

the Commissioner shall instruct the Registrar to do certain things, and as the transfer of land is of such importance, and the slightest irregularity may make a good deal of difference to people, it was felt that to safeguard the position it would be better to have legislation and so avoid trouble. Last year the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) introduced to me a deputation representing the legal profession. Their desire was to be clear on the matter and having gone into the whole thing they considered that it would be satisfactory if the procedure proposed by the Government were adopted. There is no opposition to the Bill. The officers at present in the Titles Office will have their interests conserved, and the Bill will make for efficiency. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [8.40]: I do not know that I feel inclined to support the Bill with great enthusiasm. Last year feeling that there might be something about it that I did not understand, the Minister for Justice was good enough to allow the matter to be adjourned and to receive a deputation from the conveyancing side of the profession, so that they might lay before him any objections they had to the proposal. Although the deputation did not like the idea of the combination of the two jobs—the Commissioner and the Registrar—they really felt that they were not able to advance any valid objection to it.

The Minister for Justice: Others have been enthusiastically in favour of it.

Mr. DAVY: I think it was with reluctance that the deputation admitted there was no serious objection to the proposal and that there was something to be said for it. So long as the person who combines the two positions is competent to deal with the somewhat highly technical matters, it will make little difference, and no valid objection can be raised to it.

The Minister for Justice: He will be competent.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 27th August, 1925.

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

QUESTION—MAIN ROADS.

State and Federal Expenditure.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What amount of money has been—(a) allocated, and (b) expended by the State upon the construction or maintenance of main roads to which the Commonwealth Government subscribe? 2, What mileage of main roads has been recommended by the Minister for Works? 3, Since the passing of the Commonwealth Main Roads Development Act, 1923—(a) what mileage of main roads has been constructed, maintained, or repaired, and (b) what amount of money has been expended, in each electoral district?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) Total amount allocated to 30th June, 1925—£384,000, for construction and maintenance of main developmental roads, half of which has been contributed by the Commonwealth Government. (b) Amount expended from State funds to 30th June, 1925, on construction and maintenance—£178,450 1s. 2d. Salaries and other administration charges, £13,593. 2, Approximately 1,980 miles. 3, (a) Clearing, 570½ miles; forming, 346½ miles, including 133,172 cubic yards of side cutting; gravelling and metalting 242½ miles; drains, 144 miles; bridges and culverts, 872. (b) No record is kept of expenditure in electoral districts. Time would be occupied and expenditure incurred in furnishing the required information and then it would necessarily be only approximate. A schedule showing all authorised works within each road district was recently laid on the Table of the House.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Thirteenth Day—Conclusion.*

HON. T. MOORE (Central—in reply) [4.38]: During the course of the debate the Group Settlement Royal Commission have been singled out by some members for special attention. On that account, and because I had not sufficient time on the opening day to deal with the subject, I intend to deal with it now. I hope I shall not weary hon. members if I find it necessary to read a good deal of the evidence. This is desirable because very few members have read it. The evidence needs dissecting, and putting into more concise form. I admit it is difficult to wade through such a bulky document as the Royal Commission's report. I suggest that before any member attacks the Commission's report he should read that report, and ascertain on what evidence the Commission's recommendations were arrived at. Unfortunately, the first member to attack the Commission had not had the report in his hands for half an hour before he did so. Mr. Ewing is not here for the moment, and I am sorry for his absence, though I suppose the circumstance will import more order into the debate. I consider it was very bad form on his part to condemn something of which he knew nothing. Certain of his statements were remarkable. One of them was—

My duty now is to condemn with all the emphasis I can this report.

He had not attempted to arrive at any conclusions with regard to the evidence on which the report was based. Surely that is a peculiar attitude. Mr. Ewing, I believe, knows nothing whatever about land settlement. He would consider it bad form on my part if I were to set myself up to judge something done by him in connection with the coal mining industry, of which I know nothing whatever. It has been suggested that no member of the Royal Commission knew anything of South-Western conditions. As a fact, the chairman of the Commission, Mr. Harper, was selected for his special knowledge of the South-West. I will read what was said of him by the Minister for Lands when the personnel of the Commission was attacked at an earlier date—

Mr. Harper was born in Western Australia. His father was honoured in the State. Everybody respected him. All realised that when Mr. Harper dealt with a question he dealt with it

fairly and honestly. His son is of the same calibre, and his opinions will carry weight in Western Australia. He is not actively connected with any political organisation. He is unbiassed in politics, and will fill the position of chairman of the Commission with integrity, ability, and honesty; and will retain the fair repute the honourable member ascribes to him. I am informed he has had agriculture thoroughly drilled into him. He has been trained to develop land. He has travelled in various parts of the world for the purpose of ascertaining the best methods of agriculture. For a considerable time he has been interested in a farm in the South-West. Consequently I think he will make an admirable chairman of the Commission.

Could a better man have been selected for the chairmanship? Yet Mr. Ewing says that the Commission included no member with any knowledge of the South-West. Everyone should have been pleased to have Mr. Harper as chairman of the Commission. Again, I myself claim to have a knowledge of the South-West. I went there 23 or 24 years ago, and was there continuously until 1916, when I went to the war. I was born on a dairy farm, and did not leave it until I was 18 years of age, a very short time before I came to this State. I can, therefore, claim to know not only the South-West, but also the possibilities of dairying in the South-West or anywhere else in Australia. So much for that. Mr. Dodd also thought fit to question the personnel of the Commission. He said he hoped a Commission on such lines would never be appointed again, or words to that effect. Mr. Dodd suggested it would be just as fair to appoint two Nationalists, two Labour representatives, and perhaps a Nationalist chairman to inquire into the Wyndham Meat Works. Mr. Dodd could not have drawn a worse analogy. What actually happened in connection with the Wyndham Meat Works was that a select committee was appointed, with all the powers of a Royal Commission, and consisting of the following:—Mr. Holmes, Nationalist, chairman; Mr. Lovekin, Nationalist, Mr. Hamersley, Nationalist, Mr. Cornell, Nationalist, and your humble servant, Labour, as the other member. Mr. Dodd must have been in error when speaking the other evening, though usually he is very correct in his statements.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: The Government appointed the Royal Commission, but it was the House that appointed the select committee.

Hon. T. MOORE: The select committee had all the powers of a Royal Commission, and Mr. Dodd raised no objection.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: It was the House, and not the Government, that appointed the committee.

