

Hon. J. Cornell: One consolation is that if the Causeway broke down, anyone could walk ashore.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: Only in parts; there are some dangerous pools near the Causeway. Still, one could always tell when he was on the bridge because of the stench from the algae on the upstream side. I understand that about £20,000 is being expended, and that the Causeway will then meet needs for some years. I consider it would have been better to construct a modern bridge, in accordance with the designs prepared and approved by the Labour Government. I do not say that the present expenditure will be wasted. An up-to-date bridge would cost £300,000 or £400,000, and the time will come when a permanent structure will have to be provided. The Government are considering the advisableness of building another bridge further up the river at a cost of £40,000. If the £40,000 and the £20,000 had been added, there should have been sufficient to make a start to provide a modern structure that would have sufficed for all time. Other members have dealt with matters affecting the welfare of the State, as well as of their provinces. I am pleased that the Government are adopting a progressive policy for the development of the State. I regret the proposal to impose additional taxation because the people are already taxed to the hilt. Many business people, who appear to be in affluent circumstances, are really in difficulties. Further taxation will not get us out of our troubles. On the contrary, conditions will be made worse for those who are at present paying as much as they can afford.

Hon. G. Fraser: The working man has no money to tax.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I agree, but if taxation is increased so heavily as has been indicated, the working man will have less money, because those who find the sinews of war will be unable to continue their operations. It is possible to tax people out of existence, and I am afraid that will be the result of the Government's proposals. I should like to see a scheme to reduce taxation because that would provide opportunities to make money circulate. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 21st September, 1932.

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

QUESTION—JARRAH, PRICES.

Mr. DONEY (for Mr. Griffiths) asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that South Australian timber merchants can supply jarrah at Bunbury cheaper than can local dealers? 2, Is he aware that tenders for timber (jarrah) for building a house at Bunbury were £100 less by Adelaide timber firms than by local firms?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, No.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS.

As to precedence.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I wish to enter a protest against Government business being taken at this stage on private members' day. While the Government may contend that the consideration of the Committee's report on a Bill is a formal matter, I have a fair idea that it may be discussed on the third reading and will not be dealt with as a formal matter.

The Minister for Lands: The third reading will not be moved until to-morrow.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It means that members who may wish to speak on that motion will have to remain silent or block private members' business. In order to protect the privileges of private members, I should like to move that the Notice Paper be adjusted to place private members' business ahead of Government business.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have merely followed the usual procedure on the day set aside for private members' business. I assure the hon. member that the third

reading of the Main Roads Act Amendment Bill will not be proceeded with to-day. It will be moved to-morrow. Therefore any protest he desires to make can be entered then.

Mr. Sleeman: What about the second order of the day, Special License (Waroona Irrigation District) Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member wishes to protest against the Bill on the third reading, he has the right to do so. There is nothing unusual in the order of business on the Notice Paper, and the hon. member might allow us to proceed in the ordinary way.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member from moving, when the third reading is submitted, that the Bill be discussed this day six months.

Mr. MARSHALL: We have already passed a motion—

Mr. SPEAKER: To what is the hon. member referring? There is nothing before the Chair.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am referring to the resolution of the House that Government business take precedence on Tuesday and Thursday. Now, however, the Government have adjusted the Notice Paper to give preference to their own business on Wednesday. The resolution of the House is of no value if the Government take the right to submit Government business in preference to private members' business on the day set aside for private members' business. The Government are violating and flouting the resolution of the House passed only a few weeks ago, and are preventing members from taking advantage of the privilege accorded to them on this day of each week. A reference to the Notice Paper shows that after certain private members' business is taken, Government business is again set down, after which other private members' business is again listed.

The Minister for Lands: We will postpone Order of the Day No. 3 if you wish.

Mr. MARSHALL: I protest against the action of the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Members are quite within their rights in complaining of Government business being listed in the first two hours set aside for private members' business every Wednesday.

The Minister for Lands: Formal business has always been set down in that way.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—SPECIAL LICENSE (WAROONA IRRIGATION DISTRICT).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—DIVORCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Wells and read a first time.

MOTION—LAND ALLOTMENTS FOR UNEMPLOYED.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.42]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the provision of allotments of land suitable for the erection of homes and the establishment of small farms is desirable, and that such should be made available for approved unemployed or partially unemployed residents of the State.

No more pressing question than this has ever faced the Government of any country in the world. It is only to be expected that the great financial crisis that has overwhelmed the whole world should bring in its train a number of problems with multitudinous complexities. Amongst them the problem of unemployment occupies a foremost place. It is a problem that has always demanded attention from those who are at the helm of the State. Now that the avalanche of chaos has descended the problem of unemployment has grown out of all proportion. Never before in the history of the world has any problem demanded such intense consideration, because never before in the world's history has there been such an economic upheaval. I feel that the House will bear with me if I repeat, for the sake of emphasis, some facts that must be patent to all. Members do not need to be told that those people who, through no fault of their own, are experiencing a most troublous time and struggling against poverty and want, are a charge on the more fortunately situated members of the community. The problem is a sacred responsibility and one that calls for the consideration of everybody who has any regard for the welfare of his fellows. There is opportunity for something to be done; there is opportunity to help in what I consider

the right direction. The unemployed may—although it appears almost self-contradictory at the moment to say it—become an asset to the State; but before that can be brought about, it is incumbent that more serious consideration be given to this great problem. There is an old adage, and a very true one, that if you cast your bread upon the waters it will return after many days. If we cast our bread upon the waters in the way of giving consideration to the real needs of the unemployed and taking steps which will help in a practical way, then indeed we shall achieve something. Our duty and our interest as citizens of the State demand that consideration should be given to this great subject, and given not in a way that can be described as passing, but with concentration and by fixing our minds upon it. The solution of the unemployed problem does not lie in the provision of charity. Charity is a fine virtue, but it will not provide the solution that is looked for in this case. Charity is noble in spirit; but there is something of still nobler spirit, and that is the opportunity of real help, the opportunity of real assistance, self-assistance, on the part of those who, because of the troublous times, are now unable to help themselves. We want to give opportunities of self-help to those people; and when I say this I hope I will not be considered as placing myself on a pedestal. I know that every member has this subject very close to his heart; and I know that, with members, the citizens of the State are keenly concerned; that there is scarcely anyone but would go a long distance out of his or her way to assist in discovering a solution. A vital part in the return to prosperity is to secure the return of the unemployed to work. There can be no return to prosperity while the greater number at present out remain out of work. It is a truism that our manhood is our greatest asset. At present, however, we face a dangerous position, because that which should be our greatest asset has become a dangerous liability. Those men must be employed; work must be found for them; and that work must be not only reproductive but in every way satisfactory. The present position is rapidly undermining the morale of those who are victims of the great catastrophe. We are in effect, because of lack of action along proper lines, robbing men of their most valuable and

most valued possession: we are robbing them of the possession of self-reliance; and when that is done, then something has been done which in many cases can never be undone. Men are being denied the right of honest work. Having no work, and therefore no money, or very little money indeed, men are compelled to accept rations, sustenance, or relief work. Now, the acceptance of rations is a suicidal proposition. Sustenance may not be so bad; personally, I do not think it is nearly as bad. But—and this is the great point—sustenance gets us nowhere. It provides no solution of this great problem. With sustenance, a few weeks pass by, and at the end of that period the position remains exactly the same as it was at the beginning. Unemployment is in the nature of an octopus. Its tentacles have enmeshed very many thousands of those who previously were workers; and not only what are known in the ordinary sense as labourers: members of every section of the community have become victims of the economic trouble which has fallen upon us. It may be said that men and women, boys and girls, are good honest workers; but that being young, they have not yet got the habit of work, and that it only needs the opportunity and before long they will come definitely under that heading. The economic blizzard which is raging, not only here but throughout the world, is bringing degradation and lack of self-respect upon many, many thousands of people. It is on their behalf that I speak; and I claim that unless we take corrective measures, unless something of a practical nature is done in order to prevent the continuance of this national waste, very great evil must ensue; and, further, that there can be, as I said earlier, no return to real prosperity. I think I have shown that there is imperative need for a practical and helpful scheme; and I feel that members of this Chamber will not hesitate to adopt, or to approve of, a permanent plan, should such be submitted to them. Unfortunately—I say it with great regret—the evil does not apply to Western Australia alone, or to the Government of Western Australia alone. Our Government have proved ineffectual, and as a matter of fact—I say it with all respect—futile. It is useless and hopeless to attempt to solve this problem by the provision of tem-

porary work, or of sustenance, or rations, or anything of that nature.

