

germ bread at all, but white bread made with devitalized flour, to which has been added a certain amount of "offal" or bran, almost worthless as food and withal indigestible.

The true wholemeal or germ bread, which was the staple food of England seventy or eighty years ago, can only be made from flour from which the vitamins have not been extracted by over-milling. This flour, so vital to the stamina of our race, the elaborate roller mills of this country are unable to produce. Only the old-fashioned stones of the old-fashioned mills, most of which have been dismantled, could produce it.

Our Health Department has never yet publicly stated whether or not white bread is harmful. As usual, it is left for private enterprise to step into the breach and tell us the value of whole-meal bread. I have to go, not to the Health Department, but to a little shop in Hay-street to read on its window, "Stop! You are starving your children. Cease giving them white bread." That shop, if its story be false, is guilty of libelling all millers and all who sell white bread. On the other hand, if its story be true, how is it that the Public Health Department has never publicly advocated the use of whole-meal bread?

Mr. Griffiths: When they started erecting the roller mills, they started erecting pill factories.

Mr. NORTH: In this, as in many other particulars, we should expect more than we get from the Health Department. We should expect that department to give us information on these matters. Then there is the value of being able to recognise the symptoms of deadly diseases. Few people know the early symptoms of consumption or of cancer, and so those symptoms are not recognised until the disease is no longer preventable. About three weeks ago I was glad to see in a Victorian newspaper a long paragraph published at the instigation of members of the State Parliament, telling the people the simple essentials of health, and how to attain it, what to eat and what to avoid. There is room for great extension of the activities of our Health Department in this and in many other directions. Take sewerage. I see no reason why Peppermint Grove or Guildford should not receive the same benefit from a public scheme of sewerage as do Perth and Fremantle, particularly since we now have a practical method of cheaply connecting houses one by one. I cannot see why the Health Department does not advocate the fitting of a septic tank to each house, as is done in Adelaide, where in certain specified areas every house has to be

fitted with a septic tank. I understand the cost is £25 per house, whereas the average plan rates represent 30s. or £2 per annum. So it is cheaper to instal a septic tank than it is to perpetuate the ghastly night cart service. In all these matters the Health Department has a lot of work ahead of it. I wish it success, and I trust the Minister will tackle some of the questions I have raised. Of course one can only reason as best one may, and I recognise that sound reasoning may be a beacon in the gloom of doubt, but it fades away before the daylight of actual experience.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [7.55]: We have heard the member for Fremantle, who represents the chief port of the State, and we have heard the member for Claremont, who represents a large metropolitan electorate. I represent the biggest agricultural electorate in Western Australia. It is the practise for members to bring forward on the Address-in-reply the various requirements of their electorates. If I should ask for more than my fellow members, it is because I represent a large electorate with a large population, an area which, nevertheless, is still in the development stage, most of it being but partially settled. It is only to be expected that the old established districts, that have had their needs served for so many years, should not now require as much as my electorate does. Last session I attempted to tell the House what was the production of my electorate. My figures then were not complete, but I have since approached the Government Statistician, who has provided me with the necessary data. In the Statistician's office are certain statistical plans. Each plan covers 600,000 acres, whereas my electorate comprises 6,600,000 acres. The production of wheat in Western Australia last year was something under 24,000,000 bushels: of that quantity my electorate produced 5,624,994 or nearly one quarter. Also it produced oats, hay and other things. Although my electorate produced a lot of wheat, the average for the whole of the land in the district is still a lot less than a bushel to the acre. I have here a map published by the "Western Mail," which makes the matter quite clear. The Dowerin-Wyalcatchem district has produced 1,485,000 bushels of wheat, the average yield being 14 bushels 12lbs. This sub-statistical district has three plans of 1,800,000 acres—only a small portion of my electorate. Of that area there is but 170,770

acres under crop, including wheaten hay and oaten hay, so there is still great room for development in that district. Last session the Minister for Lands declared that 9,000,000 acres of light land within 12½ miles of a railway was useless. I objected to that statement at the time, and said there was more light land under cultivation in the Dowerin district than anywhere else in the State. On my suggestion the Minister for Lands has appointed an officer to go round the district and inquire. In October last I took the Minister for Works to my electorate where he saw thousands of acres of third-class land growing crops, many of them going over 20 bushels to the acre. Mr. Bostock reported on that district and stated that the whole of the land was suitable for wheat growing, but that unfortunately a great deal of it was beyond the recognised distance from a railway. The advisory board reported on the district quite recently.

Mr. Kennedy interjected.