Hon. T. MOORE: Mention has been made of something said with regard to Mr. McLarty in connection with the Commission's report. I have no desire to say anything whatever that is disparaging of Mr. McLarty. I have the greatest respect for him. He has done the State good, honest service, and is a most valuable officer. In my opinion, however, Mr. McLarty is shouldering the responsibility for something with which he had nothing at all to do. He has been standing up for something of which he does not really approve. Mr. McLarty has criticised the Commission and said that its report was inaccurate. Anybody reading the report will find it is not inaccurate in the sense Mr. McLarty says it is. But that is the only harsh thing I have to say about Mr. McLarty, who is one of those civil servants that have stood up for their chief. I give him credit for it. The scheme itself was one in which 20 men were supposed to work together in clearing 20 farms, in contrast with the individual settlement that had obtained in the past. It was considered by those who launched the scheme that it would be better to have 20 working together than one working on his own. It will be necessary for me to read a lot of evidence to show from the words of material witnesses how this scheme progressed. In the first place the scheme set out to place the men on their farms at a cost of from £700 to £1,000, and the task was to occupy two years. As a fact, the groups have been going for four years and no man has his holding yet. As for the cost of from £700 to £1,000, we know it will be nearer three times that amount, so in that sense I say the scheme has failed badly. If the scheme were a good thing, as set out by Sir James Mitchell, for the placing of 6,000 men at a cost of £6,000,000, it might have been all right, but when under it we can place only 2,000 men with the same money, it is all wrong. Yet that is what has happened. Therefore, in that way the scheme has failed badly. The scheme has failed for many reasons. Sir James Mitchell has thought fit to refer to me as a member of the Commission who was an ex-timber worker. So I was; and by being a timber worker I learnt quite a lot about men and how they work. It would have been a good thing for this country if Sir James Mitchell had had similar experience, for he would

then have known that the scheme had nothing but failure in front of it.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: You lose your conscience if you are long amongst the jarrah workers.

Hon. T. MOORE: Sir James Mitchell's scheme sank the individuality of the settler; and when you lose individuality, what can you expect? No man knew what he was aiming at. I will show by evidence what the settlers themselves thought.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It was a purely socialistic scheme.

Hon. T. MOORE: Not socialistic, but communistic. We should associate Sir James Mitchell with Tom Walsh and Jock Garden, because he launched an intensely communistic scheme.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The individuality was lost.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, from the outset. First of all, we have said the scheme was rushed. Our critics say there was no rush. Well, we asked Mr. McLarty—

Do you think that, at any stage of the group settlement, you had an organisation capable of doing the work thoroughly and settling a group a week? His answer was: The organisation had to be built up as the scheme progressed. There were times when land was not available to meet requirements, and the settlers were arriving possibly quicker than we could handle them. The whole scheme has been a rush job, and has been working under difficult conditions. No preparation was made before the arrival of the men, and it was a matter of improvising organisation as we went along.

Yet Mr. Ewing says it was not a rush job.

Hon. J. Ewing: I have read all the evidence.

Hon. T. MOORE: Will you take any notice of Mr. McLarty?

Hon. J. Ewing: He is a first class man. However, better a rush job than no job at all.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, if you have plenty of money to spend and don't care how you spend it, it is all very well. Mr. McLarty was asked, did the officials generally admit that they had had something to learn in clearing work during the early stages. His answer was that clearing costs were heavier than they should have been, that they had had to gain much of their knowledge as they went along, and that in such circumstances it was only to be expected that in the early stages of the scheme the cost of clearing would be excessive. He added that they had cleared more land than was necessary. That

was a hopeless idea. They first of all started by pulling every tree on No. 1 group, but as they found the expenses too great they reduced the number of trees taken out, in order to come within the £1,000. Such a state of affairs showed that the men who began it did not know what they were aiming at, did not know whether it was necessary to take out one tree or how many trees. It was a case of, "Go on with the job and see how you get along, money does not matter." Here is another question, with its answer by Mr. McLarty—

Are we to understand that the group settlement system will cost more because of the clearing costs than settlement by individual persons would represent?—Yes, I should say so, for the simple reason that the group settlers are not capable of doing the same amount of work as the ordinary civilian settler who "goes on his own."

Hon. J. Ewing: Your policy was to kick the poor man out altogether.

Hon. T. MOORE: Mr. McLarty was asked whether it was advisable to clear timber in the green state. His answer was that he would not think of clearing it green if he had any alternative, but that he had none. I wonder why we had to rush into this scheme so hurriedly? Was it absolutely necessary that we should take these thousands of men and, by this scandalous waste of money, put them on to land at an excessive cost? In the words of Mr. McLarty, they had no alternative. To-day he shoulders practically the whole of the responsibility, although I do not think all the blame should be his. There was even a doubt regarding the area of the blocks. We found that in some places settlers were on holdings of much more than the 160 acres they were supposed to get. We tried to find out how they stood. Certain blocks were bracketted together because the land was poor, making an area of some 300 acres. We thought that if the 300 acres were not worth any more than the 160 acres, the whole of the 300 acres should be given to the settler free. However, there was nothing definite about it. The men did not know whether their blocks belonged to them in whole or whether they should be charged for all over 160 acres.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Is there anything in the Land Act to provide for giving away land?

Hon. T. MOORE: Of course it could not be done without an Act of Parliament. Mr. Richardson, the second in command, who was really the controller of the scheme, was

questioned. We went into the method of clearing with him. He said—

The only method of reducing costs is by keeping the timber standing, and that is the fight we have. We have trouble with our own foremen, and they of course are influenced to a large extent by the group members. There are 20 group members hammering away at the foreman day in and day out, and he might permit a little more work to be done, but that is the crucial point in clearing. It is not so much the method as the control of the method. They did not know exactly how much they could do for the £1,000. Mr. Richardson, continuing, said—

We are trying to keep within our financial limits. If, when we hand over the blocks, the settlers wish to take out a few more trees, they may do so. We have been trying to bring the scheme back to its financial limits. We have been a long time striving to do that, and I believe we have it in hand now.

This was about three years after the groups had started! You can imagine the amount of waste then going on if the present system is the correct one.

Hon. A. Burvill: But they were improving all the time.

Hon. T. MOORE: Only to the extent that they were taking out less timber. Here is the next question put to Mr. Richardson, with his answer—

By the Chairman: What do you mean by "financial limits"?—The intention was to do a certain amount of work within a cost of £1,000. In the early stages we issued a circular to foremen to keep their clearing costs down to £375 per block, which we regarded as the financial limit of clearing costs per holding, and we have struggled right through to achieve that.

