

fortunately now the bud has bloomed and it will be a difficult matter to pluck it. I have no intention of speaking disparagingly about the railway officials, because I know that in the service there are many, not old men either, who are quite capable of taking the position in hand and coping with it. There should be some means whereby these officials should be given the opportunity to display their ability in this direction. There is plenty of scope for them here. In Victoria the Minister for Railways said recently that the Transport Bill he intended to introduce would provide for co-ordination of rail, tram and motor services, and that an advisory committee representing those three interests would be appointed and would assist the ministry of transport. This is what should be done in Western Australia. I do not intend to labour the subject because the Minister for Works has already announced his intention to submit an amendment to the Traffic Act and I can only hope that whatever is done will be on the lines that I have suggested. It would not be right for me to conclude my remarks without making some reference to the Bunbury harbour. This will be the "umteenth" time on which I shall have alluded to the subject. With all due respect to those who are urging the construction of the outer harbour scheme at Fremantle, I contend that whatever attention is given to the harbour at Bunbury will be money more than well spent. Moreover, the interest on the money that will be required for the Fremantle scheme will complete the Bunbury proposal which is more justified.

Mr. Angelo: Do you suggest transferring the trade from Fremantle to Bunbury?

Mr. WITHERS: No. We heard last night the word "subsidiary" used on a number of occasions by the member for Murchison. We might class Bunbury as subsidiary to Fremantle.

The Minister for Works: I thought you were satisfied about Bunbury after my recent visit.

Mr. WITHERS: I should like the Government seriously to consider the question because it is costing something like £12,000 a year to keep the harbour dredged to the required depth.

Mr. Barnard: But you have no timber going out from Bunbury harbour now.

Mr. WITHERS: The wonderful thing about the South-West is that although we may lose trade in respect of one of our products, we have other assets. Although it is not a wheat-growing district, Bunbury gets a fair proportion of the wheat that is grown in the surrounding territory. Already we have had a record shipment this year of over a million bags from the port and there is still a lot stacked there. The very fact that the export of timber is less will not deter the progress of the South-West in any way. You cannot stop the advancement of that part of the State. Cut out timber and something else takes its place. Some of the money that is required for Fremantle ought to be spent at Bunbury. Timber is a diminishing asset for the time being only, but there are other products being shipped from the port. Now we have established the Mt. Lyell and Cuming Smith superphosphate works, and vessels conveying phosphatic rock put into the harbour once a month or more. These two companies will materially assist to keep the port going and there is no reason why the harbour should not receive consideration at the hands of the Government. I trust when the debate on the Address-in-reply is concluded we shall get seriously down to business and that the Government will be able to place before us proposals which will show that there is a way by which the ledger can be squared other than by the petty means to which I referred at the beginning of my remarks. I hope the Government will get down to the business of the State's requirements and that the depression will be lifted to a great extent with the aid of the measures that may be brought down.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [5.55]: I should like to add my congratulations to those of the other speakers on your appointment, Sir, to the Speakership, and I have no doubt you will worthily uphold the traditions of your high office. Coming as might be said direct from the plough to this Parliament I feel a certain amount of diffidence in addressing hon. members, but I am fortified by the knowledge that I am representing not only the largest agricultural electorate in the State, but one which is not the least in importance. I am also proud to be a representative of the Country Party, and it is peculiarly appropriate that the con-

stituency should have a Country Party representative. I should like, however, to pay a tribute to the good work done by the former member for Greenough (Mr. Kennedy). I came into frequent contact with Mr. Kennedy in connection with local Government affairs and I always found him most attentive to his duties and most conscientious in the performance of whatever task he undertook. It is also pleasing to recollect that that hon. member voted against a measure which is regarded in the agricultural districts as being very unfair. I allude to the Redistribution of Seats Act. I have had the opportunity of reading the speeches of the ex-Premier in which he stressed the importance of the agricultural industry to Western Australia, and in which he declared that our future prosperity depended on that industry, and so forth. At the same time I think the hon. gentleman clearly recognised that the future of his own party lay in the big centres of population in the State. A Redistribution of Seats Bill was inevitable. The gold mining industry had declined until it had become a shadow of its former greatness. Many gold mining towns had practically disappeared and the result was a great decrease in the mining population. On the other hand, the agricultural industry has advanced until it has become a leading factor in the State's progress. In fact, nearly all our increase of wealth and population in recent years has been due to agriculture. Yet we find the former Government abolished five goldfields electorates and gave them all to the metropolitan area. That was not the only bad feature of the measure. There was the difference in the quotas of agricultural and mining, to the primary industries. I ask the House to consider for one moment the immense area of the new Greenough electorate. It extends to the Murchison River on the north, east some 40 miles of Mullewa on the Cue line, south nearly to Dalwallinu in the Wongan district and to Watheroo in the Midland district. And yet this immense territory containing nearly 6,000 electors returns one member to Parliament, while the compact area covered by Kalgoorlie and Boulder with 9,000 electors returns four. I hope that the present Government, before their term is up, will introduce a new Redistribution of Seats Bill to make at least an equitable adjustment of the mining and agricultural quotas.