Mr. Hegney: You cannot blame the Government for the whole lot.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not seeking to blame the Government. In point of fact, my object in addressing the House is to endeavour to put forward a proposition with which I feel hon. members will be in accord. But it cannot be denied that the measures adopted up to the present have been temporary measures. The Government so far have been merely temporising with the trouble, and no permanently reproductive effort has resulted. Actually, Western Australia has been wasting money; and the unemployed have been and are still being trifled with. I claim—and I do not think it needs many words to secure endorsement of this view—that the keeping of men in camps is in every way undesirable, that the effect of it is bad from the standpoint of character, and that men under such conditions, should they continue long, are bound to become vicious and degraded. The place for a man is with his wife and family. I contend that even the Frankland River scheme is a proposition of questionable use. The problem really is not one of piece work or time work. The actual question is whether it is possible for the men to appreciate the steps that are being taken in order to solve their problem, the problem of unemployment.

Mr. Kenneally: They do appreciate them.

Mr. SAMPSON: For a few weeks those men will be at work, and I daresay they are to an extent grateful for that work; but when those few weeks have passed, the men will perforce drift back to unemployment, and unless there is a continuance of work, the position will be, as I said before, merely that of temporary alleviation, and by no means that of solution. In fact, intermittent work of this nature is economically unsound. I urge that we should take a wiser and a more thoughtful view, that we should open a way to self-help, that we should provide means for the economic salvation of those who have met with the misfortune of unemployment. We must make it possible to provide a real opportunity of assistance, and that real opportunity is to be found in the land. If we look after the land, the land will look after us. If we do this—and I shall a little later set out how I propose it

should be done—then the tide of prosperity must inevitably return. I have discussed this problem with practical-minded men; I have studied the statements of economists, Labour leaders, and business men; but when all is said and done, there is no real solution until land is provided, until those who are in need are placed on the land and there given an opportunity of working out their own salvation. I shall try to show how this can be done. No doubt it will be urged that this is not the only solution, and I will not dispute that. However, I claim that it is the best means of handling a most difficult question. I ask the Government to give consideration to my suggestion, and to act on it. As I have said, doubtless there are other schemes; and personally I shall be pleased to hear of them, because I admit at once that it would not be possible to place all the unemployed on the land. Nevertheless, I believe that there is no other proposal which will compare with this in point of practicability.

Mr. Kenneally: What do you propose to give the unemployed to go on the land with?

Mr. SAMPSON: I shall endeavour to answer that question as I proceed. I hope that at a later stage to-day, or at another sitting, my proposal may be criticised; but I ask the forbearance of hon. members, and their assistance and co-operation, in order that this proposal may have an opportunity of at least being tried. Criticism will be welcomed. The policy of "back to the land" is the policy that stands the acid test. Unquestionably, relief work is useless as a solution of the problem.

Mr. Raphael: What about the men on the Peel Estate?

Mr. SAMPSON: If we settle approved applicants on the land—that is, on allotments or on small holdings—then a very definite step forward will have been taken. As I understand the matter, an allotment is a block of land of up to five acres, and a small holding is a block of land up to 50 acres. Allotments are for part-time or seasonal workers, and small holdings for full-time workers. The allotments, it is clear, must be near industrial centres, or where seasonal work is available from time to time. On this aspect I shall later give some particulars furnished by a gentleman in the person of Mr. R. V. Randal, who has given much consideration to this question. Now

I desire to give hon. members some particulars of efforts which have been and are being made in other countries to solve the unemployed problem. In New Zealand over £2,000,000 has been spent in relief work within 18 months. It is significant that in connection with this expenditure the chairman administering the scheme, the Hon. S. G. Smith, has stated that although the work is to an extent of a reproductive nature, at least £500,000 of the expenditure has been wasted, or that from at least £500,000 of that amount there can be no return. That shows the economic waste of unemployment relief, even under the New Zealand Settlement Board. It is stated that the amount was sufficient to enable 600 farmers to be placed on the land and to become self-supporting. That fact has been proved as a result of the work in Auckland. Naturally, those 600 new farmers would, in turn, support about 600 families in the city. We know that wealth produced in the country flows to the city, and that those who reside there benefit in consequence. In this way the extensive settlement scheme is providing additional work. It cannot be denied that the sustenance system is sterile and does nothing useful except temporarily to alleviate distress. As a result of recent efforts in New Zealand, 2,000 men were placed in useful developmental work in the country districts. That is quite apart from the expenditure of the £2,000,000 to which I previously referred. The satisfactory part of the scheme is that men have passed off the unemployment register to permanent jobs, and in that respect what is being done in New Zealand is of great interest to us.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Surely the men engaged at Harvey are doing useful work.

Mr. SAMPSON: The men have been absorbed in jobs created largely by themselves. The improvement in farming activities carried out by them necessitated the employment of additional men. The officer in charge of unemployment in Auckland recently stated that he had vacancies for over 100 men. That is a striking commentary on the efficacy of such a scheme for placing men on the land. New Zealand has always been a progressive country. Its productivity is well known, and its methods are always up to date. It shows that even in these days of dire distress, New Zealand has been equally thoughtful and aidful in its endeavours to

solve a difficult problem, and we could copy its efforts with advantage. In the columns of the "Auckland Weekly News," statements have appeared from time to time regarding the progress of the work, and I have been able to glean information from the reports that have been published. The work absorbed all the single men available, with the result that the requirements for both married and single men are in excess of the supply. From the source I have indicated, I find that applications for men were made by farmers through their local bodies, and all work was done under a repayment system. The value of work proposed was assessed before it was started. The farmer signed an undertaking to refund the agreed value of the improvements to be carried out. Camps were established by county councils, who often hired buildings for that purpose. Farmers who were benefiting by the scheme, in addition to paying for the cost of the work, assisted the men with cheap food and in other ways. Those not engaged on farms already in occupation, were employed by county councils on such work as opening roads or developing drainage works for the benefit of surrounding areas. Considerable progress has been made with this work at Waikato, where the Government officer in charge has done much in regard to inspections and helpful work generally, and has been able to select the best men. In this way a large measure of success has been achieved. In the Raglan County, Horsham Downs and other districts, efforts have also been made to settle unemployed men with their families. Each approved applicant received £1 weekly until he was able to make a living off his farm. It is not necessary for me to give a mass of further details regarding what is being done in New Zealand, but I shall be pleased to give particulars to the Premier, Ministers or any member of the House, should they so desire. Many opportunities have been taken to settle the unemployed in a permanent way, and those opportunities have been fully availed of. In New Zealand the public have materially assisted the work, and the trustees of the Auckland Savings Bank, appreciating the need for assistance being rendered the board, provided £10,000 to finance the placing of boys on the land. That reminds me that in Western Australia we have an excellent scheme in operation, known

as the Chandler scheme. We must all be grateful to Mr. Chandler and those associated with him for their efforts to place boys on the land. In South Australia a wonderful settlement scheme is in operation at Kuitpo, a centre south of Adelaide. The scheme was instituted by the Methodist Church, and when I was in Adelaide some months ago, I had an opportunity to inspect the farm in company with the officer-in-charge. I noted a wonderful spirit on the farm, and the results obtained are satisfactory to all concerned. The citizens of South Australia have contributed materially towards the scheme. Sir Langdon Bonython and Sir Edwin Smith each contributed £1,000, and I believe the total amount collected was between £11,000 and £12,000. The manager of Kuitpo Labour Farm told me that he could not keep the lads for long. Once a lad showed himself capable of milking and doing other such farm work, the demand was so great that a position was soon found for him.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is so at Fairbridge.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, and it will also be the position with the Chandler scheme.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Have you heard of the Clontarf Farm?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. I do not desire to refer to all our efforts. I have been on the Clontarf Farm and know that the boys being turned out there are of a fine type.

Mr. H. W. Mann: I mentioned it just to indicate that something is being done in Western Australia as well as in New Zealand.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is quite correct. Reverting to New Zealand for a few moments, I would point out that much has been done in connection with the Waikato land settlement scheme, and I wish to give the House information regarding the methods adopted there—

The board of directors of the society would purchase a property, establish a camp, make a survey on a basis, approximately of a 50-acre lot per family, proceed with the erection of cottages, and, at a later stage, purchase stock and other farm requisites. When the cottages were erected they would be occupied by married men and their families. The central camp would then be available for housing the balance of the men who had been assisting the work. Men would be selected because of willingness to learn and general aptitude, and overseers especially selected on account of their ability in teaching.

