation. The position is entirely different. The nationalisation of industry, as I understand it, means that an industry is taken over by the Government and worked by the Government. Land settlement means that the people take the land over and are liable for payments on that account, finally becoming owners of the property. There is no nationalisation about that. The settlers are assisted financially by the Government, but they have to pay interest on the money so borrowed. There is no analogy between the nationalisation of industry and the so-called nationalisation of land. Mr. Holmes also said that the policy of day labour on the group settlements was opposed to the National Party's policy. I contend that if we adopted the contract principle on the clearing of the group areas for settlement, I would not be in my present position to-night and very few other members would be here. There would not be half the development we have to-day. As a matter of fact we cannot get contract labour to do the work that is being done by the group settlers, and the essence of the whole problem is to give employment to the men as soon as they arrive in the State. The Ugly Men's Association have been doing wonderful work in securing employment for the newcomers on farms, but there is a limit to their work, and it has been reached. It is necessary now to take the immigrants direct from the ship to the bush. That is the only policy that is feasible at the present time. If we do not adopt such a policy we will have to stop immigration. That is not the wish of the present Government. These people become initiated into the work very quickly and the sooner they become accustomed to it the sooner will they be able to get their holdings in proper order. This system is the only one that can be adopted. There must be competent men to supervise the operations, because the quicker new arrivals are initiated into the work the quicker will they become valuable assets to the State.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And no one has been released from a group up to the present time.

Hon. J. EWING: It is impossible to release one man until all the men in a group are ready. At Manjimup one man made such a wonderful success of his holding that he wished to be released 12 months ago, but it was impossible to release him until the work of the group had been completed. Mr. Holmes said the Earl of Harrowby, while in Perth, had outlined the policy that he thought the Imperial Government should adopt regarding land settlement. I heard his speech, and his was exactly the policy of the late Government. Sir James Mitchell was trying to get ten millions of money and to obtain the help of the Imperial Government in every possible way. If he could have got the money, well and good, but if not, there was no alternative to continuing in the way he was working.

The Earl of Harrowby was quite right. He said that when he returned to England he would try to get the Imperial Government to do as he suggested. The Earl of Harrowby, however, is not the only one in a position to judge. Hundreds of people of importance have studied these group settlements and, so far as I know, in every instance they have expressed their satisfaction. The Federal Minister, Mr. Bowden, said he was quite satisfied that everything would be all right. Then what about the visit of the Governor-General?

Hon. A. Lovekin: He only just passed through the groups.

Hon. J. EWING: Did he? I accompanied His Excellency and he paid most careful attention to everything. No doubt he would report direct to the Imperial Government. Sir Francis Newdegate travelled through all the group settlements, and would not he report to the Imperial Government? I do not know if Mr. Holmes meant it when he said the Earl of Harrowby was the only visitor who understood the position.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Do not forget that your Government informed the House in July, 1922, that the early groups had reached the productive stage, and yet two years later they have not reached the productive stage.

Hon. J. EWING: Some of the groups have reached the productive stage. Some men are ready to go off, but some are not. A group cannot be dissolved until all are ready.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You said some of the groups, not some of the men.

Hon. J. EWING: Much as I admire Mr. Holmes I must say that some of his remarks are likely to do injury to the State.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What are they?

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member spoke about people being brought here from dismal lanes in the Old Country. Let me tell him that some of the settlers have been reared under the best conditions. They are fine, virile people who had won success in life, but through no fault of their own have been reduced to their present position. The hon. member said hundreds of destitute people were being brought from the Old Country.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Has any one of them put anything into this undertaking?

Hon. J. EWING: I shall come to that. We are getting from the Old Country some of its best people. Whether they come from the towns or from the country, I care not. I have been through all these settlements in the South-West and have seen there some of the finest people that it would be possible to find anywhere. Owing to the war there was no employment available for them in the Old Country, and they have come out here. They may have been hard up, but they are not destitute people from dismal lanes in the Old Country. I wish the hon. member had not said that.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is it fair that 350,000 people should carry this burden?

Hon. J. EWING: I agree that this is an Imperial question, and I hope the Government will be able to secure more advantageous terms from the Imperial Government. It has been said that we are not getting the men with the money, but that the migrants with £200, £500, and even £1,000 of capital are going to the Eastern States. The very essence of Sir James Mitchell's scheme was to give a chance in life to the man without capital. Our settlers may be poor, but they are good men. If they have no money, it proves that the scheme Sir James Mitchell initiated is working out as he contemplated.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is any other State paying them £3 a week whether they earn it or not?