It is a mockery of political representation to say that 2,000 odd electors in a compact area like Kalgoorlie and Boulder shall return a member of Parliament as against 4,000 electors in a widely-scattered farming district.

Mr. Panton: To say nothing of 9,000 in the Leederville district.

Mr. PATRICK: And 4,000 in Mt. Hawthorn. Another matter requiring adjustment is that of the Legislative Council boundaries which should be brought into line with those of the Assembly. While on matters electoral, let me refer to the residential qualification of an elector. I think it was when Newton Moore's Government was in power that the residential qualification of an elector was reduced from three months to one month, but it remained for the Collier Government to show how it was possible, by rushing a number of casual workers from the city into country electorates—and this in spite of the fact that any number of men were available in the electorates—to disfranchise an electorate for three years. I hope the Government will ensure that there is no recurrence of that sort of thing by raising the residential qualification from one month to three months. There is no doubt that the great question to be considered is the financial position. The Government are faced with a very grave situation and, in spite of the views of the Opposition, that situation has materially altered since April last. We need only to read the newspapers to realise how even daily it is altering as regards the position with the Federal Ministry. When the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) was speaking about district allowances to railway employees, I interjected that a somewhat similar course was being adopted by the Labour Government in South Australia. The hon. member, rather unkindly I think, suggested that I was wrong as usual. If he had consulted one of his colleagues, the member for Collie, he could have told him that I belong to a race of people who are not in the habit of making statements, unless they can be proved by easily demonstrable facts. The only difference is that the Government in South Australia have gone a long way further than have the Government here. There was a report in the Press about the opening of a case before the Arbitration Court to which the Commissioners of Railways in several of the States were parties. I think the Leader of



the Opposition is correct in his contention that this matter has nothing to do with the Commissioners of Railways but is purely a matter for the Government. When the case was opened, the Commissioners pointed to the huge losses being incurred by railways and tramways, and asked to be relieved of an undertaking given by them not to disturb the conditions of the men. The Governments had given an undertaking not to disturb the conditions, but application was being made to the court for relief from the undertaking. Mr. Hall represented the Commissioners and said that unless the court prevented them from reducing wages and increasing hours, the Commissioners proposed to adopt that course. They intended to go a long way further than the Government of this State contemplate, for in addition to increasing hours, they proposed to reduce the wages. Mr. Hill, the Premier of South Australia, is very disgusted because he has to go to the Federal Arbitration Court at all. When he returned from the meeting of the Loan Council, he made a comprehensive speech to the South Australian Assembly, in which he denounced the Federal tariff and the Federal sales tax in terms which would have gladdened the heart of any Western Australian secessionist. In the course of his speech he said—

Our industries are prevented from thriving by the ever-growing pressure of the tariff. Our standards in education, health and social service are set by States grown rich through our impoverishment. When we seek to cut our coat according to the short length of cloth left us, we find we are prevented by Federal instrumentalities and actions.

That is, the Government were prevented by Federal instrumentalities from reducing wages and increasing hours on the railways. Another matter dealt with by the member for South Fremantle was the proposed Federal wheat pool. The hon. member referred to the condition of the farmers, and seemed to blame members on this side of the House for not having supported the Commonwealth proposal. If the Federal Government had succeeded in getting their wheat pool proposal through, they would have been ready to repudiate it by now. Taking the present price of wheat at sidings, a guarantee of 4s. a bushel would have cost the country something like £12,000,000, that is, £6,000,000 to the Common-

wealth Government and £6,000,000 to the States concerned. On a quarter basis, the cost to this State would have been £1,250,000 on a normal crop. The hon. member said that if the guarantee had been adopted, the difference could have been spread over the whole community, instead of requiring the farmer to bear the whole of the loss. I do not know how the hon. member would have raised the £1,250,000, whether by extra taxation or in some other way, but if it had been spread over the whole of the community by way of charging an additional price for wheat for local consumption, it would have been necessary to charge at least 10s. per bushel. I do not think the hon. member's constituents would have approved of that. It is interesting to recall that Mr. Parker Moloney's wheat pool proposal went before the electors at the last election, and I do not know that the Collier Government gave any lead in the matter. According to Press reports, replies were received by the Federal Minister from every State excepting Western Australia. I know it was a burning question at the time, because I was asked my attitude to it at every meeting in the country. The ex-Premier went through my electorate during the campaign, and I give him credit for this, that he, unlike some members in the Eastern States, did not promise the farmers 4s. or 5s. a bushel for their wheat. When he was asked at Carnamah whether he favoured the wheat pool, he replied that personally he was against it. Considering that the ex-Premier was opposed to a Federal wheat pool and that the present Premier, the Leader of the Nationalist Party, was also opposed to it, I do not think there would have been a ghost of a chance of getting it approved by this Parliament, even if it had been passed by the Federal Parliament. There is no doubt about the gravity of the financial situation. For the last 12 years, speaking generally, and this applies especially to the cities, Australians have been having a good time. Not only have we not paid our way, but we have created with loan money an artificial prosperity, and have set up standards which, with the fall in the prices of primary products and a drying up of loan funds, threaten to topple in ruins. The old-fashioned and sane idea of Governments paying their way seems to have gone out with the war. Western Australia, as compared with