Mr. LINDSAY: As regards light land, I am speaking from practical experience. I learned my farming, not by driving a railway engine, but by going on the land. In my electorate there is very little worthless land, and that little consists of wodgil country and the salt lakes. The rest will some day be brought into profitable cultivation provided it is tackled by the right men using the right methods. I wish to impress upon members that we have huge areas of land in the wheat belt that can be settled if railway facilities are provided. There is one railway which has been mentioned in the House on many occasions, the Yarramony project. The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned it on two occasions when speaking on the Address-in-reply, and has asked that the line be constructed. I hope it will be built. The Minister for Lands, in reply to an interjection last session, said this line would be built in its turn. In the list of authorised railways, its turn should be next. I have an idea, however, that an attempt is being made to construct another railway before it. I have no objection to any other railway being built. I quite agree that all authorised railways should be built. But when people have been in a district since 1908 and have been promised the railway year after year, they should get their line in its turn. I wish to refer to the production of these districts. Last session the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) wanted to know whether this line would pay. Look-

ing at the map, we find many portions of the agricultural areas in which no system has been followed in the construction of railways. The lines have dodged around to tap the first-class country and have missed the second and third class land. Before the Dowerin-Merredin line was built, I happened to be living in that district. I met the advisory board in the district and tried to persuade them not to recommend the route that was adopted. The line is in the wrong place. Still, there is a big area of land between the two lines and not served by either, because the distance between the two lines is as much as 40 miles. The question has been asked whether the production in that area warrants the construction of the line. The highest production in the State is from the district adjoining the Yarramony-Yorkrakin railway. The next highest is Kellerberrin with 1,393,049 bushels; the third highest is Corrigin, and the fourth highest is Bencubbin, the latter having 1,217,000 bushels. The next highest is the Meckering district. All four plans of these districts adjoin the route of the projected railway. In no other portion of the State is so much wheat being produced as in the district which would be served by this line. The people who have been in the district so long without a railway are carting for distances up to 23 miles. One gentleman who has been there since 1908 states that he has been paying 1s. 7d. per bag to get his wheat to the railway by motor transport. These people should not have been put on that land unless the Government were prepared to give them railway facilities. I hope the present Government will carry out their promise and have the line constructed as soon as possible. For two or three years an amount of £30,000 has appeared on the Estimates for this work, but has not yet been expended.

Mr. Richardson: Would the railway serve those four districts?

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, the line would pass through the centre of them. I do not intend to deal with the report of the Group Settlement Commission during this debate, because there will be plenty of opportunity later on. In passing, however, I might remind members that when I was appointed to the Commission, I said I was prepared to do my duty, and I am satisfied that I have done my duty. On this occasion, however, I wish to reply to some state-

ments made by members both inside and outside the House. Members constantly associate group settlement with the settlement of the wheat belt. Why the two should be associated, I do not know. The Leader of the Opposition made a statement which was published in the "West Australian." It having appeared in that paper, it must be true, because that newspaper always publishes the truth when it suits it. The report stated—"Western Australia can be thankful for two things; first, that the gentlemen who comprised the Commission were not asked to report on the settlement of the wheat belt in 1910." Why pick 1910? I fail to understand the reason. I happen to know something about the wheat belt in 1910 and shall deal with that aspect of it. The Leader of the Opposition also stated, "I would like the members of the Commission to do the work that some of these people have done." That again I take as a reflection upon me. The Leader of the Opposition knows that I was a pioneer settler, but the inference is that I did not do the work.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I said you did good work.

Mr. LINDSAY: The hon. member also said that the first 500 settlers in the wheat belt did not pay any interest.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. LINDSAY: "Hansard" gives the statement thus—"If we had waited for the first 500 settlers to pay interest, the wheat belt would not have been settled."

Mr. Mann: Which is quite a different thing.

Mr. LINDSAY: I wish to say that the first 500 settlers did pay their interest. The then Honorary Minister, the present Leader of the Opposition, stated on 20th November, 1907, in a speech on the Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill—

Something of the good the bank has done may be understood when I say that there are 3,970 accounts on the books of the bank. . . . While we have this large amount of money advanced, repayments which extend over a period of 30 years are responsible for a return to the bank of £116,020.