Hon. J. EWING: They will earn it all right. It is well known that there are bound to be losses, but if the hon. member reads the statement of the Minister for Lands, he will be very much cheered. Mr. Angwin says that 80 per cent. of the people will make good.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What percentage have left the blocks?

Hon. J. EWING: About 20 per cent.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He said that 80 per cent. are still on the groups, and they are getting £3 a week and a house.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Angwin said he believed that would be the ultimate position. Even if we get only 70 per cent. or 60 per cent. of successes, it will be a fine thing for Western Australia. I think there will be 80 per cent. of successes. When a settler leaves a group, another settler is ready to take his place, only too glad to get the advantage of the improvements. Everything will turn out well if we only show a little patience. The report of the Royal Commission on the Peel Estate is a peculiar one. Paragraphs 1 to 4 are very satisfactory indeed. They uphold the principle of group settlement, and state that the settlement is the right thing. Those paragraphs justify everything that has been done.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We said group settlement, not this system of group settlement.

Hon. J. Ewing: Yes, you did.

Hon. A. Burvill: Where is there another system of group settlement?

Hon. J. EWING: What is wrong with this system of group settlement? Mr. Holmes said all sorts of things were wrong and that he was going to rectify them, but he has never initiated anything of this kind. Let him give credit to Sir James Mitchell. The hon. member seems to be an extreme pessimist that glories in finding fault with small things. The hon. member and the other members of the commission were satisfied that this is the right system of settlement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No, it says the principle.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Yes, not this system.

Hon. J. EWING: I feel greatly tempted to read those four paragraphs. They are full of praise of Sir James Mitchell's group settlement policy. They back him up from A to Z.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You must be quoting from the "West Australian's" report of the commission.

Hon. J. EWING: If it is the mission of some of the members of this House to find fault, all I can say is that is not my mission. I am here to do what I can in the interests of the State. Paragraphs 6, 7, and 8 of the commission's report point out the necessity for co-ordination in giving effect to the policy. The Governor's Speech announces that there is to be a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole of the group settlements. I hope such a commission will not be appointed. I do not think it will do any good. Rather will it do harm. It will merely point out the small things that might have been done in a better way. But why bring those things under the notice of the public? Let us see where the faults are and rectify them, rather than give them publicity and thereby discourage the settlers, the Government, and everyone else. I do not think Mr. Angwin wants such a commission. He is quite capable of doing the work. Give him a chance. Give him a free hand for 12 months, and see what he will do. I am satisfied he will do what is best in the interests of the State. Paragraph 19 of the report refers to cows. The commission made a great song about cows, and the neglect of the late Government to provide them. I asked Mr. Holmes to state definitely what he thought the Government should have done, but I do not think he answered the question. Cows, of course, form an essential part of the scheme, and Sir James Mitchell was considering it before he went out of office. I think that 1,000 cows will meet requirements this year, and I believe they can be obtained in Western Australia.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The dairy expert did not tell us that.

Hon. J. EWING: I think it is so. Mr. Angwin has added the dairy expert, the fruit expert, and the wheat expert to the board, and thus the work will be co-ordinated. Sir James Mitchell saw the necessity for cows and would have made the necessary provision. As the years go by a herd will gradually be built up to supply the requirements of the groups, but what would the hon. member have said if two years ago the Government had purchased thousands of head of cattle and involved a cost of thousands of pounds to feed them? He would have condemned the Government, and his condemnation would have been fully justified. Cows will be obtained as required, and so far as I can see there will be no difficulty in getting them.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: This State has to find £3 a week for 2,500 settlers while they wait for cows.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member has that fixed in his mind, and cannot get rid of it. Now I wish to refer to paragraph 19 of the report, which states that the total capitalisation appears to be £1,169,648. But a large proportion of that amount represents assets such as cows, horses, implements, harness, machinery and so forth—assets which should never have been included in the capitalisation. Those assets are not part of the cost of clearing the Peel Estate.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The report does not say so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Who buys the horses? Who buys the cows?