Here is another little bit of Mr. Richardson's evidence—

To what extent has the cost of clearing been reduced by taking down less timber and adopting improved methods generally?—We have reduced the cost on average forest country to £250 per block.

What was the cost previously?—In fair average forest land approximately £25 per acre would have been the cost in the past.

By Mr. Latham: The costs are now down to £10 per acre?—Yes, in some cases.

By the Chairman: On your statement, the present cost in heavy timber country would average from £10 to £15 per acre. Is that almost entirely accounted for by the fact that you are not clearing as much as formerly?—Yes.

Mr. Richardson was then asked whether, when he became controller, a certain officer,

who was named, was under his control. His reply was—

You mean the officer who was in charge of the tree-pullers? I immediately assumed control by reporting what was taking place, and after my first trip through the districts, upon taking control, it became quite obvious to me that it was impossible to carry out group settlement operations on the financial basis laid down by the ex-Premier, and that the obvious action was to stop the indiscriminate pulling of timber. We have been up against that particular point right up to the present time.

Yet this was supposed to have been a well thought-out scheme. Here are two questions asked of Mr. Fauckner, field supervisor, and his answers—

If the men under C.P. conditions got the same amount of money per acre advanced to them, would they then be in a better position?—They would very quickly become settlers of independent means.

It suggests that group settlement is not altogether a success in its present form!—Yes; largely owing to the personal equation.

Those are the opinions of the men in charge of the scheme, Mr. McLarty and Mr. Richardson. We know their difficulties and we know that they have no definite idea of what was being aimed at or how much could be done for the money that had to be expended in the South-West. Now let us see what the settlers think of it. I will quote the evidence of a lot of them, settlers who were sworn when they appeared before the Commission and who came along to give evidence on behalf of their groups. I want members to understand what was running in their minds. One settler said—I do not want to mention any names of group witnesses because the report of the evidence has not been given abroad—

Hon. J. Ewing: It has gone abroad.

Hon. T. MOORE: I mean amongst the groups themselves. One man said—

We consider that at the expiration of 12 months we are entitled to more remuneration, because we have paid to learn. If we were not worth 10s. a day during the first three months, we were worth more than 10s. a day later on.

Does that not suggest to members that these men were out after wages and were not there as farmers at all? They were out to see how much they could get. At any rate that is what is suggested to my mind. I am finding no fault with the settlers. Another man said—

If we were put on the contract system we could do the work much more cheaply than at

present. Some of the settlers will not work under the foreman, but would work under the contract conditions. In effect, the contract system would drive out a lot of the undesirable.

Hon. A. Burvill: That man wanted to make a success of it.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, but the good man was loaded with someone he did not want with him.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: He always is.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, but under this system you see exactly what is running through the minds of the men. Another one was asked why he wanted the piece work system, and his answer was, "Some men are dissatisfied because they think others are not doing a fair day's work. They also want the opportunity to earn more money than they are getting at present." Members will see that the question of money comes in again.

Hon. J. Ewing: How long has that man been there?

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member will have the opportunity to read all the evidence.

Hon. J. Ewing: I have read it all.

Hon. T. MOORE: Again, to show the interest that some of them have taken in their work I can quote this—

Mr. Richardson visited the groups three or four weeks ago and asked us to put forward any recommendations, suggestions, or complaints we had. We did so, but he treated us like school children. We have not come 12,000 miles for any other reason than to get our own farms. We object to being treated as children. We asked him about spare time effort, stock and water. He replied "We do not want any intellect or intelligence from you, we want work. We will do the thinking for you." That is not good enough. If we are to be treated merely as machines and are not to think about the future we have no right to be here.

The Commission pointed out that remark to Mr. Richardson and he said he did not use it. We found, however, that it was in the minds of witnesses that he did. Another settler said—

In our opinion the scheme is good, but the different elements in human nature have not been allowed for. There are two classes of undesirable settlers amongst us—those who have come here to earn 10s. a day, and others who are not bona fide. The entire group desires the contract system. We consider that the administration of the scheme is behind the times.

How do we suppose those men would be working having such things running through

their minds? Would they be working very hard? Another man said—

Two members of our group were selected in England to come out to take up blocks which they were told would cost from £700 to £1,000. According to a speech by the Minister for Lands (Hon. W. C. Angwin) the cost is likely to be from £1,600 to £1,800. This shows that there has been some gross misrepresentation.

Again there is dissatisfaction. Still another said—"What trouble we have had has been in connection with the work itself because some have done more than their fair share." Again we have signs of dissatisfaction among settlers whom we hoped would make good. All these were men of note in their groups, because they were sent along to give evidence on behalf of their respective groups. Another said—

When we came to the groups first Mr. McLarty told us that the intention of the department was that after two years of work the holding would be passed over to the Agricultural Bank. We have been on our holdings for three years, and want to know where we stand. It looks as if we will be another two years before we are handed over to the Agricultural Bank.

They did not care about it. Those men would not be too pleased. Another remarked—

If a man is working on the group system he often slums over his work. Very often men will not bend their shoulders to their work unless there is adequate supervision. I believe in cutting out the sustenance payments as soon as possible, because when we get on the contract basis, men know they are working for themselves and will work harder.

At last they see a gleam of hope, but during the whole of the time that Mr. Ewing was a member of the Government that launched this scheme, the settlers had no idea what they were going to do, and the scheme had then been in operation for two years. It stands to the credit of the present Minister for Lands that he altered the system as soon as possible.

Hon. J. Ewing: You know there are 30,000 acres under pasture.

Hon. T. MOORE: And we know what that cost.

Hon. J. Ewing: Never mind the cost.

Hon. T. MOORE: Doesn't it matter what it cost! Another man, speaking about the amount of work that could be done said—

I was on the land at Mt. Marshall, and came here for the sake of my wife. We do not know where we are. Costs are mounting up.

I will not sign any mortgage for more than I think my block is worth.

That is how he treats the position. That shows that already his block is overcapitalised. Another said—

As to camp life, I would refuse to go into another. Our experience was that our place was hell on earth, particularly to people who were not accustomed to living huddled together.

Hon. J. Ewing: Another man said that it was heaven on earth. Have you read his evidence. If not, I hope you will do so.

Hon. T. MOORE: Another said "There are plenty of men in the groups who would not touch a cow; they would prefer to jump the fence rather than go near a cow."