That does not deal exactly with the first 500 settlers but it does deal with the settlers up to 1907, and shows that they not only paid their interest but repaid instalments to the extent of £116,000. The amount advanced to that date under the old Act was £640,025, and under the new Act loans were

approved amounting to £247,000. It has been suggested that the settlers who went to the wheat belt got full value for all improvements, and that every man was thus assisted in his settlement. On the 11th December, 1907, Mr. Bath complained that the Agricultural Bank would not advance money to settlers east of Doodlakine. That was nothing unusual because even to-day, according to the "West Australian," we find Mr. Sutton stating that during a trip with the Railway Advisory Board, 20 settlers who had 2,500 acres under crop were met and only four of them had received assistance from the Agricultural Bank. That shows that individual settlers have gone out and proved the country and that the Agricultural Bank has then followed. Regarding the initiation of settlement in the wheat belt, I am not alluding to the area along the goldfields line because that was rather old established and settlers had gone to Tammin, Nangeenan, and Kellerberrin in the early days. I allude to the settlement of a district at a long distance from a railway, namely, Dowerin. In 1895 the first settlers went there. That was 15 years before the time mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. The railway line then extended no further than Northam, 40 miles distant. The settlers had to cart their produce that distance, and I doubt whether one of them received any assistance from the Agricultural Bank. Later on, in 1902, the Goomalling railway was built. The number of settlers had increased greatly, but even then a number of them were a long way from a railway. The first light agricultural railway built in the State was the Goomalling to Dowerin line. I went on the land in 1906 and was 40 miles distant from a railway, and never got full value from the Agricultural Bank for the work performed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I said you had paid.

Mr. LINDSAY: When I went on the land 40 miles from a railway there was no road except the old goldfields track, and to get to my holding I had to cut a road seven miles long. The nearest water was seven miles away, and I had to carry supplies of it on my back. I am told that I got full value for the improvements I carried out. My block was probably one of the heaviest forest blocks, and the amount I received from the Agricultural Bank was 16s. per acre. If that was full value, then I do not

understand the meaning of the term. I was not long on the Agricultural Bank. I had been on the land for 12 months before I could get 1s. from the bank. I was told I had gone out too far east. I went out to prove the country and the Agricultural Bank followed. Eighteen months later other settlers went to the district and the bank then advanced them 25s. per acre. I saw Mr. Paterson and explained the position to him, and he promised to give me a better deal. His better deal was to advance me 18s. on the next occasion, whereas my neighbours were getting 25s. I say the wheat belt was settled by men with strong arms and stout hearts, and not by the sustenance granted by the Agricultural Bank. I object to the statements made about the pioneers of the wheat belt, and I will not let such statements pass unchallenged while I am a member of this House. We are often told about the "spoon-fed cockies." In those days there was no spoon feeding; one was paid for improvements, but that was all. Certainly there was a loan of £100 for stock, but none for machinery or seed or super. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I was only able to save out of my 16s. for clearing enough to buy seed wheat. I borrowed two horses, I had a saddle, and I tied the reins to the stirrups, and I put half a bag of wheat on the saddle and sowed broadcast. That is the kind of spoon feeding there was in those days. Many statements have been made about croakers with regard to the wheat belt. The Opposition Leader said that if I had been asked to report on the wheat belt in 1910, I would have condemned it. As it happens, in 1910 I had 1,450 bags of wheat stored at Wyalcatchem siding, waiting for the Government to take over the railway from the contractor. I was not likely to condemn the wheat belt then, and have had no inclination to condemn it since. I have spoken on the subject with the Opposition Leader, and he knows my views. Therefore I think he might at least have omitted me from that statement of his. The first special settlement in my district was that at Yorkrakine, within two or three miles of my own property. The settlement was established in 1908. It was due to the unemployed difficulty. The present Minister for Lands had something to do with it, and the present Opposition Leader deserves credit for the action he took at the time. That settlement did not altogether dispose of the difficulty; there were still many unemployed in the State, and men were put on ringbarking and clearing