One might assert that that was an obvious thing to do. As a matter of fact, frequently it is not done, and overseers have been appointed for reasons other than their aptitude to supervise properly. The details of the methods employed also show the following:—

The occupiers of the cottages, which are rent free, will be encouraged to produce their own living from their allotments. The order in which cottages are to be taken will be decided by ballot, where the applicants are deemed to be equally deserving. At first, all work will be carried out on a community basis. The men will be working for the society full time, although their pay is merely sustenance paid by the Government at relief work rates.

That is worth noting. The Government co-operate with the settlement boards and, as I have already indicated, during the early periods of the operations, the payment of sustenance is continued. That course is essential, and it would be essential in this State if the proposal I suggest were proceeded with. The statement continues—

The idea is to bring the whole block to a fully improved state as soon as possible. When sections are sufficiently improved, co-operative work will cease on such sections, and they will then be allocated. At that stage the allotments will be valued by the directors on the basis of productive value (irrespective of cost), and will be handed over to the men selected under an agreement of sale and purchase. Interest will be charged at the rate of five per cent. on the value assessed, and a sinking fund will be provided for.

That has been pointed out in connection with the New Zealand scheme, and it will apply here. A branch of farming that cannot be called supplementary, although it is of importance, relates to the product of the pig. Denmark is one of the chief competitors in the world's markets, and that country exports more pork and pig products than dairy produce. That means that the value of the export of pig products represents more than £20,000,000 annually. That will indicate the importance of that branch of farming activity. It has been claimed by a New Zealand farmer that the utilisation of five acres for pig farming will return more than 95 acres used for a Holstein herd from which to provide whole milk for Auckland. What has been done in New Zealand could be accomplished in Western Australia as well, or, at any rate, very largely so. I am not so daring as to say that our production is equal in every instance to that

of New Zealand per acre, but in the Dominion there are thousands of acres of land that are valueless, although other districts are extremely fertile. In considering the settlement of the unemployed on the land, we must not overlook the much lower cost entailed in providing essentials for life in the country areas as compared with the experience of city dwellers. That is important when one realises that under the proposition I am placing before the House, it is proposed that for a while sustenance payments will be continued until the settlers are able to carry on by themselves. I referred earlier to the experience of Mr. R. V. Randal, who comes from England. He is closely in touch with the provision of allotments for unemployed in the Old Country and has both written and spoken to me on different occasions regarding what is being done there. Mr. Randal has given me much information regarding the procedure adopted in the Old Country, and I am using that information as an argument in reply to any contention that there is no Crown land available. It will be shown that the area of land required is comparatively small. The information I wish to place before members is contained in letters addressed to me, which I shall read.

These are the letters from Mr. Randal:—

Dear Mr. Sampson,

Many thanks for bringing my suggestion to the notice of the Minister. I see that he remarks that there is no Crown land available within municipal boundaries. Exactly! That is why I recommended the British procedure, which is as follows.—

The borough council of, say, Slocum-in-Pou finds that poor law relief of the casually employed is a great burden on the local rates, and decides to use its powers under the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts, 1908-26, to create an allotment colony. An inspection of the surrounding country is made, and it is agreed that the rural parish of, say, Popton, is suitable for allotments and is within 20 miles of the borough.

(a) If the county council of the county containing this parish has no objection to the transfer in trust of this rural parish to the borough, well and good. The borough proceeds to draw up a part-time allotment scheme for submission to the Minister controlling local government, and if the Minister approves, the council of the borough usually seeks permission to create a liberty (thenceforward the county loses control of that parish so long as it is used under the scheme

as the Act directs. As regards rates, government, etc., it becomes part of the borough and the "freemen of the liberty" are represented by a councillor).

(b) If the council of the county objects, the Minister sends down an inquisitor, and after a publicly contested inquiry the Minister may grant the transfer if he thinks fit. In either case the borough purchases the land compulsorily at taxation price, plus 10 per cent., raising the money from its own citizens by issue of debentures. (N.B.—The inquisition no longer burns heretics, it does the useful work of superintending local government instead, and is purely civil and is appointed by the Minister for local government.)

(c) The borough then proceeds to cut up the parish into allotments of approximately 5 acres each, where necessary to erect a standardised cottage on each allotment, and either extend the local municipal tramline or run a bus service between the borough and the Popton parish hall, raising the money locally by municipal debentures. (This work is usually done by out of work citizens.) Each allotment is then let from year to year to a married unemployed man with ample provision for compensation for improvements (even unexhausted manure value) in case he leaves, and the right to bequeath it to a near relative. In most localities he can only be put out if he fails to reside on his allotment, till it in a good and husbandlike manner, keep it in repair, or if he fails to register for casual work at the borough labour exchange when unemployed, and accept same at award rate if offered, provided such employment is within the borough (he need not go out of the borough to work). He is municipally financed to till his holding, if in distressed circumstances. All schemes have to be approved by the Minister who audits accounts, helps with technical advice, inspects labour colonies and allotment schemes, etc.

As regards boroughs, I think something on these lines could be done here. For rural districts the scheme is rather different.

Here is another letter from Mr. Randal:—

In to-day's "Sunday Times" there is an article calling attention to the amount of land close to Perth suitable for close settlement, but held up in the Gwangara reserve, unused for years, and likely to remain so. I think this answers your question—"No land available." When the forestry Act was before Parliament, I pointed out that the conservator appeared under the Bill (now the Act) to possess far more power than was good for any one fallible human being, and suggested he should be limited to the same powers as the British Commissioners of Woods and Forests, but unhappily my fellow citizens did not seem to agree with me.

Among other limitations a British county or borough council seeking land for allotments or small holdings may seek a transfer of land from the Royal forest, and on proof that it is to the public interest that such land be used for municipal small holdings or allotments

rather than Royal forest, may obtain an order of transfer from a court of law. The doctrine of the English courts in granting transfers is that the public interest requires that land capable of being intensively cultivated should be so used if within 25 miles of a large town; but that land, too poor or too steep for cultivation, be utilised as forest (failing strong reasons to the contrary). I hope you will call the Minister's attention to this matter. Altogether far too much power in Western Australia is given to bureaucrats, and British experience seems to show that large powers to municipal and county councils is a useful counterpoise to abuse of bureaucratic control—not only in forestry and small holdings, but other matters, also, *e.g.*, farm colonies for feeble-minded and for unemployed; municipalities and centralised government departments check each other, the one bringing minute local knowledge, the other technical skill.

Mr. Randal has also made the following comments:—

I have received a letter from the secretary to the Minister for Lands, but the Minister has not distinguished between a full-time small holding and a part-time allotment for a casually employed person. I think it most essential that this distinction should be very sharply made, because the failure to make it sharp enough reduced many a promising scheme in the early days of the British Act to bankruptcy. When will folk realise that casual labour is essential and any attempt to promote this necessary partial employed reserve from the labour market—whether by full-time small holdings (or any other means) defeats its own ends? In busy times the men desert their full-time small holdings, lured by high wages (for life on a small holding of 50 acres is not so attractive as town life) and it is a problem to prevent the costly improvements to the holding being lost, so that to save them, small holdings have to be thrown into one. Then, when the boom bursts, these ex-small holders come back on the dole. The only effective remedy ever tried so far as I know is part-time allotments near usual working place. A part-time allotment is free from these objections. It is near the mother town (with which it is connected with a cheap municipal bus or train service) and the allottee has usually to register at local labour bureaux when unemployed and accept manual work at award rate if offered any within the municipality (if physically and otherwise fit) and if not picked up he goes home and tills his allotment. It is essential that a municipal bus service be provided between the allotment colony and the mother town. Allotments should always be grouped—wherever such registration is not insisted on, experience shows that cottage allotments become simply week-end residences for the well-to-do, and defeat their own ends as an unemployment relief measure. Please make this quite clear to the Minister. I am most anxious that Western Australia should avoid the mistakes which almost spoiled the scheme in the early

days of the British Act. . . . I ask you to explain this to the Minister, as I know you are much interested.