Hon. A. Burvill: Did you look for evidence in the opposite direction?

Hon. T. MOORE: We placed ourselves almost entirely in the hands of those controlling the scheme. We asked them to show us the best they had. When we went into the hon. member's district we asked him to show us what had been done, so that we might judge for ourselves. He did not show us much. The controller of the scheme took us round and I think he showed us the best that was to be seen. Here is the evidence of another man, Mr. Wake, organiser of the Anglican Immigration Committee. He said that he was in close touch with all the men in the various centres and had an intimate knowledge of the types of the settlers and the work they were doing. He was asked whether he visited the groups, and he replied "No; I have seen the settlers before they have gone to the groups, and I have seen many of them after they have left the groups or have been dismissed. They generally find their way back to me." Then this evidence was given by him—

You have not seen any of those you say will leave when the sustenance payments stop? —No. It is from correspondence that I have come to that conclusion.

Do you receive definite reports from your own people to back up your impression?—Yes. I have asked for their opinion. No man is better able to judge than the parson.

Mr. Wake also said that it was the women who were causing some of the unrest that existed in the groups. Another witness said—

If we had our own houses we should feel more settled and things would be better. The people do not want another winter in shacks. I do not blame them.

Hon. J. Ewing: The shacks are very comfortable.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: It was the barrack system that they objected to.

Hon. T. MOORE: Another settler gave this evidence—

Insufficient discrimination has been used in the selection of the members of the groups. It is not pleasant for one's wife to hear the language that is used by other women. I shall take the first opportunity to get on to my own block.

I have no wish to find fault with the women of the groups because there are amongst them some of the finest that ever came to this country.

Hon. J. Ewing: Then why did you not leave them alone?

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to allow Mr. Moore to make his speech in his own way.

Hon. T. MOORE: Mr. Wake also told the Commission—

These groupies have no money by the time they get on to the group and with no idea of household management, they load up their accounts at the stores and so cannot make a do of it.

I asked the witness whether these women had been housekeeping in the Old Country and his reply was, "No. In the Old Country many women who live in towns and slums do very little cooking. Most of their stuff they buy ready cooked. The conditions here are quite foreign to them." Again, Mr. Richardson, the Controller, said—

I can produce ample evidence of the inefficiency of group settlers by comparison between the results under piece work conditions with those obtained under group conditions. In addition to that many group settlers do not make any secret of the fact that on the 10s. basis they will not do more than 10s. worth of work. I might add that their idea of what is 10s. worth of work is not a very high one.

Here are the words of the Controller again—

The fundamental trouble regarding high costs is that the group settlers have not entered into the scheme in a proper spirit. If they were seized with the idea of creating farms for themselves at a minimum cost and had exerted the whole of their efforts in that direction, we would not have had the high costs that are presented to-day.

They were not seized with the fact that they were there to farm for themselves. It seems to me that there was something in the contention of a former Minister for Agriculture, Mr. H. K. Maley, when he said

that Sir James Mitchell's scheme was so simple that if he explained it, people would not understand it. Apparently the settlers could not understand the scheme. The Controller was asked to compare Agricultural Bank conditions with those operating under the group settlement scheme, and he replied—

I am satisfied that if group settlement were conducted on parallel lines to the Agricultural Bank in connection with working conditions, our costs would be immensely reduced. I mean to say that that end would be achieved if the men were on piece work or contract conditions.

So the whole scheme was breaking down as we went along! Here we find that 20 men were unable to work together: no one knowing anything about it would expect any such thing. Here is something else regarding the indefiniteness of it all. The Controller's evidence contains the following—

What does the cost of supervision mean, only foreman's wages?—The ex-Minister controlling the scheme was doubtful whether overhead charges would be added.

All was doubt. The ex-Minister referred to was Sir James Mitchell. The settlers did not know and were anxious to ascertain the position so that they could get on. Here is what another settler said—

The people think they would be able to get more work done and earn more money under the contract system. The settler would do his contract work instead of his daily grouse.

I do not know what that suggests to you, Mr. President, but I think it indicates that they were not going to push ahead. Then he continued—

If a man knew that every stroke of the mattock was worth so much he would get in two strokes where now he makes only one.

That would represent a big reduction in the costs. Another settler said—

The Government should be urged to define as soon as possible their policy regarding the future. This would remove a great deal of doubt and misapprehension at present existing. There seems to be an impression that the settler has no guarantee that the block will be handed over to him when the group disbands.

Here is another instance. One man was asked about settlers who had left and he replied—

It was through inexperience or a disinclination to carry on that they left. Inexperience is a heartbreaking qualification to possess when one is trying to meet not only living expenses but also financial obligations.

That evidence was given by a district inspector, Mr. St. Barbe Moore, when speaking of our own soldier settlers. He had had experience with the inexperienced regarding the settlement of our returned soldiers and that represents his idea regarding men when put on to work they did not understand. The foreman also had difficulties because, while appointed to their positions to act as the advisers and friends of the whole of the group members, it was soon found that there were certain people on groups who would not do their share. The foreman found themselves in an unfortunate position, for they could not put off those unsatisfactory settlers as would be the position on any other job where men were employed at 10s. a day. Thus the foremen were in a most invidious position and one of their number, a senior foreman, when questioned by us, gave the following evidence:—

Have you met the objection that foremen consider their position unsatisfactory because they have not sufficient control?—Repeatedly.

Have you been met with that objection when you have approached men to take positions as foremen?—I cannot say many have raised that objection because £6 is not easily passed by a man wanting a job. In several instances they have objected on that ground.

He also pointed out that foremen received £6 a week and they were content to jog along even with unsatisfactory settlers. Thus, at this stage, we were getting from bad to worse. Another senior foreman, gave this evidence:—

Do you have many complaints through the foreman about the men not doing their work satisfactorily?—Yes, plenty.

Do you think these men are doing their work satisfactorily, allowing for their being new chums?—Some are, but some are not.

When questioned regarding the inefficiency of some of the settlers, this foreman said:—

After a certain time the good men fall back to the pace of the slow men, and the whole business comes down to the level of the slowest men.

That is quite true, as any man who has worked amongst them must know. If you have a gang of men not working on their own block and those men are engaged in the work for years, it will be found that the slow men among them will regulate the pace of the work of the others.

Hon. A. Burvill: That applies apart from group settlements as well.

Hon. T. MOORE: But unfortunately the State has to shoulder the cost of the group settlement scheme.

Hon. A. Burvill: And it has to shoulder the cost of a lot of other things, too.