country further east. Later on, the civil service settlement was established because there had to be retrenchment, in the absence of work, and in the absence of money to pay civil servants. Many of us were on the wheat belt before any civil service settlement took place there. I remember when you, Mr. Speaker, selected land alongside mine. Although you were legally entitled to that land, a mistake occurred, and some other settler claimed it. You then agreed to surrender your block provided you were given an area elsewhere. I know something of the civil service settlement. I had the contract for sinking the dams there in 1909, before any civil servants were on it. I met the first wagon load of them coming out. They were bogged, and wanted me to pull them out. I said, "Yes, but take out your team first, because they will not pull the hat off my head." The team was taken out, and I pulled the civil servants out. This was in 1909, and the first crop these people got was in 1911. Our troubles started in that particular season, 1911, not because the rainfall was not sufficient, but because our farming methods were not suited to the rainfall. To-day we who are farming our land properly, would get good crops on such a rainfall. That is where I differ from the gentlemen who claim to have settled the wheat belt. I say it was settled with a multitude of mistakes, which had to be rectified. If the Government have to pay the piper, they should call the tune. Before embarking on an expenditure of millions of pounds in land settlement, they should know the best way to farm the land that is to be settled, and should only finance those farmers who farm in the approved way. My troubles started in 1911. I was one of the fortunate few who got something—four and a half bushels. That was another occasion when I applied to the Government for assistance. The Seed Wheat Board was inaugurated in that year, and I read in the Press that the board were lending money at 5 per cent. I had met a bank manager in 1910, when I owed the Agricultural Bank £165 and they would not give me anything more. The bank manager asked me, "How much do you want?" I said, "£1,000." He said, "You have got it." I never went back to the Agricultural Bank afterwards. The Agricultural Bank were binding me down, while giving me a few shillings, about half the value of the actual work; and I had to go down to Perth to see the bank officials

on several occasions. The other people simply said, "The money is there." However, I saw that advertisement about 5 per cent. on seed wheat stored in one's barn. I happened to have some seed wheat stored in my barn, and I thought I would have the 5 per cent. money, and I wrote a letter to the board accordingly. I was sent a form, which I filled in. Then I did not get a reply for a month, and I wrote again. Thereupon the board sent me a cheque. The next thing was that they lodged a caveat against my holding and sent me for signature a bill of sale over all my property and chattels. I saw my banker about it, and he supplied me with the necessary funds, and I wound up my business with the Seed Wheat Board. In the statement furnished to me by the board I was charged 2d. per bushel for office expenses. In the actual result I found that I was paying 13½ per cent., instead of 5 per cent. as advertised. I paid and got out, and have never been back to the Government since. That is my experience as a pioneer settler financed by the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is spoon feeding.

Mr. LINDSAY: Now I have got as far as 1911. I agree that 1912 was a dry year, though most of us did get fair crops. In the far eastern district, however, the rainfall was light; and owing to the methods used the crops were in many cases a failure. Then 1913 was a little better, but 1914 was an absolute drought, and the trouble on the wheat belt started. Up to that time the Government had been advancing money to clear forest country, but it had been noticed that the light lands were producing good crops in dry years. The Agricultural Bank then had a brain wave, and decided to start the farmers on clearing the light land, leaving the heavy land alone. The farmers cleared not only the light land, but many thousands of acres of wodgil country, which afterwards a Royal Commission reported to be worthless. Although the Government did reduce the price of wodgil land, the fact remains that many of those men lost years of their lives on it, and while struggling with the wodgil land acquired a load of debt which they could never get rid of. The next four years were the wettest years in the wheat belt, and for that reason, and because the farmers in those days used the same methods on light land as on heavy forest land, and also be-

cause they were not supplied with their requirements at the right time, and again because they did not get enough manure, the farmers got back further and further, year by year. In some cases the properties were abandoned and the men left the land. Had we known in the early days how to settle that country, the failures that occurred would not have occurred. The failures on the wheat belt have been on light land, and on light land alone. Now I want to deal with the question of light lands and methods of settlement, because the Government have just recently classified about 1,500,000 acres of light lands, the greater part being in my electorate. There is no railway through those lands, and a railway will have to be built before they can be settled. Personally I believe that in the past we have settled our lands in areas that were too large. I am quite prepared to admit that a good many of my friends do not agree with me, but I hold that 1,000 acres of land in the wheat belt is quite enough for any man, not merely to enable him to make a living, but to enable him to obtain a competency for his old age. The Government should never finance a man to become a capitalist, but only to put him in a position where he can have a reasonable sized holding. In the area in question the Government will have to be very careful indeed, or we shall have bigger failures there than even the failures in the older settled areas, these latter having a better rainfall. Before the new areas are settled, the Government should, through the Agricultural Department, lay down a policy of farming, and the settler should be financed to farm in that way and no other. The Government should see that the farmer carries out the job as it ought to be carried out. If that is done, I am satisfied the results will be successful. It is generally thought that what saved the wheat belt was the war, that during the war wheat growers got very high prices. I have heard a Federal member say from the platform to a crowd of wheat growers that they got many millions of pounds more than world's parity for their wheat, owing to the fact that the Government sold the wheat for them. I asked him how much the wheat growers had got, and his reply was, "Five shillings." I happened to have the actual figure about me. The amount actually received by the farmers was such as to justify the statement that the wheat belt did