Hon. J. EWING: The agreement with the group settler is that the land shall be ready for him, and that after that he must look to the Agricultural Bank. The expenditure for the items I have mentioned, however, should not be included in the cost.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But has not the money to be found for that expenditure?

Hon. J. EWING: When the man buys the horse or the cow or the pig, he has the asset and he goes on improving that asset all the time. At least £300,000 has to be taken off, reducing the capitalisation well below one million pounds.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Mr. Colebatch told us a year ago £296,000.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Holmes is doing Mr. Colebatch an injustice.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The statement is in "Hansard."

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Colebatch perhaps was supplied with information that was not quite up to date. I do not think he can be blamed very much. We have here an amount of £1,836 in respect of which each settler will be liable when he takes up his block. Moreover, this item applies only to the Peel Estate. It does not apply to other group settlements, because the settlers on them get their land free. Hon. members have said that the land is to be given free to the settler, and then they have gone on to take exception to the fact that the Peel Estate does not come under the Imperial agreement. If it did, the man would have to get his land for nothing instead of paying £500 for it. I do not think the State can possibly give the Peel group settlers their land free.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The agreement provides that you must give the settler the land, and as you cannot give the Peel Estate settler the land, that estate cannot come under the Imperial agreement.

Hon. J. EWING: I think the Government will find themselves able to make such arrangements with the Imperial authorities as to bring the Peel Estate under the Imperial agreement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do you not think they should have done that before they started?

Hon. J. EWING: Life is made up of things which should have been done but have not been done. To criticise in such a small manner seems to me bad policy. I have made a calculation to the effect that the value of the assets of each Peel Estate settler will be £500 or £600 and that thus the Peel Estate settler will not have to carry a greater burden than £1,200 or £1,300 in all. I consider it unnecessary to say much more about the Royal Commission on the Peel Estate, though I may point out that the Commissioners say the position is such that the people of Western Australia cannot bear the burden, that 350,000 people cannot bear the burden. But in truth there is no question of looking back and being afraid. Let us go right ahead, and then there must be success. We do wonderful things for the people who come to this State and who are in this State, and, all things considered, the people are indeed fortunate.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Just now you said the same thing as that paragraph of the Commissioner's report says. You said you wanted Imperial assistance in connection with the Peel Estate.

Hon. J. EWING: The Commissioners give no credit to the administration of the Estate, which is under Mr. McLarty.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Don't we? We have two paragraphs about Mr. McLarty.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. McLarty has been in charge of the whole scheme since its inception. Sir James Mitchell was the head of the scheme and gave directions as to what was to be done. Mr. McLarty carried it out; he appointed the necessary men and saw the work done. Mr. McLarty has achieved a wonderful work, but the Commissioners have made him no allowance for the difficulties of drainage and for last year's abnormal rainfall. Moreover the position regarding unemployment in Perth was acute, and 400 of the unemployed were sent to work on the Peel Estate. Their work may not have been as economical as possible, but still it enabled the scheme to go ahead.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Commissioners have said that.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not think so. After severely criticising the administration and the work of the Peel Estate, the Commissioners wind up their report with a laudatory reference to Mr. McLarty, who has been responsible for the estate from beginning to end, and who takes that responsibility cheerfully, knowing that he did his duty and that under the conditions nobody could have done better. Let me add that advantage is being taken in connection with other settlements of the experience gained on the Peel Estate. Para-

graph 31 of the Royal Commission's report reads—

Before concluding, your Excellency's Commissioners desire to express their appreciation of the unsparing efforts of Mr. McLarty in supplying every detail of information asked for. In addition to this, he himself supplied a vast quantity of fact and helped to elucidate many points by questions put to witnesses. The work entailed upon him during a lengthy inquiry was extremely onerous, and in view of his multitudinous duties in connection with the Agricultural Bank, Industries Assistance Board, the Soldier Settlement and Group Settlements generally throughout the State, the burden must have fallen very heavily upon him. Your Excellency's Commissioners express the hope that his efforts will be suitably recognised, and that he may be relieved of some of his many important duties, as irreparable loss must accrue to the State if, through breakdown or illness, retirement becomes inevitable.

In one breath the Commissioners condemn Mr. McLarty, and in the next they express the hope that he may long be spared to continue his wonderful work.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Mr. McLarty told me he did not bring these men here, but they were brought here and he had to do the best he could with them.