I wrote Mr. Randal regarding the possibility of Perth City Council being approached and he replied:—

As there are 753 successful British schemes in operation, surely one or more could be picked suitable for Western Australia, but if you would like me to be one of a deputation to the city council I would like to know exactly what is proposed, and be satisfied that the concrete proposals are just and workable. I think, as I told you, the chief difficulty will be fitting a British municipal scheme into your totally different system of local government (*e.g.*) owing to its right to create extra rural liberty lands, a British municipal council would not be troubled by lack of Crown lands within its boundaries.—R.V.R.

And again, under a later date Mr. Randal wrote:—

I see you are much concerned about the marketing of small holders' produce. I am very well aware that this problem is a very acute one in Western Australia. It is one of the very strongest arguments for adopting the British full-time small holdings legislation, including the Credits Act, here (as well as that for part-time allotments). In Britain, under the Agricultural Credits Act, a municipality or a county council has the right to assist the establishment of a small holders' co-operative market or factory (taking a mortgage debenture over the plant) as part of a small holdings scheme municipally run. Of course, near huge cities this is rarely necessary, but in Eastern England, where towns are small and markets apt to be glutted, it is much availed of, and many beet, sugar and cheese factories owe their establishment to this wise legislative provision. I have read that more recently it has been availed of by city corporations in connection with market garden allotment schemes, for though an allotment is five acres, man and wife may each hold five acres (ten acres in all) and ten-acre market garden colonies involve much marketing of perishable produce—but this was not in general use for allotments when I left England, although rapidly coming into use for full-time small holdings. As regards small holdings as distinct from allotments, I specially recommend the schemes in Durham and Norfolk as suitable for Western Australia. I hope you will point this out to the Minister, because I am sure that without some such scheme for municipally assisted co-operative factories, no scheme of full-time small holdings could possibly succeed in Western Australia. It would only result in hopelessly glutted markets. That has been proved in Britain, Holland and Denmark alike.

Some time ago in a circular issued from the Department of Labour and Industry of Queensland to all local authorities, it was stated that the department was willing to

assist unemployed men to go on the land with rations for an extended period to enable them to tide over the first month of hardship. Other assistance as required might be given in special cases. The Minister in charge said that any application from intermittent relief workers to change over from the present work scheme to that of endowment on land would be given immediate attention. He was referring to a recent suggestion for the Government endowment of blocks of land procured through their own initiative by intermittent relief workers at a rate of 10s. weekly for a guaranteed period of 12 months, in place of a weekly allotment of intermittent relief work. I trust members have not been bored by a description of the methods employed elsewhere. It would be a narrow-minded policy to hold that what others are doing is of no interest to us in solving our own difficulties. It is of considerable interest and help, and we are learning by comparison. The New Zealand schemes may require modification to make them apply to our own conditions, but when one country takes definite steps to solve the unemployment problem by making the unemployed dependent on themselves, surely it is worth while to study the method of procedure. The same applies in regard to schemes in the Old Country and in Queensland. If something on those lines were done here, men would be given opportunity to work for themselves, and would produce most of their own requirements. They might on the small holdings possess a cow and a few pigs for themselves.

Mr. Panton: Would not that throw a lot of other producers out of work?

Mr. SAMPSON: The trouble is that many of the unemployed are being deprived of food that is required. Then in addition there would be an opportunity to improve our marketing methods.

Mr. Panton: That is where you should have started.

Mr. SAMPSON: That interjection appeals to me. In regard to the plant and horses necessary for cultivation, there could be something of a communal system, and this principle would probably be used. As to the necessary homes, we read something a few days ago of homes erected in the Melville district at a cost of £50. Such homes are but small, but they make a good deal of difference to the happiness of those concerned.

Mr. Panton: They would be big enough only for a single man.

Mr. SAMPSON: By the time he is married he may be able to afford more space. Those homes contain two rooms and a kitchen. There are amongst the ranks of the men many qualified as carpenters. They could erect their own homes, thereby keeping down the cost to a minimum. I am sure the men and women concerned would gladly live in those shacks, provided they owned them; and they would own them, subject to an agreement with the Government. Their happiness depends on the provision of a home and the opportunity to work. The overseas market for small farm products has not in certain lines yet been glutted. I refer to berry and other fruits. There is a big market for dairy produce, and an overseas market for eggs and honey. About a fortnight ago I received a letter from a friend in Scotland who said he had read about the wonderful honey produced in Western Australia, and had endeavoured to obtain some in London without avail. I got into touch with the manager of the Western Australian Honey Pool, who told me that following upon Honey Week, and the conferences which had been held, the local consumption of this commodity had increased materially, and to-day there was no difficulty in getting rid of local supplies. In addition to the local market there is a big market overseas. Not much imagination is required to visualise the success of the proposal. To say that the scheme is Utopian and impossible is to take a wrong view, a view which postulates despair and one which circumstances do not justify. I have urged before that good, honest, industrious men are being ruined because of their inability to obtain work. It is inevitable that men will become more and more disgruntled if they are not permitted to work out their own salvation. I wish to refer briefly to a visit I paid to Austria. On the day that the Minister for Lands (Mr. O'Keefe) and I arrived in that country we were informed that the day before there had been 25 suicides.

Mr. Kenneally: Did they hear you coming?

Mr. SAMPSON: There was tremendous distress in that country because there was no opportunity to work, and no land was available. Prior to the war Austria had a

population of 60 millions. As a result of the war the opportunity to settle on the land was no longer available to the people. Hundreds of men were starving, and despair was noticeable everywhere. Our conditions could not be compared with those of any place in Europe. We have enormous quantities of land in different centres, and most of these areas are readily available. Despair should be unknown here. I am thankful to say that suicides are extremely uncommon, but there is a great deal of distress. That distress I think we can remedy. I am not recommending the communal system. I recall my early experiences when I was looking for work.

Mr. Hegney: How long ago was that?

Mr. SAMPSON: I travelled up the River Murray and the Darling River, in South Australia and Victoria.

Mr. Pantou: Did you have a fishing line with you?

Mr. SAMPSON: I tried hard to get work. I knew what it was to carry my swag.

Mr. Pantou: Good for you.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know what it is to seek for work and fail to find it. For a single man it is a serious matter, but for a married man it is a tragedy. Had I been a married man with a wife and family my difficulties would have been multiplied manifold. To come back to Western Australia—

Mr. Pantou: A very nice little trip.

Mr. SAMPSON:—and the incidence of unemployment here, I repeat—

Mr. Pantou: You must not repeat too much, or the Speaker will have something to say.

Mr. SAMPSON: The loss of dignity of those who are out of work, the loss of self-respect and self-reliance, and many other factors, are destroying the morale of large numbers of people. No one will dispute that the chopping of grass from street corners, the chipping of weeds from the roadway, the weeding of park lands, the sweeping of sand from sandy roads, the digging of post holes and filling them up again, constitute work that has a degrading effect upon those who carry it out. Those who do such work know that it is of no value.

Mr. Hegney: It is of some value.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is comparatively valueless. Such a method or system can do no other than bring about degeneracy.

Mr. Hegney: You are condemning the present system of society.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am condemning a system which permits the unemployed to continue as they are doing without giving them that which is lying idle, namely, land.

Mr. Hegney: You support that system?

Mr. SAMPSON: I urge they should be provided with land, on the allotment or small holdings system outlined by Mr. Randal as in the Old Country. We know what is being done in New Zealand and Queensland, and this prompts one to suggest the adoption of the same methods here. It would be infinitely better than the present lack of method, and incalculable improvement in the position would be brought about. In place of those who are deprived of almost every hope we should have a sturdy class of real manhood in process of development. The question to be asked is whether this proposition is workable. I claim that it is. We have the land in huge quantities, and if sustenance were provided for a while for those who settled upon it, it would not be long before these people became comparatively independent. Of course there would be some failures, but there would be a big percentage of successes. I ask members to look on the picture provided by the present method, the hopelessness of the unemployment camps, the degeneracy involved in the dole system, the demoralising effect of the absence of employment generally. On the other hand I can see the picture of small farms, carrying stock and with cultivated land, and more than all, the development of an honest, independent and happy people. This is already being brought about in New Zealand. The money used for rations or sustenance would thus be put to some permanent use, not being used merely for temporary relief. Those who were placed on the land would be law-abiding. Their future would be fraught with hope, whereas those who were denied this opportunity would be brought to a state of despair. Naturally the proposition has no association with party. Nor would it be possible to regard it from the party standpoint. Everyone is deeply interested in the position generally, and is desirous of assisting in finding a solution for the problem. I suggest we should take such steps as would lead to a number of the unemployed men and their families, and single men as well, being put upon the land.