the other States, has had an unprecedented run of good seasons. According to Mr. Bruce Leake, of Kellerberrin, the eastern districts have never had such a run of wet winters. Yet no provision has been made for lean years. One Government has merely boasted that its deficit has not been so great as that of its predecessor. Governments have borrowed money and expended it, sometimes not too wisely, and then have borrowed more money to assist to pay the interest on their previous borrowings. If you, Mr. Speaker, and I went to a banker to raise a loan—it would be a forlorn hope at the moment—but if we succeeded, and then next year said we were sorry we could not pay the interest and would he please lend us more money for that purpose, how long would we last? Yet Governments have been doing that for years, and what is bad in an individual is just as bad in a State. The financial position is such that money to be borrowed is only to be used for works that will give a profitable return. Many years ago one of the leading planks, and to my mind the finest plank, of the Labour platform, was that money was to be borrowed for reproductive works only. That plank appeared in Labour's platform at the time of the Daglish Government, and when Mr. Daglish tried to carry it into effect, his Government was called the mark-time Government. Had Labour carried out that plank right through up to the present, Australia would not be in the bad financial position she occupies at present.

Mr. Willcock: Only the Labour Party?

Mr. PATRICK: Both parties, but Labour members have done their share of borrowing. Expenditure is to be closely watched in future to ensure that we get value for every penny spent. Economically, all is not well, and we have now to knuckle down and acknowledge the fact. We seem to be the last nation in the world to come to the reorganisation process and get back to normal. This is largely due to the fact that for a number of years, Australia has been loan drunk and the prices for her primary products have been at high levels. From 1913 to last year, exports from Australia, mostly primary products, have more than doubled in value, though actually the quantity exported has not been a great deal more. Now falling prices have reduced Australia's income by from £30,000,000 to £40,000,000, in addition

to which money is difficult to borrow, and the rate of interest has gone up. Australia is staggering under an enormous burden of debt amounting to some £1,100,000,000, and over £30,000,000 has to be sent overseas every year to pay interest on that portion of the money owing abroad. This interest can be paid only by exports, which are principally primary products, and as prices have fallen, production must be increased. Every Australian party now admits that the position is serious. To my mind the position is that we have £30,000,000 to £40,000,000 less to spend, owing to the fall in prices, and probably another £30,000,000 to £40,000,000 less owing to the impossibility of borrowing. If the existing standards are to be maintained with the present production and present conditions, then a section of our people are going to be employed at good wages while another section are going to be permanently unemployed. It is impossible to draw a quart of beer out of a pint pot, and it is equally impossible to escape the fact that if we render an industry unprofitable, we inevitably create unemployment.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. PATRICK: Before tea I was referring to pessimism. There are different kinds of pessimists and optimists. The late Thomas Hardy, the great English writer, is supposed to have been a confirmed pessimist, and he gives the following definition:—

Pessimism: My motto is, first correctly diagnose the complaint, and ascertain the cause, then set about finding a remedy.

Optimism: The motto of the optimist is, "Blind the eyes to the real malady, and use empirical panaceas to suppress the symptoms."

There are many of this type of optimist in Australia to-day, especially in the Federal sphere. There seems to be an aversion on the part of politicians, or there has been in the past, to put the facts before the people. They seem to prefer as Sir Thomas Hardy says, "Empirical panaceas to blind the eyes of the people to the real facts." The position reminds me of a little story I came across some time ago. It is about an Irish schoolmaster. He was addressing his class and he said he would give a shilling to the boy or girl who could tell him the name of the greatest man who ever lived. One child said Napoleon, another referred to some other notability, another to Sir James Mit-



chell, and so on. At last one little Jew boy said he could answer the question, and named St. Patrick. "You are right, my boy," said the teacher, and handed him the shilling, "but how did you come to think of the great man's name?" "Well," said the little Jew boy, "it was this way: right down in the bottom of my heart I knew it was Moses, but business is business." So it has been with many of our politicians. Right down in the bottom of their hearts they have known the facts of the position but they were not game to state them. The remedy seems to lie not so much in a reduction of wage costs, although to a certain extent that is inevitable, but in a reduction of costs by increased production. There is something vitally wrong with Australia. We are a strong and virile race capable of holding our own with any other nation. In the last few years we have been slipping badly, especially with other Dominions such as Canada and New Zealand. In Australia we have a protective tariff, and have had it for years, and yet we cannot ship a pound's worth of manufactured goods outside the country. Canada has built up a large export trade in manufactured goods. That Dominion can put a binder into Australia in competition with our own makers, after paying duty and charges amounting to at least £30. There must be something wrong with the country when that sort of thing can happen. According to the implement maker, Mr. McKay, wages are just as high in Canada as, or higher than, they are in Australia, despite the fact that Canada has no basic wage and no elaborate arbitration laws. There is certainly not so much interruption in Canada through strikes and disputes. In 1927—the last year from which I can obtain the figures—there were in Canada 79 disputes, and 22,000 men lost 165,000 working days. In Australia, where idealists instituted the system of arbitration, with which to abolish strikes, there were 200,000 men involved in 441 strikes, and they lost 1,713,581 days. New Zealand is in a far more prosperous condition than we are. That Dominion has no difficulty in borrowing money in London and its finances are in a sound condition. It also recognises the value of primary production. In its taxation measures it provided a total exemption on all incomes earned by any owner of land from the direct use or cultivation of it. The farmer paid no income tax. In the Budget that was introduced a few weeks ago