Hon. J. EWING: What is wrong with those men?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They don't know their job. The State has to pay them and teach them.

Hon. J. EWING: Good luck to them! That is the essence of the whole scheme.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Indeed it is the essence of the whole scheme!

Hon. J. EWING: If a man has to leave the Old Country owing to adverse circumstances and comes out here, are we not glad to see him?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Of course we are.

Hon. J. EWING: Certainly we are. The people in the State are well satisfied to take these men and teach them rather than not have the State advance. I have received a letter from Mr. Rose, whose absence on this occasion I greatly regret. He did not take part in all the proceedings of the Commission, but I believe he collaborated in the drawing up of the report.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He sent a paper to the chairman of the Commission after the report had been drawn.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Rose writes that he thinks the Commission did not give full credit to those responsible. No doubt before the session closes Mr. Rose will be able to express his views here himself, but he says he considers that the sustenance should be reduced gradually, and that many things might be done to help the settlers. Little good has resulted from the Royal Commission. Much has been said that might well

have been left unsaid. If the Collier Government wish to keep the group settlement going, they will give Mr. Angwin a free hand and let him go right ahead and see what he can do. I am sure Mr. Angwin will do everything possible for the advancement of the State. I shall not speak on education to-night. I wish to congratulate the Leader of this House on holding that very fine portfolio and I hope that either when replying to this debate, or when introducing the Appropriation Bill, he will tell the House what I now tell the House from my short experience, that the officers of the Education Department are men of a very high standard and are doing marvellous work for the upbringing of the rising generation in Western Australia. Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Brown spoke on mining, and they appear satisfied that they now have a Government which will push ahead the mining industry as no previous Government did. However, the Mitchell Government assisted mining in every possible way, so far as I can see. They were absolutely satisfied that the right thing was to reduce mining costs as much as possible. They helped the mine owner and they helped the prospector, and they reduced the price of water. Yet we are told they did nothing for the industry. The proposed Royal Commission on mining may prove a very useful Commission indeed. What the present Government aim at, and what the late Government aimed at, was to reduce the tariff, so that machinery might be admitted cheaper and the industry generally assisted. It is to be hoped that through action on the part of the Federal Government something may be done to assist mining in Western Australia. I have read with great pleasure the reply given by Mr. Collier to the deputation that waited on him yesterday. The reply was most sympathetic, and I hope the gold-fields people have something to look forward to in the way of reduction of freights.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Take some of the taxation off them.

Hon. J. EWING: I hope that may result. The hon. member last session did all he could to get taxation taken off. I hope the present Government will do what is desired in that direction, but I am not highly sanguine that such will prove to be the case. Another matter I desire to refer to before I conclude is the electrical power scheme which, on many occasions, has been before this House. I have on several occasions failed to carry a motion that I have submitted in favour of it, but as water dripping on a stone continually wears away that stone, so in this case has the subject eventually claimed attention. The previous Government appointed a Commission to investigate the possibilities of the scheme. Mr. Scaddan had declared the great bugbear to be the insufficiency of the water supply. It has since been proved that the Minninup pool, which is gigantic in size, contains sufficient water to meet all requirements. Mr. Taylor and the members of the Com-

mission satisfied themselves that there is ample water in this pool for all purposes.

Hon. A. Lovewin: Only for a small scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: Oh, no. Mr. Taylor said that there was more water there than there was in Perth.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Is it as good as the Perth water?

Hon. J. EWING: It is beautiful water. The amount required for the carrying out of the scheme is £216,000, and if the collieries are brought together, a proposition that will be for their own benefit, they will be able to pay 10 per cent. on the money invested.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is the small scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: It is the nucleus of the large scheme. It is said that there is enough water there for every requirement. The Minister for Railways has already investigated the matter at Collie and he has promised that when the money, which is the important factor, is forthcoming, the Government will take the initial steps. We all know that no country will succeed unless it has cheap power. Cheap power makes for the good of the State. In concluding I can only express regret at the defeat of the previous Government. I suppose that is only natural; but at the same time I extend to the new Government my congratulations and express the hope that under their management the progress of the State will continue.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th August, 1924.

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

QUESTION—WATER CONSERVATION, AVON RIVER.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: Has anything been done to carry into effect the motion tabled by me and carried by this House on the 17th Novem-