The lot of such people would be infinitely better than it is to-day. We know what has happened recently with respect to preference to Empire products. This should open up still further opportunities for markets overseas. Large areas of land are available here, and much of our best land is out of use. There are rich valleys in the hills, and all are reasonably adjacent to Perth. Certain land held for forestry purposes could be reviewed, and areas that could be released might be made available for cultivation. There are blocks of land adjacent to country towns which might be used for allotments on the small-holding system. It is almost impossible in many country towns to purchase locally-grown vegetables, eggs and other commodities.

Mr. Panton: In the case of many country towns it is almost impossible to grow such things because of the lack of water.

Mr. SAMPSON: The rainfall is good in the case of many country towns, and in other cases sufficient water could be provided. Consideration could be given to such circumstances. There are areas of arable and fertile land where the rainfall is certain and ample. Such land could be better used for the purposes I have outlined than held in idleness. It cannot be disputed that much of the best land in the State is unused. In the course of his evidence before the Farmers' Disabilities Commission, Mr. A. H. Malloch declared that many people were land poor in that they held more land than they could cultivate, and it had become a burden upon them. Such areas could be resumed very cheaply. The dairy industry is yet in its infancy, and vast strides have yet to be made in it. In this connection I contend that the small farm holder would find a good market for his dairy produce. It has been suggested that on occasions the market has been glutted, and no opportunity has been afforded for the disposal of produce. It may be that some of these small farm settlers might be compelled to barter their produce. Even so, their position would be greatly improved compared with what it is to-day. The Government have big quantities of galvanised iron and timber available, consequently there should be no difficulty involved in respect either to land or material. My proposal is not that the houses should be erected for these settlers, but that they should be erected by the men themselves, costs being kept down

to a minimum, thus enabling such money as may be available to relieve as many cases as possible. After I had spoken on the subject last year I received several letters from unemployed persons. They were pleased that the proposal had been made, and were hopeful that the suggestions would be carried out. I have said enough to convince members that we should now take action and proceed on the lines I have indicated. I realise that difficulties exist from the standpoint of money, but I believe the Government will take a broad view and continue to pay sustenance until the men are settled on their holdings. To do otherwise would be to court failure. We cannot afford to ignore the opportunity that is presented to us. If the suggestions I have advanced are adopted, there is a possibility of many of our unemployed returning to happiness and prosperity. We know that many problems must be solved before it can be said we are on the highway to prosperity, before there can be any return to that happy state we enjoyed three years ago. We can never reach that stage until consideration is given to the lot of those unfortunates who are out of work. If the consideration I ask is given, it will then be in the hands of the unemployed themselves to work out their own salvation. Given the opportunity there is a big percentage who would spare no effort to ensure success. We have gone through a very difficult period and men and women have suffered acutely. Sustenance is not doing anything of a permanent nature, whilst rationing is even more degrading, and relief work is merely a temporary expedient. I shall be greatly disappointed if, following the submission of this motion, approval is withheld. I have endeavoured to tell the story fairly and I hope the Government will decide that the proposition is reasonable, that it is in the best interests of all concerned. Thus I hope it will be brought to reality.

On motion by Minister for Lands debate adjourned.

MOTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Relief for Mortgagees.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [5.21]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House legislation should be enacted to afford relief meas-

ures to necessitous mortgagors of the Agricultural Bank.

I regret very much that I find it necessary to move in this direction. I am actuated by the unfortunate position that has arisen in this State as a result of the disastrous shrinkage in the value of primary products. All that the motion aims at is to give Agricultural Bank clients the same protection that is afforded to private mortgagors under the Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagors' Relief Act Amendment Act. When that measure was before the House last session the question was often asked through the Press, and by way of resolutions passed at various meetings held in different parts of the State, why Parliament had not given protection to the clients of the Agricultural Bank. We were frequently met with the reply that Parliament and the Government of the day would not see any injustice done to the clients of the bank. I am not here to prove that any serious injustice has been done by the Agricultural Bank to any of its clients, but I am asking through the motion I have submitted that those clients be given the same protection as Parliament has afforded private mortgagors, that is, mortgagors who are indebted to other than private mortgagees and the Associated Banks. I desire that protection shall be afforded to many farmers who have found themselves in the position of not being able to meet their liabilities to the bank, and in many cases to creditors outside the bank, many of whom are unsecured. If members will refer to the report of the Royal Commission on farmers' disabilities they will notice that a great deal of thought and consideration was given to the acute position of the clients of the bank. That was a very necessary part of the investigations of the Commission, seeing that such a large proportion of our farmers are clients of the bank. Various proposals were put up by the Commission in regard to giving relief to these mortgagors, and while the Government have met the position to some extent, in my opinion they have not gone far enough to guarantee the Agricultural Bank mortgagors that security of tenure which is so often asked for. It is not necessary for me to read the Commission's report on the subject; it has already been read to

the House on several occasions. The Premier when delivering the Budget Speech mentioned that the total outstanding liability to the Agricultural Bank for interest was £1,762,594. It is unfortunate that so many of our farmers are so far behind with their payments, but seeing there is a prospect of better prices ruling, I have not the least doubt that in the near future most of that interest will be paid to the bank. From my knowledge of Agricultural Bank clients I have every reason to believe that they are honest men and will meet their liabilities. What they ask is that reasonable time shall be given to enable them to realise on their properties when the time is opportune. It is admitted that because of the low prices that have ruled since 1930 securities have depreciated, and to such an extent that there is very little equity left in many of the properties. It is hoped that within a few years, perhaps two or three, or even five years, these properties will appreciate in value and there will be some equity still available. I wish again to state that I have great regard for the managing trustee, the co-trustees and the officers of the Agricultural Bank. I know they would be the last people to press unduly any of their clients. But seeing that we have arrived at that unfortunate position where there are no fewer than 905 properties on the hands of the trustees, it makes one wonder whether there will not be quite a number of others in the same position unless better protection is afforded them. I am aware that the bank authorities have displayed great forbearance. The one desire of the trustees has been to endeavour to keep clients on the land. Of course there is a limit to their patience and endurance. It is the duty of the bank to protect the money invested in bank securities, and I am satisfied that the trustees are doing their best in the interests of all concerned. Still, there are times when an error of judgment might be made. Probably a farmer is evicted, or the farm is realised upon at an inopportune time. I do not intend to quote instances of hardship. I have a knowledge of a few farmers on whom eviction notices have been served. Perhaps in some of those instances the trustees were justified and had good reason for taking drastic action. Still, as I pointed out the other night, even in the worst cases where farmers are forced off their holdings, they

have to fall back on the Government for sustenance. Parliament should give Agricultural Bank mortgagors relief, and the Government should be prepared to introduce legislation to give clients at least the same protection as mortgagors to private banks and private lenders enjoy. It is all the more necessary that such protection should be extended to Agricultural Bank clients when we realise that a larger proportion of those clients are in danger of having their holdings forfeited than are clients of private banks and private mortgagees. Comprehensive legislation is necessary. Some measures for relief do not apply to the Crown. Under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act that provision does apply to mortgagors to the Crown. Unless the Government introduce a separate measure, they should, when the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act is under consideration, extend similar relief to Agricultural Bank mortgagors. If we had more comprehensive legislation for farmers, providing relief generally, such as is afforded in some of the other States, it would be hardly necessary for me to submit this motion. Legislation introduced in New South Wales only a few days ago makes special provision to protect farmers' properties and assess the value of mortgages, while it also provides for a scheme of adjusting debts and writing them down. For the present I do not ask the House to go as far as that. All I ask is that immediate protection be given to clients of the Agricultural Bank so that they will not run any risk of losing the equity in their properties owing to the unsatisfactory prices ruling for their products at present. It will take some time to recondition farmers' accounts and enable clients to reach a satisfactory position as regards their liabilities and responsibilities to the Agricultural Bank. If legislation were provided, similar to that in the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act, it would only be necessary for the trustees to go to the court and apply for permission to proceed in any case, just as private banks and private lenders have to do. The unfortunate position of the agricultural industry, consequent upon the disastrous prices, is well known to every member. I am satisfied that every member, irrespective of party, wishes to see the industry restored to a healthy and

prosperous condition. From my long experience of the farming districts, I believe that in view of the advances having been made on low valuations, it will not be long before many holders realise a fair and valuable equity. But they need time. There are no fewer than 600 or 700 farmers at present under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. While they have protection, they have it only with the good will of their creditors. The Act has afforded considerable protection to farmers who have availed themselves of it, and has been administered very satisfactorily. But though protection is afforded for a certain period, it is secured only with the good will of the creditors.