this has been altered, but making an income tax payable only in the case of land where the unimproved value is over £7,500. That would exempt practically all the farmers in this country. Australia can only advance by increased production, and this can only be brought about by an increase in production per head of the people. To ignore the economic factor as to the ability of an industry to pay the wages asked can also only lead to unemployment. What shall it profit a man if he gain a high arbitration award and loses his job? I remember in my young days, when the Wallaroo and Moonta mines were working in South Australia. It was a prosperous community there. Every man owned his own house and everyone was contented. They had a system there whereby wages were affected by the price of copper. Wages rose or fell automatically as the price of the metal rose or fell. The Australian Workers' Union then came along and organised the miners. The Arbitration Court gave them a splendid award, but the mines were closed down and have never since been opened. We have a country rich in gold, silver, copper, tin, etc. and yet mining is practically at a standstill. If our metals existed in any other country they would be worked, and would be employing thousands of men, and be the means of establishing secondary industries in the manufacture of machinery, etc. Because the cost of production is high from various causes, the mines in Australia remain closed. This leads to further unemployment. Apparently only our farmers are expected to suffer a reduction of 50 per cent. in their earnings and wages, and still carry on. I put it to members opposite who own farming properties, if the same rate and conditions were to apply to farmers, or men working on the farms, as apply to the men handling wheat on the railways and the wharves, how long would they retain possession of their farms?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The two things are not comparable. One is a seasonal occupation and the other is a permanent one.

Mr. PATRICK: It is a matter of the rate of wages. The same thing would apply to any other industry. If it were applied to the farming industry it would close down, and if that happened, the result would be chaos and ruin to Australia.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Very few farmers pay less than the basic wage to-day.

Mr. PATRICK: I do not think many pay it.

Mr. Panton: That is a very sane admission.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: In my district we pay £2 10s. a week and keep. That is equal to the basic wage.

Hon. P. Collier: I pay more than the basic wage.

Mr. PATRICK: I am referring to the average throughout the State. I wish to refer to our wretched arbitration laws, which attempt to put every man on the same basis.

Mr. Panton: They do nothing of the sort.

Mr. McCallum: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. PATRICK: They put every man on the same level.

Mr. Panton: On the same minimum.

Hon. P. Collier: You had better stick to farming.

Mr. McCallum: And talk about something you understand.

Mr. PATRICK: It does not matter whether a minimum is fixed or not, it becomes the wage for the industry.

Mr. McCallum: The Arbitration Court does not do that.

Mr. PATRICK: If the shearers worked on a daily wage, what sort of tally would we get? What incentive would there be for the fastest man to shear any more sheep than the slowest man in the team? I remember when I was on the platform for the first time, six years ago, I referred to the great expense of clearing on the group settlements by means of day labour. The irony of the thing lies in this, that when the Mitchell Government went out of office and the Collier Government came in, the new Government abolished the system of day labour clearing on the groups, and introduced that of piece work or contract. When speaking on this question in the Legislative Council, Mr. Thomas Moore, who was a Labour member for the Central Province, and a member of the Group Settlement Royal Commission, quoted the remarks of a group foreman, who indicated that after a time the good men fell back to the pace of the slow men, and the whole business came down to the pace of the slowest man. On this point Mr. Moore said that any man who was working amongst men must know that was quite true. He said, "If you have a gang of men not working on their own blocks, it will be found that the slow men amongst them will regulate the pace of the work of the others." That

is quite true. Human nature is the same everywhere, just as it is on the groups. The principle applies almost throughout every industry in Australia. If a bricklayer can lay 400 bricks a day and receives the same rate of pay as the man who can lay 1,000, and if the employer continues to pay the fast worker only at the same rate as the slow worker, the 1,000-brick a day man will drop down to the 400. He would be a mug if he did otherwise. Thus building cost goes up, and higher rentals follow from these increased costs.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They always lay bricks by piece work.

Mr. PATRICK: When speaking on this question in the Federal Arbitration Court in 1924 Mr. Justice Powers, the President of that tribunal, who knew well what he was talking about, said—

My duty is to prevent strikes as far as possible, and give fair rates and conditions to both parties. The court cannot, in my opinion, do anything that would prevent strikes and give to the workers the value of their work to the employers, more than to induce the workers to accept piece work rates fixed by this court. The members would increase their incomes and get what they claim, some share of the profits made by the employers with their assistance.

Further on the judge said—

No unionist who has had piece work rates fixed by this court would dream of going back to the old wages system under which men cannot improve their positions, or rise from the one dead level of labourer or fitter, or whatever work they may be at.

At McKay's implement works in Victoria most of the work is done on piece work, and the men earn good wages. I understand that Mr. McKay proposed to establish works in Western Australia, but the union here objected to the Victorian conditions. It, therefore, followed that works which would have employed many Western Australians at good wages, and which would have saved many pounds to our farmers, were retained to Victoria.

Mr. Panton: The union only asked them to comply with the laws of the land.