not recover as quickly as it should have because the farmers, owing to Government action, did not get in their returns quickly enough to enable them to pay their accounts, their interest, and possibly something off their indebtedness. In the year 1915-16 the total amount we received for our wheat was 4s. 5d., and a few decimals, less freight; but this is how it was paid: The first advance was made on the 7th January, 1916, and was 3s. per bushel. In October we got another dividend of 6d. Taking that year as an example, it is not to be supposed that 3s. per bushel was sufficient to enable the farmers to pay their way, let alone meeting interest on their accumulated debts, of which they all had a lot at that particular time. The consequence was that interest was added to capital, and so the debt grew. I quite acknowledge that the farmers continued to get dividends out of that pool, but the final dividend was not paid until 1922, six years later. We had to pay our expenses meantime, or get someone else to pay them for us, and be charged by him for the service. However, things improved. In 1916-17 we got 4s. 1½d. per bushel, less freight. That was equivalent to 3s. 9½d. per bushel at the siding. If we had got the amount in a lump sum, we might have paid some of our debts, or at least met the interest on them. However, on the 13th January, 1917, we received the first payment of 2s. 6d.; on the 4th August of that year we got 6d.; and the final payment under that pool was made on the 5th November, 1920. The total payment for that year was 3s. 9½d. per bushel, and not, as stated, 5s. In the third year's pool there was an improvement. On the 21st January we got 3s. a bushel, and on the 15th August we got 3d.; in September we got another 9d., and the final payment from that pool was made in November of 1920. The total amount was 4s. 5d. per bushel. As a wheat grower, I can assure the House that in those three years the money received was not sufficient to enable the farmers to pay their debts. They were hanging over us and delayed to a great extent the recovery of the wheat belt, which would otherwise have been quicker. From that time on prices rose, and then we were able to pay back the money that we owed. In 1918-19 we received for our wheat 5s. 1d., in 1919-20 we received 9s., in 1920-21 we received 6s. 11d., and in the subsequent year 4s. 1d. We think it is advisable to mention these matters here because

while there has been expansion in the wheat belt, the progress has not been what might have been. All who took up land did not have the intention to farm. A lot of those who took up land in the agricultural districts did so merely for the purpose of speculation. Some certainly did go on with operations, but the number of genuine settlers was small. One who is now a member of another place had an area in my district and stuck to it until 1911, when he dropped his bundle and got out. We have been told that we got good prices for our wheat, and there has been a great amount of controversy on that subject. We, however, have not been very much concerned as to whether we got too much or too little. We knew that there were many difficulties in existence. But I wish to show what the price of wheat was in other countries during the periods that I have already referred to. In 1917 the guaranteed price of wheat in America was 2 dollars a bushel. That was the minimum price. In the next year it was 2 dollars 20 cents at Chicago; in 1919 it was 2 dollars 31 cents at Chicago; in 1920 it was 2 dollars 58 cents; and in 1921 the price dropped to 90 cents per bushel. I stress this for the reason that the question has often cropped up as to whether it would be advisable for this country to spend more money in further developing the wheat belt. So far as wheat is concerned, we can compete profitably with any country in the world. I have already told the House that there are 6,600,000 acres in my electorate, and there has not been a reduction of a bushel to the acre in the output. That electorate has produced a big quantity of wheat already, but in the next 10 or 20 years it will yield 20,000,000 instead of 5,000,000, which is the output of today. That is, provided we get facilities that the Government must provide. Last session a motion was submitted for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the water supplies for the wheat belt. An amendment was submitted by the member for William-Narrogin in favour of the personnel of that Commission being the engineers of the department. That amendment was carried, and I wish to compliment the Government on having acted on the decision of Parliament. The Commission carried out its investigations and prepared certain schemes, one of which happens to be in my electorate. The Minister for Water Supply, and Mr. O'Brien, the engineer, were out there a little while ago and produced plans and specifications in con-