Mr. Marshall: It cannot be altogether due to that.

Mr. PIESSE: A majority of the creditors may decide to carry on a farmer under the Act. If they decide that it is impossible or inadvisable to carry him on, he has either to go bankrupt or make other arrangements to carry on. If protection were afforded, as indicated in my motion, every farmer under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act would be safeguarded against foreclosure. That is what farmers generally have in mind when they speak of security of tenure. During the last two years anxiety has existed in the minds of many farmers as to what was likely to happen. Clients of the Agricultural Bank should be assured of protection similar to that enjoyed by their neighbours who have given mortgages to other banks. I have admitted that the trustees of the Agricultural Bank have acted sympathetically, but I do not think it right that the trustees should have the final decision as to whether foreclosure is justified. The time has arrived when the trustees of the Agricultural Bank should give the whole of their time to the work. There is sufficient work to occupy the whole time of the three trustees.

Mr. Marshall interjected.

Mr. PIESSE: I am prepared to admit that there are misfits. Some clients of the Agricultural Bank would probably not make a success of their holdings in any circumstances. We are not alone in having farmers of that description. The same thing prevails in the Eastern States. But even some of the farmers whose position is regarded as hopeless might yet be saved. A scheme of re-conditioning the debts of farm-

ers in difficulty is a matter that should receive the earliest consideration of the Government. I know that something has been done, but that does not extend beyond the granting of a stay order. There is no difficulty regarding the clients of the Agricultural Bank who it is considered may safely be carried on. The trustees have done their best to carry on such clients. Still, quite a number of accounts must be re-conditioned. Sooner or later the position will have to be faced. One has only to consider the operations of the Industries Assistance Board. The board have been in existence since 1915, and a large proportion of the accounts should have been re-conditioned years ago. The neglect to do so is not fair to the clients, to the bank or to the unsecured creditors. In many instances nothing has been paid off outstanding debts, and I am satisfied that in almost every case the unsecured creditors would be well advised to write down their accounts heavily and give the Industries Assistance Board client some hope of carrying on.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. PIESSE: Before tea I was pointing out that while every thought has been given by the administration to I.A.B. clients, very little thought has been given to the liquidation of outside unsecured debts, and that, in the result, operations under the Act have been rather a long drawn out business unsatisfactory to almost everyone concerned. I realise that the position is precarious, both for the Agricultural Bank and that bank's clients. I have no wish to place any restriction upon the Agricultural Bank in regard to abandoned farms, which have to be disposed of, or sold outright, at the earliest possible moment; but I am desirous of protecting farmers in possession. I think it reasonable to expect that they will receive at least the same consideration as private mortgagors are receiving. I know that the writing down of debts presents great difficulties, but I have no desire to go into that aspect to-night. I do, however, wish to refer to what has been done in South Australia. Quite recently the Director of Farmers' Debts Adjustment in South Australia was called upon to make a report to his Government. The director is a gentleman of considerable experience in farming matters, and is well known to most members of this Cham-

ber who have visited South Australia. He is a judge of the South Australian Supreme Court, and is in a specially favoured position to make recommendations to the Government. To deal briefly with his report: he outlines the matter by saying that debt adjustment is a question for the whole community, and that he realises further farm relief to be essential to security. I hope that the Western Australian Government will be guided largely by that report, a copy of which, I understand, is in the Premier's possession, and that when further legislation in this direction is contemplated, consideration will be given to the recommendations contained in the South Australian report. I want farmers in possession of their properties to have breathing time. I also desire that there should be a thorough review of the special circumstances of each case that is in danger of foreclosure. I commend the motion to the favourable consideration of hon. members and of the Government. I want every farmer in possession of his property, whether a client of the Agricultural Bank or of any other bank, or of a private mortgagee, to have statutory protection against foreclosure at least during the currency of the emergency legislation enacted by this Parliament.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

RETURN—RAILWAYS, LOCOMOTIVES AND CUSTOMS DUTY.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.36]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing:—(1) The cost (exclusive of Customs duty) of the 10 locomotives and 32 boilers purchased for the State railway system in 1924. (2) The amount borrowed by the State Government, and paid to the Federal Government, by way of Customs duty in respect thereof. (3) The annual interest charge upon the people of this State in respect of the added loan burdens on account of that Federal Customs duty. (4) The approximate duty, under the existing tariff, that would be payable by the State Government to the Federal Government in respect of the proposed purchase of £1,400,000 worth of electrical equipment.

I do not know that there is any great need to put forward reasons for the carrying of the motion. It seems to me that the particulars for which it asks are desirable—

The Premier: They cannot be got.

Mr. SAMPSON: —and should be made available.

The Premier: They are not available.

Mr. SAMPSON: The motion merely asks for approximate figures. If they cannot be given, I shall be satisfied with a reply to paragraph (3) of the motion.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—BULK HANDLING.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [7.42] in moving the second reading said: In introducing this Bill I do not intend to dwell on the subject matter of the measure for the present, except to say that the Bill proposes the appointment of a trust, which shall have a monopoly of the handling of all wheat grown in districts where bulk handling has been established. The measure also provides for the imposition of a toll of one-half penny, or more, per bushel on all wheat grown in a district where bulk handling has been established. Further, it provides a Government guarantee of the repayment of borrowed capital at the date the loan falls due. Then it provides that after the capital cost has been repaid, the bulk handling scheme shall be transferred to a company composed of wheatgrowers who have been participants in the bulk handling system. Before dealing with the details of the Bill I wish to say that the principle of bulk handling is one that has found recognition for many years past in numerous countries. It is established in the United States, Canada, South Africa, New South Wales, and many other countries. I shall deal with the position of bulk handling in these various countries as I go along. The British Department of Agriculture, in its report for 1928, states that 85 per cent. of the wheat imported into Britain is imported in bulk, and that the countries shipping in sacks are India (entirely), and Australia, California and Chili (largely). The task before me is to demonstrate to the House that bulk handling is suitable for Western Australian conditions. Before approaching that task, I desire to refresh hon. members' memories

as to action taken in this connection by this House in years gone by. In 1913 the then Minister for Agriculture, Mr. T. H. Bath, appointed a committee to inquire into bulk handling. The date of appointment was the 27th June, and on the 3rd December the committee reported in favour of the immediate introduction of the bulk handling system into this State. The breaking out of the war in 1914 caused the matter to be shelved, for the time being, by the Government; but in 1915, when the Hon. W. D. Johnson was Minister for Agriculture, the question was re-opened through the coming to Australia of representatives of the firm of Metcalf. They came out under contract to the South Australian Government. They were to prepare plans and specifications for a bulk handling scheme for South Australia. The then Minister for Agriculture (Hon. W. D. Johnson) conferred with the Ministers for Agriculture for Victoria and South Australia and discussed the position with Metcalf's representatives. As a result of that discussion in July, 1916, the then Government prepared an agreement which was ready for signature, but there was a change of Government and nothing was done for the time being. In July, 1916, the Wilson Government assumed office, and Sir James Mitchell, who was then Minister for Industries, instructed the secretary of the State Wheat Marketing Board to prepare a scheme for bulk handling of wheat for Western Australia. That document was prepared, but again nothing was done. In 1918, a Royal Commission was appointed by the Legislative Assembly, with the Hon. W. C. Angwin as chairman. The Commission did not report against bulk handling, but suggested that the time was not opportune for the establishment of such a scheme in the State, and advised the Government to carry on for the time being under existing conditions, with a view to the inauguration of bulk handling at a later date. In December, 1920, two Bills were introduced in the Legislative Assembly dealing with phases of bulk handling. At that time the Western Australian Grain Growers Co-operative Elevators Ltd. was in existence and it was sought to confer on the company the sole right for a term of 25 years, to construct and use elevators for the bulk handling of grain. One Bill dealt with pool payments in connection with the Industries Assistance