Hon. T. MOORE: Here is another extract from this particular man's evidence relating to this point:—

Do the good men realise that they are carrying the others on their backs?—Yes, we have lost good settlers because of the slackers.

That is a serious statement to be made by a senior foreman. He there declares that lots of good men have gone because of the slackers on the groups. Such a man would sooner leave his position than continue with the slackers. He went away and probably secured better wages in another job. Again, there is this evidence:—

Is this really a serious matter?—There are one or two cases of slackness on most of the groups. We have no definite times given to us to determine the probationary period.

That means to say that the foremen do not know how long they have to carry unsatisfactory settlers before they are permitted to get rid of them. These settlers come on the groups and have their wives and families with them. I put myself in the position of a foreman having to contend with this position and I admit I would not sack too many of them. They are there and the Government have to back them up to the extent of the sum we have mentioned in our report. Another foreman who had left his job said:—

I had a settler whom I considered very poor, and I reported against him time and again. I did all in my power to make a settler of him, but could not succeed. I recommended him for suspension, and my recommendation was not upheld. Then, as I considered that the department had lost confidence in me, I tendered my resignation. Some settlers leave because a good man gets tired of carrying a poor man on his back. The good man leaves and the duffer stays.

There is the evidence of another man who left his £6 job as foreman rather than put with the indignity! Another settler, speaking of other settlers, said:—

They say if they had sufficient money they would go at once. If they had the £11 landing money they would have gone before. I am told they forfeit that amount if they go off the group within 12 months.

Why are you so sure they will not make farmers?—Because they have not the initiative. One man told me he did not know one end of a cow from the other.

Another man also gave evidence as follows:—

Do they say why they came here?—One or two have said that they would not have come but for the glowing pictures painted in the Old Country. One man said he expected to have

a house roofed, not with iron, but with glazed tiles. He had seen that in the pictures.

Here is another extract from the evidence of a foreman—

From the experience you have had of them, do you think a reasonable proportion are likely to make good?—No, I think 50 per cent. of them will stop here after the sustenance cuts out.

Is that gauged from what they have said or from what they do?—From what they do.

Are any of them physically unfit for work on the groups?—No, they can all do the work if they want to.

Another foreman said—

If I tell a man to get a move on, the others will hold a meeting and start go-slow methods.

Hon. G. Potter: You should not encourage that sort of thing, at any rate.

Hon. T. MOORE: The men are going slow, just as the doctors do. The doctors are on a minimum and one has to pay the minimum whether the worst doctor treats one or not.

Hon. A. Burvill: History repeats itself.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: That is a terrible indictment of day labour.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, of day labour without a boss. Do not make any mistake about it, men on day labour under a boss, earn their money; but the group settlers are on their holdings and they do not believe they are farming. They have no boss.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What about the foreman?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They do not recognise the foreman as the boss, for he has no power over them.

Hon. T. MOORE: Then he said in reply to a question as to whether that often happened—

Frequently. The new people have been led away by what they have been told by the others. The settlers understand they will not be charged up with anything in excess of £1,000 for their blocks.

It is a long way from that amount now! Hence they are not worrying about when they will finish and they are not losing any "sweat" on it either. Here is some more—

I suppose it must have cost £6 or £7 to get rid of some of the trees. Other trees were left because the traction engine could not bring them down.

I admit that that was at the outset of the scheme. It shows, however, that the men who started the scheme did not know what they were going to do. They were aiming

at something but they had no idea how they were going to shoot. A settler with experience in Gippsland gave the following evidence:—

Do you think the settlers here have as good an opportunity as the Gippsland settlers, taking into consideration our milder climate?—Here they are trying to make farms too quickly. In Gippsland it took years to make a farm. If you take your time, you can do the clearing much cheaper. Therefore the Gippsland settlers would not be under as high capital cost as the settlers here.

Of course they would not in this rush job. Here is what Mr. McLarty said—

Group conditions remove the isolation that is a material factor in the contentment of the settler.

As one who has lived in the country all my life I claim that Mr. McLarty was not correct in his statement. There are men who are living a hundred miles inland with their womenfolk pioneering stations on the Murchison. You, Mr. President, know how far back those pioneers are living. Isolation is nothing to a man when he has his home and his family.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Those people have been used to isolation all their lives.

Hon. T. MOORE: When we come to talk about isolation in the South-West, what does it amount to? Settlers there can be removed from other settlers by a few miles only. If a man is married and has his home, that is all he wants. In my opinion, people are willing to live under such conditions provided they have facilities to get about. They will not mind the isolation. While the isolation may be bad in one instance, it was a great deal worse in the other. The environment was absolutely killing.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It had just the opposite effect to what was intended and it was bound to have it, when you consider human nature.

Hon. T. MOORE: One foreman was asked how much experience he had had when he started the work and he replied—

I had a little farming experience in Western Australia and also in South Australia before I took up land here.

Have you had any experience in clearing?—No. I was at one time an engine-driver on the mines, and I had some experience on the homestead leases there and did some clearing in my spare time. That was the only clearing I had done.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Then how did he get his job?

Hon. T. MOORE: They were short at the time and this was a rush job. That man continued his evidence as follows:—

When you commenced your duties as foreman in charge of the group you had to feel your way?—Yes, I know a bit more about it now. I struck a good group of men. I made the best use I could of them, and we got along satisfactorily. Most of the settlers on the group are Australians.

Had any of those men experience in clearing?—Yes, several of them, and that helped the group generally.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: That man may be Premier of the State in the future.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am not finding fault with him. He may be the best man there, but when he talks about having gained his experience of clearing by getting rid of mulga in the homestead block on the gold-fields, it makes one smile. He said—

You had definite instructions as to what had to be done regarding clearing, ringbarking, and so on?—Yes, I had to feel my way then. The instructions at the outset were not too definite. I had men doing the preparatory work and grubbing for months before I received any definite instructions.

There was nothing definite in that scheme. I have dealt mostly with the experience of settlers to show what was running in their minds, and I have attempted to show what was in the minds of the controller and of other officials at the settlements. On those grounds we say group settlement should not be continued as it will be too expensive. This rush method should be stopped, and we should endeavour to prevent a repetition of what has occurred in the past.

Hon. J. Ewing: Stop the scheme?

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member does not know the first thing about farming and yet he will persist in interrupting. He has never put a shilling into land; he puts his money into coal, which is a better proposition.

Hon. J. Ewing: I farmed in the Eastern States long before you started.