Mr. PATRICK: Members may say we have our own State Implement Works here. I have heard hon. members say we ought to use local products. I am acquainted with a considerable number of Labour farmers in my electorate, but I do not know of a single one who uses a State Implement Works machine.



Mr. Sleeman: You cannot have looked round very much, because I know one in your district who uses State Implement Works machines.

Mr. PATRICK: In that case, he is uncommon. I know one centre where the farmers are all Labour supporters, and yet there is not a State Implement Works machine among the lot.

Mr. Sleeman: As a matter of fact, a farmer in your district used one of the first harvesters built by the State Implement Works, and he is still using it.

Mr. PATRICK: That may be so. I am speaking of men within my own knowledge.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have a State harvester which I have been using for years and years.

Mr. PATRICK: It is really marvellous how inefficient State enterprises can be. McKay starts in Victoria in a small blacksmith's shop, with practically no capital, and gradually, over a series of years, builds up a business which makes him a millionaire. The State Implement Works started in Western Australia with all the experience that McKay had gradually to acquire, and with ample capital; and yet this State undertaking makes a lamentable financial mess. Admittedly McKay had a good thing in the tariff, but the State Implement Works here enjoyed not only the benefit of the tariff, but also the advantage of interstate freight, equivalent to at least £15 on a harvester. I can give another example from Queensland. Either Mr. Theodore or Mr. Ryan—I forget which—said to himself, "This pastoral business is highly profitable"; and he proceeded to acquire or resume station after station, which his own Government ran at enormous loss, and which succeeding Governments, Labour and otherwise, have been gradually getting out of at further heavy losses. In fact, I noticed in the Press recently that the final station had been sold and that the total loss was £1,900,000. It takes our own Government all its time to make a profit out of State hotels in good towns where they have a monopoly of the trade and everybody knows that to be a highly profitable game.

Mr. Panton: We shall have to start a drink-more-beer campaign.

Mr. PATRICK: The money wasted in State enterprises would have been better employed in opening up country and mak-

ing for that increased production which Mr. Scullin declares to be vitally needed in order to save Australia. To reduce production costs, taxation on the primary producer must be reduced. The wheat grower is urged to grow more wheat, in effect to work longer hours, to "scorn delights and live laborious days." How, then, can any Government justify the many privileges and concessions which were given to our Public Service at a time when prices were high, and which even then were made possible only with the assistance of borrowed money? I repeat, taxation will have to be brought down. With regard to the land tax, previous Governments removed the exemption of £250 and doubled the rate of tax. On top of that came a State vermin tax. On top of that again there came fresh valuations, raising the valuations of our lands to at least double, on the average, and thus making the tax four times as great. The increased valuation of our lands does not cause them to produce any more. In fact, the new valuations were made at a time when the prices of all primary products were at the very top. If a new valuation were made on the basis of the selling values of farms—as it should be—quite a different tale would be told. Yet I understand that the new valuations, under the law, must remain for three years in the case of one Government, and for five years in the case of the other. Then we have two income taxes to pay: that is, if we are lucky. I do not think the farmers will be paying any income tax this year. In New Zealand, as I have already mentioned, there is no income tax as regards the farmer. The present Government should as soon as possible carry out their promise to reduce the land tax by 50 per cent., and amend the law so that the farmer will only pay land tax or income tax, whichever may be the greater. An idea seems to be prevalent, especially in Federal circles, that high taxation in lieu of reduced expenditure can save the present situation. Taxation is no remedy, for it can reach a point when industry begins to collapse. Thus, taxation—as it has proved in the case of Federal taxation—can defeat its own end. The position to-day is that the prices of wheat and wool are back on the pre-war basis. At a time when wheat and wool values were high, agricultural machinery more than doubled in price. All building materials increased in

price. Railway freights increased. Taxation increased. The cost of workers' compensation went sky high. Wages and conditions generally were vastly improved. High prices for primary products, with the assistance of loan money, carried all these increases. The farmer, who was not exactly making a fortune in pre-war times, is now asked to carry all these additional burdens with pre-war prices. That is the problem which Governments have to solve. In my opinion Australia will never get back to a sound basis until a bag of wheat or a bale of wool will purchase the same in essential commodities as it could purchase in 1913. I notice that Mr. Hughes, speaking on the gold bonus deputation to the Prime Minister, declared that only a miracle could save Australia.

Mr. Panton: He was looking in the mirror then.

Mr. PATRICK: Then Mr. Hughes went on to talk about the possibility of a new gold find or an oil discovery. There are in Australia many politicians like Mr. Hughes—Micawbers waiting for something to turn up.

Mr. Angelo: But Mr. Hughes is now an extinct volcano.

Mr. PATRICK: What we have to do is, in the homely phrase of Mr. Hill, the Premier of South Australia, cut our coat according to our cloth. There are many unemployed in Western Australia to-day, but the picture shows still seem to be raking in large sums of money, and trots and race meetings still go on merrily. To the casual man from the country visiting the city, the waste of money is something appalling; and yet, side by side with that waste, there are poverty and distress. It seems highly doubtful whether at present wheat growing can be carried on profitably without other primary activities. In my opinion the Government should give up all idea of a 3,500 farms scheme and so forth, and concentrate on consolidating the farms which are already settled.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you include the new groups in that statement?