Board, and was defeated. The other Bill went to the Legislative Council during the closing days of the session and its consideration was deferred till the next session. The following year Sir James Mitchell, as Minister for Lands, introduced another Bulk Handling Bill along similar lines with the object of giving a lease to the Grain Growers Co-operative Elevators Ltd., and providing that firm with a monopoly of the bulk handling of wheat for a period of 25 years. The Bill was drastically amended in the Legislative Council. A meeting of managers was held, with the result that the Bill was shelved. In 1928, Mr. Millington, the then Minister for Agriculture, with the approval of the Government, appointed another committee, but the files do not show any record of the committee ever having met. The question was again re-opened in July, 1931, when the Westralian Farmers Ltd. submitted a proposal to the Government, but it has since been withdrawn. The Government appointed me, as Minister for Works, to make inquiries regarding bulk handling matters, and I in turn appointed a committee to carry out certain investigations. Since then members have been furnished with copies of the resultant report, and I assume that they know its contents. It is not my intention to deal at length with that phase, because members have copies of the report and can peruse it for themselves. As I have already stated, the Westralian Farmers Ltd. withdrew their original proposal, and now there is a scheme before the Government from the Trustees of the Wheat Pool. Probably hon. members have read a good deal about it in the columns of the Press. The scheme now before the Government provides for the installation of bulk handling facilities at 280 sidings, and at the ports of Fremantle, Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton, at a cost not to exceed £625,000. Finance is to be arranged in London, and a monopoly is required.

Hon. P. Collier: To be specified in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Control is to be vested in a board consisting of the Pool trustees, two representatives of the wheat growers, and one nominated by the Government. Generally speaking, that is the history to date of the actions of Parliament and Governments in connection with bulk handling matters. It is my intention

now to deal with bulk handling systems operating in various countries. During the course of my remarks, I desire to reply to much of the criticism and objection that have been voiced from time to time, and I shall endeavour to answer the statements made as I proceed. I first wish to deal with the bulk handling systems in operation in the United States of America and Canada. We have been told that the climatic conditions are not the same there as those obtaining in Western Australia. I agree with that statement. We have also been told that in the United States of America and in Canada, owing to the failure of the system, large heaps of wheat are strewn all over the countryside. I also agree with that statement. We must understand that harvesting machinery has developed of recent years not only in Australia, but all over the world. Whereas the bulk-handling systems of the United States of America and Canada were developed under one form of harvesting—the binder and header—to-day harvesting operations are conducted with a combined harvester. The result is that deliveries in the United States of America—this does not apply so much to Canada—are now as rapid as in Western Australia. The system in America and Canada was such that merchants, co-operative companies, and local buyers put up their own elevators at country sidings. They were not storage bins, but working houses. Generally speaking they were 30,000-bushel working houses, divided into a number of small bins. That was satisfactory for the method of harvesting in those days, because wheat deliveries were spread over many months. It may be said that the system of turning wheat over many times because of climatic conditions could not be applied here. In that regard we must understand that since the system was inaugurated in Canada and America, knowledge of bulk-handling matters has greatly increased. We must also understand that we know our conditions and those that applied in the United States of America, where at the outset the scheme provided no facilities for the storage of wheat. In view of our later knowledge, we must start off by making provision for storage to meet the demands that will be made on the system. Whereas they erected 30,000-bushel working houses, we can erect a 150,000-bushel capacity plant, including storage, at about half the cost per bushel of

the smaller installation. The Pacific coast of the United States is in a different position from the other parts of America and Canada about which I have spoken so far. The climatic conditions there are somewhat similar to ours, and the industry there was started at a later period. In the early days wheat had to be shipped round Cape Horn, and, therefore, wheat was transported in bags for many years. It is only since 1921 that wheat has been shipped in bulk. Because of the climatic conditions, and the long sea voyage round Cape Horn, insurance companies would not accept risks on bulk wheat. Then again the ship owners themselves would not take wheat in bulk. Since the opening of the Panama Canal, those difficulties have been overcome, and the wheat is handled along the Pacific coast in bulk. I again stress the point that the climatic conditions in that part of America are somewhat similar to those obtaining in Western Australia. I have before me certain extracts from a publication headed "Bulk and Sack Handling of Grain in the Pacific Coast States," issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. The publication is the result of investigations by Mr. E. N. Bates, senior marketing specialist, C. P. Bodner, associate marketing specialist, grain division, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, and Mr. E. J. Stirniman, formerly associate agricultural engineer, University of California. These men were sent to the Pacific Coast by the United States Department of Agriculture to inquire into the position and saving effected by bulk handling in California. In the course of their report they state—

In the keen competition on the world's wheat markets, the great factor for success must be lowered production costs. Producers on the Pacific coast are in a position to reduce their production costs by handling their grain in bulk from the threshing machine to the terminal markets. Many of the efficient farm managers have been among the first to recognise the possibility of handling their grain more easily, rapidly, and cheaply by the use of the bulk system.

Bulk handling was established there first in 1921, when the percentage of wheat exported in bulk was 1.4. In 1930 the percentage of wheat so exported has risen to 99.5. Hon. members will appreciate the large increase in those few years. The position there is

that in the year 1920-21, of the 24,731,891 bushels produced, 1.4 per cent. was exported in bulk. In the 1929-30 season, of the total harvest of 20,382,509 bushels, 99.5 per cent. was exported in bulk. Only 46,881 bags, containing $2\frac{1}{4}$ bushels each, were exported. Later I will deal with the savings and benefits of bulk handling, and will again refer to this report. Another country where bulk handling has been inaugurated is the Union of South Africa. The system was established there in 1924 with the object of handling the maize crop. The Union of South Africa is a much larger country than Western Australia, and maize is grown 700 or 800 miles north in the Transvaal. Terminal elevators were erected at Cape Town and Durban, and 35 country elevators were also installed. The terminal elevators were provided to collect the grain delivered at the country sidings. The capital cost of the system to the 30th June, 1931, represented £2,564,108. I know hon. members will gasp when I mention that amount. From information I have received from the general manager, I find that the system is most complicated and much too expensive. The scheme could be inaugurated for much less to-day. At the time the bulk handling system was inaugurated in South Africa, there was a flat rate on grain amounting to 10s. a ton, irrespective of from where it was hauled. When the bulk handling system was inaugurated, the flat rate was increased to 15s. per ton, which included the bulk handling of wheat. In addition to the charge of 10s., 5s. a ton is levied in connection with the elevator system. Grain is cleaned, graded and dried, for which a charge of 2d. per 200 lbs. is levied. As in many other countries that grow grain, South Africa suffers severely from droughts. Because of that, the system so far has not been a great success. In fact, the accumulated loss on the operations since 1924 amounts to £284,000. One reason for that loss is that the system requires to handle 20,000,000 bushels of maize before it can be made to pay. Unfortunately there have been two seasons only since the inauguration of the scheme when conditions have been favourable for the handling of much grain. In a letter to me the manager says—

The main advantages which our producers derive from the grain elevator system may be briefly summarised as follows:—

(a) Saving in cost of grain bags. On this point it may be noted that the farmer only requires a limited number of bags which can be used over and over again for conveying his grain to the elevators. Most grain-importing countries are provided with facilities for receiving grain in bulk from ships, and the importers prefer to receive grain in bulk owing to the extra cost of handling in bags. In most cases grain in bulk commands the same price as grain in bags, but even in cases where it is necessary to ship in bags owing to lack of bulk handling facilities at destination ports, our experience is that although in some instances the price paid for grain in bags may be a little higher, it certainly does not represent the value or cost of the bag to the producer.

(b) The elevators provide safe storage for grain.

(c) Most accurate and reliable grading of grain is assured under the bulk handling system.

(d) The elevator receipts issued to grain owners have a Government guarantee of grade and weight, and are negotiable documents which can be sold outright or deposited with the owner's banker as security for advances.

(e) Elimination of disputes between buyers and sellers as to weights and quality of grain, which often cause annoyance and losses.