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member knew better than to take on farming in the South-West.

Hon. J. Ewing: You would stop the whole scheme.

Hon. T. MOORE: We suggest that it should be stopped. We know that Sir James Mitchell contracted for six millions of money, and instead of settling 6,000 farmers as agreed, the six millions will be just about

absorbed by the settlement of 2,000. If it is a fair proposition to spend the six millions on 6,000 farmers it is a foolish proposition to go on spending the same amount on 2,000.

Hon. J. Ewing: You have done great injury to the State.

The PRESIDENT: I take it the hon. member is justifying the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Hon. T. MOORE: That is what I am attempting, and I hope I am succeeding.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is entitled to an uninterrupted hearing.

Hon. T. MOORE: Dealing with the quality of the land, is any member foolish enough to believe that we have not poor land as well as good land in this State? Let me quote some of the opinions on land which we say is bad and which should not have been selected for group settlement purposes.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You blame the method of selection?

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes. Mr. McLarty was asked about the Abba River country, and he said that the results achieved by the Spanish settlers in that neighbourhood first showed the possibilities of that land. Then the following questions and answers ensued:—

Were there specific instances of where the Spanish settlers had succeeded?—I could not mention settlers' names, but quite a number of settlers in that district had got unexpected results from the land, and were doing quite well.

Could the officials show us the blocks on which the opinion was based?—Yes. They are to be seen. Mr. Brockman would be the best man to show you them. He it was who first brought under notice the possibilities of this country.

We went on to that land, but we did not find the Spanish settlers established at all. There were some men growing vegetables and supplying the local market, but none of them could possibly have made a living from dairying there, although their capital expenditure was low. One man told us that in the early stages, while developing his holding, he had lived for six months in the year on swede turnips and for the other six months on pumpkin.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Are you sure it was not a dairy cow that you were talking to?

Hon. T. MOORE: The man added that every time he saw a pumpkin now, "I 'keeck' him."

Hon. J. Nicholson: Is that on the land outside Busselton?

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, and if the hon. member ever goes down that way, he will find it quite easy to go out to those blocks. Passing through those areas in the early spring, one finds decent clovers growing there, but clovers are not pasture; they will keep cows going for only a short period. It is necessary to have something to carry on with after the clovers go off in December. What are the settlers going to do in the other months of the year?

Member: What about ensilage?

Hon. J. Ewing: I think you hardly realise the injury you are doing to the South-West.

Hon. T. MOORE: Mr. Brockman was questioned about the land. He was the man who selected it and knew all about the settlement. He was asked the following question:—

Were you ever hard put to it at any time to get any considerable area of land?—The Forests Department held up large areas for some time. Eventually some of the country was released, and then we had no difficulty.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether good land should be retained to grow timber or used for the purposes of agriculture. A similar argument never arose in Gippsland, and therein lies the difference between settlement in Gippsland and in our South-West. The people in Gippsland were allowed to go into the big timber country, but here we find the groups being pushed on to the little sandy ridges. Mr. Willmott lives in the South-West and he knows what is being done. Mr. Brockman was further questioned as follows:—

If that land had been released by the Forests Department earlier would you have settled light land such as that on Group 14?—No.

Then you prefer to settle the forest country?—There is better land there.

You had to make representations to the Forests Department through the Minister to have land released for the purposes of the scheme?—Yes, and that was done.

Was that after the appointment of the Royal Commission to inquire into forests matters?—We got the extra area released after that. We had some bother about it.

According to your evidence you think it would have been better to have more settlement in the Manjimup area than at this end, and you would have done that had you had a free hand from the start?—Yes.

So Mr. Brockman is not altogether to blame. He, too, had to enter into these rush methods. Men were arriving, and the best land avail-

able was land that the Forests Department had given up, because it was no good to them. It was no good for settlement purposes, either. Mr. Prowse, a settler in that district, said—

Some of the land on Group 16 is useless, because you cannot get on to it in winter as it is too wet, and in summer it gets too hot. It is possible to overcome the water difficulty by draining the land, but there is his opinion of it in the summer season. Mr. Prowse added—

I think about 500 acres would be required to enable a man to make a living and pay interest on that type of country.

We also examined Mr. Pullin, the second official in command in the Busselton area. The chairman asked him whether we could get any evidence to show what had been accomplished. We had been told that some settler or other was established on the land. Mr. Pullin replied—

You will not get it (evidence) here. That is the difficulty most of the officials have been up against all along. I refer to the lack of dairying under similar conditions in this part of the State. We have nothing to guide us.

Pullin was one of the scheme officials who stood out prominently. He had been farming and dairying in the Eastern States. He could not see that anything had been done in the Busselton district to show what the land would produce, and he was waiting to see. The Abba River country should never have been settled. The Controller of Group Settlement (Mr. Richardson) was questioned as follows:—

As Controller of group settlement have you nothing to do with the selecting of the land for group settlement?—No.

Are you always satisfied with the quality of the land selected?—No.

The Surveyor General, Mr. Camm, whose surveyors surveyed and cut up the blocks, was asked about the Abba River country—

Did your officials select the Abba River country?—No; Mr. Brockman selected that. It was the beginning of group settlement in the Busselton district. I understand the reason Mr. Brockman went there was to find land that would not be so expensive to clear as was the Pemberton country.

There is the suggestion—get these thousands of pounds spent somewhere and it does not matter much about the quality of the land on which the money is spent. The Dairy Expert, Mr. Hampshire, was questioned as to the carrying capacity of the land. He said he thought the country would carry a cow to every four acres. Mr. Hamp-

shire is a very optimistic man. He said in the course of his evidence—

I know that there is some of that light pure white sand country on which some of the men have been settled. That class of country is much too light for dairying. On the other hand, there is a lot of land in the area you mention that is quite good enough. My estimate referred to the fair grade of land there. We referred to the worst grade of land that should not have been settled. Mr. Hampshire pointed out that it would be necessary to enlarge some of the blocks—

What would you do with the blocks that will not carry a cow to four acres?—That presents a difficulty. It might be possible to convert two blocks into one, or to cut up the areas differently. A portion of the better class of land could be given to each settler, and also a portion of the other type of country, so as to enable him to improve it and make it workable.