nection with that scheme, the purpose of which is to supply an area of 500,000 acres. There are to be three dams in my electorate and the cost is estimated at £270,000. Last session, when I was dealing with this matter, the member for Guildford—he has more sense now since I have been associated with him for many months of late—said that the State could not afford to spend so much money on water supplies. The suggested scheme has been discussed by the people interested and they are perfectly satisfied to pay interest on the cost of the work. At the same time they are of opinion that they will be charged too much, although they cannot do without it. When we talk about water supply for agricultural areas, certain members seem to think that we are entering on an innovation. In order to find out what has been done elsewhere, I wrote to the Minister for Works in South Australia and he supplied me with a good deal of information on the subject of agricultural water supplies in that State. I have a plan here which displays everything that has been done in the adjoining State, and all the water supplies are marked in colours on that plan. It shows that there are also no less than 14,000,000 acres of country served. The amount of interest actually received in South Australia is a little over 3 per cent. In other words, in that State it is evidently their idea that water supplies are required in wheat and sheep districts, not so much for the purpose of deriving revenue, but more because of the development of that class of country depends primarily upon sheep and wheat. The total capital cost of the South Australian scheme runs into 19 millions sterling. One alone serves an area of no less than 6,000,000 acres. We in Western Australia are asking for nothing like that. The biggest area we have to serve is 270,000 acres. Hon. members may declare that South Australia has been able to carry out her works much cheaper than we can manage to do ours, but their schemes are as costly as the one in Western Australia to which I have referred. The one that more closely approached the proposal suggested for the district I represent is the Cowell scheme in South Australia, the total capital cost of which is £291,460, and the number of acres served 527,936. I understand it is the intention of the Minister for Water Supply to bring in an amendment of the Act to permit of an increase in the rate levied in the district. The rate at the present time is 5d., which is the limit, and in order to pay

what is asked by the Government the rate will have to be increased to 1s. In South Australia nothing so high is charged. As a matter of fact the highest rate imposed is 4d. per acre, and in some districts the charge is as low as 2d. per acre.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Are they gravitation schemes in South Australia?

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, I have all the details here; the hon. member may see them. The length of mains is 4,490 miles 74 chains. The mains were of concrete and wood, but reports showed that white ants had eaten the wood, whilst the collars around the concrete mains were breaking and they were being replaced by others of cast iron. In order to cover the cost in this State of £45 per 1,000 acres, the interest rate has been fixed at 7½ per cent. I recognise, of course, that interest and sinking fund must be paid, but I do not consider it fair, in the early stages of settlement, to impose such a big handicap on the farming community. Certainly they should not be asked to pay sinking fund. In South Australia the average interest on the money borrowed is £4 16s. per cent., and on some of the schemes no interest whatever is paid by farmers. One of the reasons for that is that there is not sufficient mileage of mains laid. There is not one scheme that pays the full rate of interest. I plead to the Government to leave the sinking fund payments out of the question here, and impose only a levy which will represent the actual interest on the money borrowed. If the interest rate were reduced to 5 per cent., it would mean that on 1,000 acres the cost would be a little under £30. Particularly in the more lately settled areas, which must have a permanent water supply, it is advisable that the Government should seriously consider the suggestion for the abandonment of the payment of a sinking fund, at any rate for a time, or until those who are on the land have become established. In the eastern wheat belt the water problem is a serious one. The last three years have been exceptionally dry. There were places in which isolated thunderstorms occurred. Without these it was almost impossible to fill our dams until the winter rains came. In the big flat forest country that lies in the far eastern belt, the ground is very porous and absorbs moisture as fast as it falls during the ordinary rainfalls, and again it is impossible to get the dams filled. The problem of keeping sheep, which is becoming more pressing, can only be solved by secur-

ing outside water supplies. It has often seemed to me that nature has provided us with the places in which to get water supplies. In these outside areas we find huge granite outcrops every 10 miles or so apart, that have evidently been placed by nature for the provision of water supplies for the surrounding country. It is right we should make use of them. The only way that land can be settled there is by using the rock catchments to provide the farmers with extra supplies of water. In speaking upon the question of opening up the million and a half acres of land that has been classified, I mentioned that I thought 1,000 acres of land was sufficient for a man whom the Government were financing. I have gone thoroughly into the question, and am satisfied that a great many of our mistakes in the past, not only of the individual, but of the Government, were due to allowing a settler too much land. Many more men went bankrupt in the wheat belt through having too much land than because they had too little. A man may improve 1,000 acres in 15 years and be a good man for doing so. Until the land is improved he has to pay land rents and road board rates, and the land represents a breeding ground for vermin for himself and his neighbour. After a man has spent 15 years slog-ging, as he has to do, to make a success, he has done enough, and has quite a comfortable living, and so far as the finances of the country go, that is as far as the Government should help him. People have said that this area is too small. I have referred to the land settlement in other countries. The United States is a large wheat producer. We are also under the impression, which is not correct, that there is a very big yield per acre in that country. They also talk about the big bonanza farms in America. I have here some information from the Year Book of Agriculture to show that this is not so. In America the four biggest wheat-producing States are North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The best spring wheat district is North Dakota. The acreage under crop in North Dakota is 8,252,000 acres, and the average acreage per farm is 466 acres. The yield for the years 1917 to 1921 was 9.2 bushels per acre. In the winter wheat States, of which Kansas is the largest, the acreage under crop is 11,500,000, the average acreage per farm is 274.8, whilst the yield per acre for those years was 13.5 bushels. One advantage we possess in com-

