

view of the parlous state of the finances and the difficulty of obtaining loan money. Perhaps the Government will make inquiries as to the advisability of constructing a light tramline until such time as 50,000 or 100,000 acres of land are under cultivation. I feel certain that a tramline would meet the requirements of the people for the time being until it is proved beyond all doubt that the future of the district is assured. I remember 10 or 15 years ago when the land around Lake Grace was inhabited by hoodie rats and a few rabbits. It was then thought unfit for wheat growing. Less than 40 settlers took off 100,000 bags of wheat from that area last year and I hope that between 120,000 and 130,000 bags will be delivered at the siding this season. That development was carried out by people from the Old Country, probably none of whom had seen a forest before, with the exception of the parks around London. In my opinion the Newdegate area is equal, if not superior, to the land at Lake Grace. If the Government can see their way clear to do something for the settlers there, it will be in the interests of the State to keep them on their holdings. They cannot stay there unless means of communication are provided either by way of motor traction or by the iron horse. I congratulate the Government on the work they have done since their advent to office and I trust that during the next three years good seasons will be experienced and that the affairs of the State will be administered so as to enable Western Australia to become the brightest gem in the Empire.

Lieut.-Col. DENTON (Moore) [8.58]: I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your elevation to your high and honourable position. I trust you will live for many years to enjoy that honour. May I also congratulate the Premier and Minister upon assuming Ministerial rank. I trust they will have a prosperous time while in office and that during the period they are in charge of the government they will endeavour to place the affairs of Western Australia on a very satisfactory basis. The late Government laid the foundation stone upon which the present Administration can build. I had not intended to speak on the Address-in-reply because I consider too much time is taken up with the debate. It is only fair to give the Government a chance to bring forward legislation which I trust will be for the good of the country. I wish to refer to a question that was dealt with during the last Parliament regarding the purchase of the Midland Company's railway and concession. I do not wish to labour that at the present juncture, but I hope that before long the people of the Midlands will come into their own. The Government would be well advised to take over a large area of Midland country for the purpose of group settlement. They will find up there sufficient good land for the settlement of thousands of mi-

grants. I have been through the grouplements in the South-West, and I can say it will be many years before that part of the country becomes productive. In our northern lands we have large areas on which migrants with very little trouble could make their holdings productive much more quickly and easily than would be possible in the South-West. For production, our district is second to none in the State. Indeed we have those lands that will compare with any in Australia. I do hope the Government will make some effective provision for the extension of water supplies in agricultural areas. There is very sore necessity for water on the Wongan Hills railway. Unfortunately our gold mining industry appears to be on the wane. Nobody regrets that more than I do. In the early days the goldfields were responsible for bringing into the State thousands of valuable settlers from all parts of the world. In my district most of our settlers are ex-goldfields men. Now that the gold mining industry is on the wane, some of the goldfields water might well be spared to relieve agricultural settlers. It may be said that the farmer ought to provide for himself. Usually he does, but sometimes Nature does not come to his aid at the time he most requires assistance. So I trust that the goldfields water scheme will be extended from Goomalling along the railway towards Mullewa. That would afford much relief to the settlers, and so would result in improved yields from their holdings. It is often said that the man on the land is the backbone of the country. But we are apt to forget that when a man goes on the land he takes with him his women folk to share his hardships and sufferings. Frequently have I heard agricultural members speak of the trials and tribulations of the men on the land, but I have never heard a member speak of the woman who helps the man on the land. I should like to learn that the Government intend to bring in something in the nature of a bush nursing scheme to help, not only those women struggling beside their husbands on farms, but also those women struggling to assist their husbands on mining claims at the back of beyond. I trust the Government will bring down wise legislation. If they do, it will have my support.

The Premier: But you may not be able to discern the wisdom of the legislation.

Lieut.-Col. DENTON: Under the guidance of the Government we shall have no difficulty in that. Much has been said about the ex-Premier. In my opinion the ex-Premier has done very much to put this country on a sound foundation. To him all praise is due for the way he has stood by the State of which we are all so proud.

On motion by Mr. Hughes, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.7 p.m.*