But there is a cottage on each of the blocks already, and according to him there will be some spare cottages on some of those blocks very soon. Mr. Prowse offered a suggestion as follows:—

One suggestion I had to make was that the settlement should take place on approved holdings, a settler being put on the first block, the next block left vacant, and a settler put on the third block and so on. Thus if the acreage selected were found inadequate, it would be possible to cut up the intervening block. As it is at present, £300 or £400 is spent on each block for houses, buildings, and so on, and if it is found necessary to reject one of the holdings, that means a dead loss of that capitalisation. By missing alternate blocks as I suggest, it would enable extra land to be provided where necessary, without the extra capitalisation involved in the erection of houses and so on.

Mr. Prowse is farming in the district; he knows the land thoroughly and he was emphatic in his opinions. He expressed the hope that the Commission would have some influence in preventing the erection of so many houses with a view to saving the State from financial loss. He offered another suggestion as follows:—

Another suggestion I have to make is that the Government should agree to a subsidy on butter.

That may have been all right before the advent of group settlement, but if group settlers require a subsidy on butter, the State might just as well have continued to import its requirements of butter.

Hon. J. Duffell: It was by subsidy that the industry was established in the Eastern States.

Hon. J. M. MacFarlane: There will not be any butter from the groups for a long time to come.

Hon. T. MOORE: Mr. Hampshire was strong in his advocacy of subterranean clover as a crop. He said—

I call subterranean clover a crop, not pasture. It grows from August to December and, like a crop of wheat, it goes off. The grasses respond to every shower of rain. If you close up a paddock of subterranean clover at this time of the year, it dies, but the grasses do not die.

When people make up their minds that land is good simply because it is carrying good crops of subterranean clover, they are misled. Subterranean clover will carry stock for only a very short period of the year. The Surveyor General was further questioned as follows:—

Do they (the group officials) make an inspection prior to your surveyors making their survey?—In some instances they do. There is so much work to do that it has not been possible for this to be carried out all the time. It is the ideal aimed at, but I am afraid it has not been carried out.

Again, they could not carry on; the pace was too fast. Mr. Johnson was asked regarding the cropping of green country in the Northcliffe area—

Do you say it is a waste of money to crop this land in the first year, when it is in a raw and green state?—Yes, absolutely.

This man knows the Manjimup area. He has been farming there for many years. Mr. Johnson has much to gain or lose by the failure or success of group settlement. He is not only the storekeeper but a land holder, and has a great area cleared. If through the group settlement the South-West gets a bad name, Mr. Johnson will be the loser, because it will give a setback to land values which we hope to see rise. Mr. Johnson says—

I consider that unless the system of settlement is altered, no further groups should be put in. I say that, although I agree it is absolutely necessary, we should have more settlement in Western Australia.

I am positive that even Mr. Ewing is aware that Mr. Johnson knows what he is talking about.

Hon. J. Ewing: You are only picking out parts of his evidence.

Hon. T. MOORE: I cannot read the whole of it, but is there anything wrong with what I have read?

Hon. J. Ewing: You have picked out parts of it.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member says he has already perused this for himself.

Hon. T. MOORE: Speaking of the Agricultural Bank conditions as applied to new settlers he says—

Ordinary settlers are put on their own initiative, and they gradually gain confidence in themselves; that is, provided they are treated fairly by the Agricultural Bank. Under the present system of group settlement, the group members are practically working as they were in the Old Country, under a master. They are not gaining the initiative which is necessary to the making of a successful farmer.

I think Mr. Johnson knows what he is talking about. He was then asked—

Is your suggestion that the settlers do not realise that they are working to build up farms for themselves?—They don't get the initiative. If they are waiting for a ganger to bring them out at eight o'clock in the morning, they cannot be expected to develop the initiative which a successful farmer requires. Two years ago I rechristened this system "serf settlement."

Two years ago he says he re-christened the system "the serf settlement." I do not think Mr. Ewing will want many more extracts such as these read out. Mr. Johnson is one of the successful men of Manjimup, in fact he is one of the biggest financial men there.

Hon. J. Nicholson: He has done well.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes. I am speaking of the system. I have no fault to find with the South-West. I know there is good land there, but the system is wrong. Mr. Johnson knows, and other settlers know, that if this scheme fails and these men walk away, as, according to the officials, many of them will, it will be a bad advertisement for the State. The controller, Mr. Richardson, has said that only 25 per cent. of the settlers will make good. The remainder are doubtful. I have never condemned the South-West. Even before group settlement was mentioned I said that settlement could take place along the gullies and through the jarrah hills. I do believe settlement can take place successfully there, but you cannot go on placing men there indiscriminately merely because each has a wife. That is what group settlement came to after a while. Men would arrive at Fremantle and have no place to go to. The husbands could not find work where there was also a place for the wife. They were, therefore, put upon the groups. That was a very un-

wise system of settlement. I hope the Government will see fit to advance to farmers in the country money for housing accommodation for the men they employ so that they can take their wives to the farms with them. We are asking men to go to the back country from Fremantle or Perth in order to develop it, but they cannot keep their wives and families on the wages that are paid to them. A lot has been made out of the fact that it is necessary we should provide all the requirements of the State from the cow point of view.

Hon. J. Ewing: Read Mr. Johnson's evidence in reply to Question 4317.

Hon. T. MOORE: I do not know the evidence so well as to be able to identify that question. The Commission have gone into the matter. We asked Mr. Hampshire, who is supposed to know, what we needed in the way of dairy products, and he told us there were already sufficient settlers on the land who could produce enough to meet our requirements. Why must we continue the scheme? Sir James Mitchell says, "We have to go on, there is a million going out of the State each year." If we divide the million amongst the settlers already placed in group settlements and on the Peel Estate, he will find that each individual settler will get a gross return of about £400. If these men are going to pay anything like the interest bill that will be presented to them, and keep their families, they will have supplied the needs of the country, and there the whole field finishes. What will happen next? It is remarkable that that answer of Mr. Hampshire is not in the report, although I asked the question. I have gone into the statistics and find that this is the case. Mr. Hampshire deliberately told us we had enough settlers there to provide our requirements if they went on in the way that he suggested. Why then the statement that we are to go on with the scheme if there are already enough men on the land to supply our wants? That is the position the dairy expert presented to us.

Hon. A. Burvill: Mr. Johnson says he can keep one cow to the acre, and Mr. Hampshire says four acres are required for one cow.

Hon. T. MOORE: We were speaking to Mr. Hampshire about the Abba River country, where the land is not so good, and on which the Commission reported adversely.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why not tell us what is going to be done on the good country.