parison with the United States, so far as the spring wheat States are concerned, is that in the wheat belt we have a fine pasture all the year round for the grazing of sheep, whereas they cannot raise stock outside for more than six months of the year, and have to house and hand feed the animals for the rest of the year. I am satisfied that no country in the world offers such opportunities for the production of wheat as does our wheat belt. Western Australia offers great opportunities for increasing the areas under wheat, and can produce wheat as cheaply as it can be produced in America. It is stated that America is very close to the Home market. We must understand that a great deal of the wheat in America is railed about 1,000 miles, and it costs a lot of money to send it to a seaport. On the average it costs more to deliver wheat from the farm in America to Liverpool than it does to deliver wheat from our State to London. We have a vast area in this State that is only partially settled, and some of it is not settled, and it behoves us to make some attempt to settle it. For that reason railways are necessary. I have mentioned one or two railways which affect my district, and the extension of a third is necessary to settle the area in question. A large area of country has been classified by the Government north of Bullfinch, comprising a million and a half acres of land. Some of this land is in a dry district. To me it appears that the rainfall is sufficient provided correct methods are used. In order to convince myself that the rainfall is sufficient I have collected some figures showing the rainfall for that district and also for South Australia. Cowell, on Eyre's Peninsula, has an average rainfall of 11.79 inches, and the average for the six growing winter months is 7.62 inches. The rainfall at Bullfinch is 1,147 points, or about 20 points less than Cowell, and the rainfall for the six growing months is 734 points, or 18 points less than Cowell. The question arises as to whether Cowell is a safe wheat growing district. I have written to the Commonwealth Meteorologist to get some further rainfall figures. The rainfall figures I have are from the port near Cowell, and the average wheat yield is for the surrounding area of nearly 1,000,000 acres. It must be presumed that the rainfall of the far inland areas of this district must be lighter than at Cowell. Assuming that it is the same, we can say that if Cowell is a safe

wheat district, that district of which Bullfinch is the centre will also be safe. I have received some figures covering the 1923-24 season for the Cowell district. The area under wheat was 104,850 acres, the number of bushels produced was 1,123,000, and the average yield per acre was 10.71. The average yield is not very high, but I do not know what the rainfall was for the year: In these dry districts the rainfall varies, and until one knows what it is it is impossible to say whether the district is safe or not.

Mr. Davy: Is the rainfall as regular at Bullfinch as at other places?

Mr. LINDSAY: I have the rainfall for Bullfinch. Some figures have been given to me from the Merredin State Farm, showing the average yields from 1916 to 1921. Wheat grown after fallow shows an average yield of 22 bushels 43 lbs., and wheat grown without fallow was 10 bushels 47 lbs. Unfortunately, a great deal of the land has been farmed on the principle of non-fallowing. In the case of the State farm the yield was twice as great from fallow as from cultivated land. In 1919 the rainfall for the six growing months of the year was 748 points, or just about the average rainfall for Bullfinch, and the yield per acre was 26 bushels 16 lbs. The rainfall on my farm in 1922 was 1,050 points, and the rainfall for the six growing months was 703 points, and the average yield from fallow was 21 bushels to the acre. It is not so much a question of how much rain we get as to when it falls, and the methods employed to make the best use of it. I believe we could greatly extend the wheat belt into the drier districts if we used sound farming methods such as are necessary to get decent averages in those areas. Last year I spoke about education. It seems to me that more than half of our population is engaged in producing from the soil. Our education system, however, is made in the city and is not suitable for the children of country people. In a country like this, which depends so much upon primary production, we should take steps to educate our children in all kinds of rural problems. A great many of our children in the outer districts are getting no education at all. Owing to the scattered nature of our settlements, and the distance that the various schools are apart, many children in the wheat belt have to go without education, or wait until their parents