Mr. PATRICK: I think quite enough has been spent on groups already. There are scores of abandoned farms in good districts alongside the railways, farms that should be

written down and brought back into production. In the northern area, where there has been no railway development for years, there are rich, improved districts such as Balla, Dartmoor, East Yuna, Mendels, and Wongoondy, which should have railway communication before money is spent on sending farmers out into newer and doubtful areas. East Yuna has been turned down by the Railways Advisory Board, but I understand that the late Government gave a promise that the board would be sent to the Balla-Dartmoor area. I do not think there is much chance of new railways being built in the immediate future, but I am desirous of having it established in principle that that land is suitable for railway development when opportunity offers. If the Government send the Railways Advisory Board to Balla-Dartmoor, they should also send them again to East Yuna. On a recent Sunday Mr. Drew and I had the opportunity of driving over and inspecting some of the country which the Railways Advisory Board, in their previous report, condemned as absolutely unfit for wheat growing; and that country was carrying really splendid crops. Personally I do not take too much notice of Government experts since having heard from Mr. Drew that the Lands Purchase Board absolutely condemned Mendels and Wongoondy estates, in my opinion, some of the finest land in Western Australia. Golden opportunities have also been lost in the past for purchasing the Midland railway, which runs through some of the best land in this State. I realise that at present the finances would not permit of the purchase of the railway, but I consider that the Government should make a proper valuation of the Midland Company's assets so as to have it ready when funds are available.

Mr. Withers: If the lands were taken, the railway would not be much of an asset. It would all have to be reconditioned.

Mr. PATRICK: The general manager of the Midland Company, Mr. Poynton, speaking in Geraldton two or three years ago, said—

He was not aware that the Government had made any serious attempt to value the assets of the company. The Government had never made any attempt to determine what the property was worth, and had never made any valuation worth considering.



If the Government negotiated for that property as I understand they did in the past, surely they would have had some proper valuation made of the company's assets. In my opinion it would have been a good thing if some of the money wasted in the South-West had been spent further north, among other things on the purchase of the Midland Company's assets. The South-West is not the only district in Western Australia suitable for dairying. There is a large area north of Perth and extending beyond Geraldton which, with improvement of pastures, and with top-dressing and the provision of silage and so forth, could carry on dairying just as profitably as the South-West, and with a fraction of the capital expenditure. There seems to be an idea—I believe it is largely fostered by the Agricultural Department—that the South-West is the dairying part of the State, and that the other part is the sheep and wheat part. In the Eastern States butter factories are to be found scattered all over the wheat districts. In fact, Victoria is said to have more butter factories outside Gippsland, which is the Victorian equivalent of our South-West, than in Gippsland itself. This development has been largely retarded in Western Australia by the high prices of wheat and wool. However, the farmers of this State have now to learn that they must go in for a greater diversity of farm practice if they wish to carry on successfully. Conditions in the country districts generally should be improved in order to encourage people to live there. A leading politician of the Eastern States—I do not remember at the moment who it was—said recently that Australia had been over-borrowing for years, and that far too much money had been spent in providing conveniences for the people and far too little in making for development and increased production. It is a crime, in my opinion, to spend loan money on non-reproductive work in the city while railways are urgently required to open up new areas in the country districts, and when water supplies, schools and other incidentals to civilisation are required for the men and women, with their children, who have gone out miles from anywhere to develop new holdings. The sympathy of this House should go out every time to those men and women who are doing so much to develop this State. I had an excellent study

in contrasts a few months ago. Prior to commencing my election campaign, I read an account of a meeting of a parents and citizens' association held in one of the leading towns. One of the members complained about the necessity for calstomining the walls in the school building, which was one of the finest in the State, equipped with every convenience. A week later I called at a farm to see a man and was told that he was doing some work at the school nine or ten miles east of the Wongan line. I went there and found four or five settlers busily engaged in erecting the school building. They had gone two or three sidings down the line, demolished the old school building, carted the material to the railway siding, placed it on trucks, taken delivery at the new siding, and were then engaged in re-erecting the building to the satisfaction of the department and without costing the State one penny. In passing I may add that a generous Government charged those settlers with the cost of freighting the material for the school over the railways! I was glad to hear the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Cunningham), when referring to district allowances, mention the difference between the position of city and country children with regard to the University. I referred to this question on the hustings, and say again that the University may be a free institution for city children residing with their parents, but it can hardly be described as such for country children who have to pay for their board and lodging when they come to town. It would be no great hardship if we asked the people in the metropolitan area, whose children attend the University, to contribute something towards the cost of upkeep of the institution, because it seems to be incurring larger deficits with each succeeding year. Most people to-day are talking about secession, and this brings me to the fact that Western Australia, which is essentially a primary producing country and will eventually be the greatest in the Commonwealth, has recently been dealt a series of severe knocks per medium of the Federal tariff. It is a lamentable thing that party interests in this State should prevent us from securing a unanimous protest from Western Australia against the operations of the Federal tariff. I have already referred to the fact that Mr. Hill, the Labour Premier of South Australia, made a bitter attack on the Federal tariff in a recent speech in



the South Australian House of Assembly. I remember that a few years ago Mr. Troy, when Minister for Mines, travelled round the country areas and denounced the then Nationalist Government's tariff which, he said, was ruining the gold mining industry of Western Australia. Certainly a great deal of the decline in the mining industry has been due to Federal legislation. Just after the recent Federal election we had the spectacle of the ex-Premier, when touring the South-West, telling the people, according to published reports, that he hoped the new Federal Government would not unduly increase the tariff as it would do a serious injury to Western Australia. The point I wish to make is that all those I have mentioned agreed that the Federal tariff has operated detrimentally to this State and to South Australia. Nevertheless, at the Federal election recently held they supported the Labour Party who favoured the imposition of a prohibitive tariff. That demonstrates that their words of protest were merely as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