Hon. T. MOORE: That is all tabulated in the report. Whilst there has been criticism of a general nature regarding the report, no one has shown where we are at fault, or attempted to controvert the figures put forward to show the cost of settling a group settler. Even Mr. Ewing has not done so. Very few Commissions have gone so exhaustively into a subject as this one did. Mr. Burvill says we must have silos. If we had them, we might add a few more thousand pounds to the scheme. We had evidence to show that 90 per cent. of the settlers are on moist land. Mr. Burvill cannot have read the report, for this is what the officials say. Other men say that silos are necessary. There is a conflict of opinion. It would not be fair to set ourselves up as judges if people can produce what they say they can.

Hon. A. Burvill: It is said that the essential part of the equipment for each settler is the provision of a silo.

Hon. T. MOORE: That is a bad advertisement for the State, and we should not make too much noise about it. The dairy season, with natural grasses, is a remarkably short one, according to the evidence. I would not care to dwell upon it. Mr. Thomson, manager of the Albany butter factory, and settlers around Denmark and Albany, say that the dairy season lasts only from September to December on the natural grasses, and that other provision must be made for feeding the cows from then on. I do not care to dwell on that evidence.

Hon. A. Burvill: You had absolute proof in Denmark that dairying can be carried on with silos; why did you not use it?

Hon. T. MOORE: Were any silos working there?

Hon. A. Burvill: Mr. Bailey had one.

Hon. T. MOORE: He is not a successful farmer. He is only building up his place.

MR. PRESIDENT: The hon. member should not interrupt so much.

Hon. T. MOORE: Do members want other disadvantages of the scheme brought to light? At the State farm, owing to the bad times during the winter, the cattle have to be housed. That is not done in the Eastern States. Our South-Western climate is not particularly good. Mr. Hampshire says it is advisable to house the cattle or provide shelter for them, but I do not want to go into that.

Hon. J. Ewing: What about all the land that is opened up between the two railways in the South-West?

Hon. T. MOORE: Some men say that the grasses keep green in the summer, but Mr. Burvill dissociates himself from that because he says silos are necessary. We were told that irrigation was required. In this country we have two seasons—the summer and the winter. Unfortunately the butter-making season is very short. Irrigation is suggested in a country where we have a bounteous rainfall, but the rain is over in a short time.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is a short season in Gippsland also.

Hon. T. MOORE: There is rain nearly every month in the year there, but they never get an excess of rain as we do here.

Hon. J. Ewing: Nor do they at Nornalup.

Hon. T. MOORE: We had not much evidence about that. The groups were rushed out miles from a railway, no one knows why. Does it not show there must be something wrong with the system, when it was necessary to go out 36 miles from Denmark to establish group No. 116? What is wrong with the intervening country? The worst advertisement we have is the settlement of men down there. If it is necessary to send them out so far from a railway, there must be something wrong with the country.

Hon. A. Burvill: Then recommend the construction of a railway.

Hon. T. MOORE: If that is all the settlement that can take place along the route, the railway had better not be built.

Hon. A. Burvill: There are settlers all along there.

Hon. T. MOORE: We find this on every hand in connection with the groups. Others have been pushed out 17 miles from a railway. The communications are bad. Roads to a distance of 10 miles have had to be built at the expense of the State to serve one group placed on its own. Groups have been badly placed. This means so much more road making, and other facilities have to be provided because groups are being sent so far out. It is not a good advertisement for the State. Sir James Mitchell said that potatoes could be grown every month in the year in the South-West. I believe that is so in favoured localities on swamp lands. In connection with the potato crop for 1923-24 under the group system, no profit

was made, and although these men grew the potatoes under expert supervision, the groups lost £3,585. It is misleading for Sir James Mitchell to say that potatoes can be grown there every month of the year. There are tremendous losses under the group system because the men are not working on correct lines.

Hon. E. H. Rose: The old settlers lost thousands of pounds over potatoes.

Hon. T. MOORE: That is so. These settlers were on green country which was unfit for potatoes. The unfortunate position is that what the members of the Royal Commission had heard could be done was not supported by evidence tendered. Mr. McLarty also stated that a man who went on the Agricultural Bank was in the same position as a group settler when it came to abandoning a property—he would lose nothing. In a certain district, of which I will give Mr. McLarty the name should he desire it, a certain settler got a piece of ground. He had to pay £100 down for a start to get the block. Then he approached the Agricultural Bank for a loan. He was granted an advance for clearing, but not for fencing or a house. That is the difference between the system which Mr. McLarty says operates, and the system which actually operated. The settler wrote to me on the matter. He had £250 advances made for clearing, but as he had not been assisted to erect a house he was compelled to leave his wife and family of four in Geraldton. I helped to get him a further £50 for fencing, which would enable him to carry stock. Still, there was nothing for a house, and it was necessary for him to come to town on that account. The bank informed him that if he put up £100 they in their turn would put up £150 to build a house. That is the treatment meted out to a good Australian. Mr. McLarty spoke of the report as being incorrect. I would ask him to say is not the case I have cited correct. I say it is perfectly correct, and further I say that in many cases there is the greatest difficulty in getting the Agricultural Bank to advance. Hon. members will see how inconsistent Mr. McLarty is. The great majority of the men who went on the land under the Agricultural Bank took a good deal of their own money out with them to lose. On the other hand, the group settlers put in nothing at all of their own. They are paid from the day they arrive in the country. I maintain that the Commission's

report is quite justified, and entirely based on the evidence. I defy any competent judge to sift the evidence and then declare that the report is biased in even one particular. The Royal Commissioners were set a certain job to do. I asked no one to get me the job. When it was offered to me, I did it to the best of my ability; and I am perfectly convinced that in a time not far distant—the minority report binds itself to the prophecy that in 1926 the group settlers will pay their own way—we shall see who is right in connection with the development of the South-West by group settlement. I trust the Government will give consideration to the Commission's report, and not be misguided by persons who keep on saying that we are bringing in a million pounds' worth of dairy produce annually from the Eastern States, when we have already placed in the South-West sufficient settlers to supply that requirement, if they are able to do anything. I am sorry to have had to detain the House, but having been attacked I felt called upon to go through the evidence. I hope the House will consider that the case which I have presented justifies me in saying that the report is true and correct in every particular.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply, as previously amended, adopted.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That the Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

Question put and passed.

The PRESIDENT: In presenting the Address to His Excellency I should like to be accompanied by the mover and seconder of the Address, and the mover and seconder of the amendment.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Real Property (Commonwealth Titles).
2. Transfer of Land Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.