can afford to take them to town or send them to a boarding school. When the children do go to the town for their education they are not taught those things which induce them to go back to country life. The whole of our education system has been built up by men in the city to make lawyers, doctors, typists, or shorthand writers of the children, and not to encourage them to engage in rural occupations and increase the production of the State. Although education is costing us a great deal per head of the population, it is costing less than in other countries. We cannot afford to have our country children growing up uneducated, or to have them taught along such lines as encourage them to leave the country districts as soon as they can. Because of this system we are losing the cream and having the skimmed milk left behind. I was appointed a member of the Royal Commission on group settlement, with other gentlemen, for the collection of evidence, and for the submission of a report upon that evidence. We have reported on that evidence, and many people have criticised us without ever having seen the evidence. Some of the critics are land owners in the South-West, and I may state for their information, since they talk about the wonderful potentialities of the south-western land, that I have seen some of their farms, and consider that the owners have taken a long time to prove the potentialities of the South-West. On the other hand, when I speak about the wheat belt and say what should be done there and what should be produced there, I at least have done it and have produced it. My wheat yield in the competition last year was the highest average yield in Western Australia. When these people criticise me I say to them "Why have you not done those things with your land if they can be done?" I except the Leader of the Opposition, because he has a farm in my district, and is a big producer. A few years ago, when I was chairman of the Dowerin Vermin Board, the rabbit inspector reported that the Opposition Leader had more rabbits on his farm than any other land owner had. In conclusion, I shall bring my intelligence, if I have any, to bear on matters before the House. I belong to a party, but I am not one of those who consider that the duty of an Opposition is to oppose every measure. No doubt I shall

oppose many Bills brought down by the Government, but as regards Bills not affecting my party's platform I may probably be found voting with my friends opposite.

MR. KENNEDY (Greenough) [9.4] I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. KENNEDY: I endorse the sentiments expressed by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) on the unemployment question. It is a deplorable state of affairs when able-bodied men have to travel the country to seek employment. It has been suggested that married men should be given preference of employment, but there are also able-bodied young men prowling around the country looking for work and, when they do not find it, yielding to temptation. We frequently have the spectacle of young fellows who have been unable to find employment being brought up for stealing motor cars and other vehicles. They have travelled through the country in those cars or vehicles, and after doing possibly a considerable amount of damage to them have abandoned them. Then the police have taken action. My own view is that before an immigration policy is inaugurated our own local unemployed should be absorbed. We can bring migrants here when there is employment to absorb the surplus population of other countries. It is pleasing to note the era of prosperity which the State is enjoying, due largely to the success of the land settlement policy. However, there are still large tracts of unalienated land in this State. In the Greenough electorate there is an estate of 33,000 acres, called the Mends Estate, which the Minister for Lands is having inspected by the Lands Purchase Board with a view to closer settlement. In the Northampton district there are large estates of first-class quality, though rainfall statistics are not available, by reason of there having been no settlement in that neighbourhood in former years. Several pioneer settlers, however, are there now, with the stout hearts and strong hands mentioned by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay). That hon. member compared settlers with engine-drivers, and I may point out to him that in the industrial arena there are men with strong hands and stout hearts just as there are in the agricultural arena. The hon. member, having pioneered a farm for years, can now

sit back; but one does not find engine-drivers and other employees sitting back on their £4 a week. They are hurried away to the Old Men's Home. I have known engine-drivers and other railway employees take up land and make as much a success of it as the member for Toodyay. Another question pertaining to land settlement is the Industries Assistance Board. No doubt that board when inaugurated served a highly useful purpose, but it has outlived its usefulness. At present many I.A.B. clients are practically on a dole system. They sell their wheat illicitly as a consequence, and then are hauled before the courts. Several such cases have occurred recently. The I.A.B. system now merely tends to make criminals of our farmers. The board should be modified, or brought under the Agricultural Bank; or else the clients should be placed under the system of private banking. It is also pleasing to note that the railways are in a paying position, due largely to the bountiful harvest. However, there are many ways in which economy could be practised on the railway system. Last year 142,000 tons of super were despatched from Fremantle and Guildford, most of the quantity passing through what is called the bottle neck. With the exception of the small quantity going down the South-Western line, the whole of the 142,000 tons had to go through the narrow neck from Midland Junction to Spencer's Brook. If private enterprise does not construct super works in Geraldton, the time has arrived when the State should do so. The trucks conveying super to the Geraldton district have to run from Fremantle and Guildford to Geraldton, Ajana, and Yuna, 380 miles, and when released have to run back empty to the wheat belt to pick up wheat. If there were super works in Geraldton, the trucks would go out to the farmers loaded with super, and would return to the seaboard loaded with wheat. After discharging the wheat into the steamer, the trucks would run back loaded with super again. We are told that there is a shortage of rolling stock, especially owing to increase of land under cultivation, and generally to increase of products. Another matter I desire to mention for the information of the Minister for Railways is firewood haulage. At present the cost of firewood is very high; in the towns it may be described as enormous—one gets practically a barrow load for ten shillings.