Mr. Munsie: The present Federal Government have increased the tariff, but not nearly to the extent that their predecessors did.

The Attorney General: He did not say they did.

Mr. PATRICK: The new tariff seems to have been increased principally in the interests of the larger centres of Australia, which emphasises the fact that the Labour Party is becoming essentially a city party. The tariff seems to have been framed under no particular system or method. For instance, we are told that the wool industry is in a bad way, and we are urged to use more wool. Artificial silk, wool's chief competitor, of which over £6,000,000 worth was imported into Australia last year, principally consisting of Rayon which is made out of waste cotton, under the Federal Government's tariff is given a distinct advantage over wool. Farmers' requisites have been hit up sky-high. Galvanised iron has become a classic instance. The bonus paid on galvanised iron to Lysaghts is more than sufficient to pay the wages in the whole industry. I think most of us could carry on wheat growing successfully under those conditions.

Mr. Millington: Some could not do so.

Mr. PATRICK: I remember that a few months ago the city newspapers published columns of letters dealing with the question of farmers' finance, and we were given a lot of gratuitous advice as to how we should run our business. We were told it was necessary for us to become more efficient so as to increase production. If the position were not so serious, the reading of such statements would be quite humorous. I do not know how some of these efficient city men are getting on, particularly those who own farms.

Mr. Panton: You mean the terrace farmers.

Mr. PATRICK: There was a story told by Artemus Ward, the great American humorist, who said that an enemy of his got hold of him and gave him the father and mother of a hiding. "But," Artemus Ward said, "a year or two later I had a terrible revenge. His uncle died and left him a farm." Some of these efficient city men are now in the position of Artemus Ward's enemy. Despite the knocks dealt by politicians, droughts and diseases, the wheat-growing industry is really one of the most efficiently run in Australia to-day. Without the assistance of heavy duties or bonuses, it has to compete in the world's markets against grain grown in cheap-labour countries like India and the Argentine, and has to place wheat in the world's market at the world's highest price. The Australian consumer really gets the cheapest wheat in the world because he gets it at world's parity, less longest distance freights. As a matter of fact, there are really two competitive industries only in Australia to-day—wheat and wool—and it is a pity that politicians should constantly cast additional burdens upon them. Australia's secondary industries are heavily protected, and sugar, butter, dried fruits and wine are heavily bonused. The wheat and wool growers are urged to make themselves more efficient in order to be able to compete in the world's markets, yet a premium on inefficiency is granted to every little tinpot industry that likes to start in Australia. They are not told to make themselves more efficient to compete in the world's markets. Those controlling such industries could not sell two-pence worth of goods outside Australia in open competition. Their methods and machinery may be out of date. Never mind! Give them some protection and cast addi-



tional burdens on the two great industries that are carrying Australia to-day and facing world competition. It is to me an amazing thing that the Federal Government should choose the present of all times to make the tariff prohibitive. The present British Government are against all food preferences, and are only seeking for an opportunity to abolish them. The dried fruits industry in Australia is largely in the hands of returned soldiers. That industry exists only because of the generous British preference. If Australian dried fruit had to struggle in open competition with the products of cheap-labour countries like Turkey and Greece, the industry would fade away. Butter, sugar and wine similarly enjoy a generous British preference. Yet at a time like this when Australia desires to borrow money in London and has difficulty in getting it, we deliberately throw the present tariff in the face of Great Britain. Other countries are beginning to retaliate. France buys three times as much from Australia as Australia buys from her. France has already retaliated by placing a prohibitive tariff on Australian wheat. Germany, Italy and South Africa have followed along similar lines. During last season, Australian wheat was shut out of practically every market in the world except that of Great Britain. I suppose if it were not largely a matter of sentiment, they would have hit back also. The serious position regarding the overseas markets lies in the fact that the Soviet Government in Russia are working hard to regain their old pre-war export trade. In those days, Russia was the largest exporter of wheat throughout the world. If Russia is in a position to export wheat, all the European nations, including Great Britain, will grab her wheat with both hands, because Russia is prepared to buy their products.

Mr. Withers: Because they can secure it at cheaper rates.

Mr. PATRICK: Because Russia will take manufactured goods in exchange. Ours is a suicidal policy, because the prosperity of the city and the manufacturing interests in the cities depend upon keeping the country districts prosperous. Mr. King O'Malley, one-time Federal Labour Minister, when speaking in the House of Representatives, said, "You can destroy your cities in the night and they would be rapidly rebuilt. Destroy your country districts and the cities will fade away, never to rise again." I am

glad to know that we will not be asked to deal with much new legislation this session because, to my mind, Australian Parliaments in the past have displayed a perfect mania for passing Bills. These Bills once passed have never had an opportunity to function properly. Parliament has to be eternally tinkering with them.

Mr. Panton: Some Bills passed here have not functioned at all.

The Minister for Works: Thank God!

Mr. Panton: The Dog Act, for instance.

Mr. PATRICK: When I was speaking on the hustings, I said it would be a good thing if, certain necessary legislation having been passed, and we could rely upon good administration, we shut up our Parliaments for ten years, and saw how the position would work itself out. There is one question I must refer to, namely, the reduction of Parliamentary salaries. I should not like to conclude without giving my opinion on that. I am certainly in favour of a reduction of salaries, provided it is done on the same lines as in South Australia, where the reduction extends also throughout the Public Service on a graduated scale. Still I should not like to see so high a rate as Mr. Hill, the Premier of South Australia, has imposed there. Under Mr. Hill's scheme there is to be a graduated reduction throughout the Public Service rising to 25 per cent. on salaries of £1,000 and over. I do not wish to abuse the patience of members much longer, but in conclusion I should like to say that personally I stand for the interests of country districts all the time. For I know that if the country districts are prosperous, the towns and cities will always get their share, probably more than their share. All the real wealth of this or any other country comes from the land, which produces everything essential to the preservation of life. Agriculture, as Adam Smith puts it, is the one abiding source of national stability. If I may make another quotation, the men who cultivate the land create incalculable wealth, and they ought to be the nation's healthiest, happiest, most comfortable, and most independent citizens. But Australian Governments bind them in chains and then call upon them to produce more wheat. The people of this country have to learn that there is no royal road to prosperity. During the next year or two we are in for a

very rough time, a testing time. And, after all, there is no test like adversity, either for an individual, a party, or a nation. It is the supreme test of character. And we come of a race of men that have always stood up well when put against difficulty. We have a wonderful country, and we have men who will be prepared to face the facts of the position if they are properly put before them. In my opinion we also have a very capable Government, and a Leader of the Opposition who would be a credit to any Parliament of the Empire. I feel I am voicing the wish of all on this side when I hope he will be long spared to occupy that high and honourable position. The Prime Minister of Australia recently said there were dark clouds hovering over Australia. And he went on to refer to Australia's wonderful recuperative powers. I have heard similar remarks about Australia's wonderful recuperative powers on the opposite side; in fact, "recuperative" seems to have taken the place of that good old word "potentialities." The Prime Minister referred to Australia's wonderful recuperative powers, which simply means that it is to the men and women of the country districts that he and others are looking to make Australia's prospects bright. The secondary industries do not recuperate worth one cent. It is to the men and women of the country districts that the Prime Minister is looking, because they are laying broad and deep the only foundations on which can be built up a really prosperous community. Their work, however, can be helped or hampered by wise or foolish legislation, and it is being hampered to-day by foolish legislation. I appeal to members on both sides of the House to try to lift the burden now on the backs of the primary producers, so as to enable them to give that increased production which is so vital to Australia's needs to-day.

**MR. RICHARDSON** (Subiaco) [8.20]: At the outset I desire to join with other members in tendering to you, Sir, my congratulations on your elevation to the Speakership. I know you will fill the position with dignity and that you will have the support of the whole of the members of the House. I desire, also, to take this opportunity to thank members for having elected me Chairman of Committees. I can only promise them that I shall try to emulate

my predecessor, the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey). I do not intend to-night to enter into any controversial matter, because I feel that, occupying an official position, I should not be justified in doing so. But there are one or two matters which have been discussed in the House, and which I consider of very great importance indeed. And so I intend to refer to them as I go along. It appears to me the policy for Western Australia, and indeed for the whole of Australia, has been laid down for us. I think it is the first time in the history of Australia that we have a uniform policy throughout all the Australian Parliaments.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Who laid it down?

Mr. RICHARDSON: The latest Premiers' Conference has laid down a policy which says we must balance the ledger and that we must spend nothing except on reproductive works. And the Premiers of this and the other States, together with the Prime Minister, have bound themselves to that policy. As I said in the beginning, I do not propose to enter upon any subject of a controversial nature. May I add that neither am I going to answer interjections. So interjections will be entirely lost upon me. The two great problems with which we are confronted to-day are finance and unemployment, the one being dependent entirely on the other. If the Government of the State can secure sufficient money, then I feel sure their policy will give employment to those out of work to-day. But until the Budget is brought down, neither I nor any other member can discuss that problem with any definite security, for we do not really know what the Government propose to do. Probably I should not have spoken to-night had not the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) brought into the discussion something which I think is of the greatest importance, not only to Western Australia, but to Australia. I refer to what he described as the extremists of the Labour Party and their cry of repudiation of our war debts. The hon. member is to be commended for having brought the subject before Parliament. It is generally asked, why do not the Labour Party keep the extremists out of their ranks. I am going to say it is not alone the Labour Party's job, but it is our job as well, to cut down the following which the Communists in Australia are gaining. It may be said