The next system I wish to deal with is that of New South Wales. That is held up as the shocking example of why we should not have bulk handling. To an extent that is true. The capital cost of the New South Wales system was £4,067,240, a tremendous capital cost, but I want to give the House the reasons for that. On two occasions I have visited New South Wales and investigated the subject on the spot. In the first place the New South Wales system was built, not as a bulk-handling system, but as a storage scheme. It was built at the end of the war for the purpose of storing grain. The Federal Government provided certain money for a storage system. Metcalf & Co. were the designers of that scheme also, and unfortunately a great deal of money was wasted. I have been informed that in order to decide the quantity of storage required at various sites, the Railway Department was asked to supply the quantity of wheat delivered. They did supply the quantity of wheat delivered at certain stations, but they included also four or five sidings. The result is that in New South Wales there is provided in certain districts hundreds of thousands of bushels of storage more than is required. At Temora, for instance, there is supplied a capacity of 650,000 bushels, whereas the

capacity required is 300,000 bushels. And they have erected unnecessary cleaning and drying plants. There are ten elevator legs which have never been used, and five grading plants which have not been used. Also there are drying plants for which no use has been found, while exhaust fans costing £25,000 have never been turned on. Moreover the silos were badly designed and have had to be reconstructed to give efficiency. During the last three months the manager of the New South Wales elevators called for tenders for terminal silos for an extra 2,000,000 bushels. Although the initial cost was 4s. 6d. per bushel, the price received for the extension was only 1s. 6d. per bushel. The total cost of erecting the New South Wales system averaged out at 3s. 5.7d., or practically 3s. 6d. per bushel. To-day it is recognised by engineers that the scheme could be installed for one-third the cost. The storage capacity is 23,363,000 bushels. The charge made in the year 1930-31 was 2½d. per bushel, but last year it was reduced to 2¼d. per bushel. The balance sheet furnished to me, not for this year but for last year, worked out at .8d. per bushel or £83,045 on 24.1-3 million bushels, which left a balance of £173,788 for the payment of interest, which provided only 4.2 per cent. interest on the capital outlay. These matters should be known to the House. But again I say that although this tremendous capital cost is there, it is recognised that the whole system could be installed for a great deal less to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: But the same has been said about every estimate submitted. Look at the results.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The figure I have of 1s. 6d. per bushel is from the contractor and he is prepared to construct at that price. But the reason for the failure is really that it was the pioneering system in Australia. They were inaugurating a new system about which very few knew anything. The system of buying wheat in bags was perfectly satisfactory to the buyers of wheat and also to the shippers of wheat, and so they did their utmost to make bulk handling a failure. The merchants, in order to keep wheat out of the silos, quoted much bigger prices for bag wheat than for bulk wheat. The result was that in 1920-21, 1,934,000 bushels went through the silos. The next year the quan-

tity through silos was 3,247,664 bushels, and in the following year it was 4,596,563 bushels, and so on until 1930-31. And in all those years the greatest number of bushels of wheat put through the silos in any one year was 17 millions. When the silos started to operate, they operated at 65 country silos with a terminal storage capacity of 6,750,000 bushels. So members will see that when you have only 2,000,000 bushels to handle with a storage capacity of approximately 20,000,000 bushels, the system cannot be expected to pay. To-day everyone in New South Wales is doing his utmost to make bulk handling a success. The shipping companies are offering a much lower freight, and the insurance companies are charging a much lower rate of insurance, while the buyers of wheat are offering much better prices. For some years in the London markets bulk wheat was quoted at 6d. per bushel less than bagged wheat, while the shippers, generally speaking, charged a little more. But during the last two or three years, particularly this year, we find that the shippers have reduced their freights by from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 9d. per ton on bulk wheat. That is the freight actually being charged, and instead of there being 6d. per quarter difference in price, in favour of the bagged wheat, the maximum difference is now only 3d. per bushel. Generally speaking, the bulk wheat and the bag wheat are now sold at the same price. The result is that there is more profit in having the wheat in bulk. Now I want to show what has happened during the last two years. In 1930-31 the number of bushels handled was 24 $\frac{1}{3}$ million bushels, and this year it was 25,975,000. So it will be seen from the operations of the system during the last two years the farmers are now supporting bulk handling, the merchants are supporting it and, generally speaking, it is a success. There has been bulk handling in Russian ports for many years past. There has been bulk handling in the Argentine ports for many years, and this pamphlet from which I have already quoted, states as follows:

In Argentina, railway interests are negotiating with a British company for the construction of a chain of country and terminal grain elevators. The plans of construction are patterned after the elevators of the United States and Canada.

The Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics, formerly Russia, is planning to take its pre-

war place in the wheat markets of the world. Some of the best American engineers and economists have been called to Russia for consultation and work on the problem of putting into production large areas of now undeveloped land. It is planned that the grain will be handled in bulk in the field and through modern grain elevators. It is significant that the Russian investigators who studied the grain-handling systems of this country did not give the sack-handling system of the Pacific coast any consideration in the plans, for the development of their grain-marketing programme. An American company that has specialised in the building of grain elevators and flour mills has been awarded contracts aggregating approximately 110,000,000 dollars to build elevators, flour mills, and miscellaneous industrial structures in the Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics.

There has been a good deal of opposition expressed on many occasions to the introduction of bulk handling. There have been many Royal Commissions reporting on it, and so far as my investigations go I have never yet found one Royal Commission that did not recommend the installation of the system. I have here an extract from the Royal Commissions' report in Victoria in 1913. In Victoria the same objections were then put up as are being put up here to-day. This is the reply of the Commissioners:—

The principal objections against the bulk handling system have been carefully considered. Summarised they are—Its great initial cost; the unsuitability of vessels now carrying our produce; uncertainty as to whether the grain will carry satisfactorily in bulk from Australia; insufficient quantity exported to justify the installation of the system; the hostile attitude of shippers; the increased cost of ocean carriage and marine insurance; and the limited number of foreign ports possessing facilities for handling wheat in bulk.

We have the same position to-day. This is the statement of that Royal Commission—

Your Commissioners have duly and thoroughly investigated each of those objections and, with the exception of the objection regarding the initial cost of the installation of the system, they have no hesitation in asserting that in the light of the experience of countries which have adopted the system under much less favourable conditions than obtain in Victoria, not one of them is insuperable. It is desired to draw particular attention to the fact that the bulk handling system was adopted in Canada on a successful basis when the wheat yield was below the average yield that now obtains in Victoria—the Canadians in the crop year 1890-91 were operating with an elevator provision of 7,628,000 bushels for a wheat crop of 17,884,000 bushels. Further, while it has been demonstrated that grain can be successfully carried

oversea in bulk to Continental ports, the question of the limited number of foreign ports possessing bulk handling facilities has been entirely disposed of.

That is the report of the Victorian Royal Commission in 1913.

Hon. A. McCallum: Why has not Victoria adopted the system?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think Victoria will adopt it within the next few months. We have had just as good reports in this State. We had as good a report in 1913, and there have been many reports since then. As one of the newspapers said 17 years ago, "There have been sufficient reports by Royal Commissions to fill a silo." Undoubtedly bulk handling will interfere with vested interests. At the present time certain dockage is made on wheat sent in by farmers. If a man brings in wheat below f.a.q. there is a dockage, by which the merchants benefit. Again, a certain increase in the weight of wheat takes place, and again the merchant gets the benefit. Now this extract is taken from Mr. Stevenson's report when he was investigating the question in Western Australia—

Any profits which may be made at present by merchants from storage charges, from docked wheat subsequently included in f.a.q. parcels or shipments, or from gain in weight during storage, would accrue to the authority controlling bulk handling, and through that authority to the farmers in the form of reduced charges for handling. As an indication of the extent of the profits from gain in weight, it may be pointed out that the added weight of wheat on 21,424,000 bushels handled by Western Australian Farmers, Limited, in the 1929-30 season was 129,000 bushels, valued at £23,200.

Again, it will widen the market. At the present time to buy wheat one would require a huge capital and organisation, with an agent in every country town. Wheat in bags scattered about the country is not good security. Bulk handling certificates will be negotiable securities and quite a number more buyers will be coming in.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What guarantee have you of that?

Hon. P. Collier: None whatever.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As I have said, we have had the reports of numerous Royal Commissions in Western Australia. The Royal Commission of 1918 declared the time was not opportune for the installation of bulk handling. When in 1913

the first Royal Commission reported, the yield of wheat was 9,168,000 bushels. In 1917-18, when the second Commission reported, the yield was 9,303,000 bushels. That Commission said the yield was not sufficient. In 1921-22, when the House passed two Bills, the yield of wheat was 13,904,000 bushels. Last year the yield was 41,360,000 bushels. It cannot be said that one of the reasons why we should not enter bulk handling is that we are not producing sufficient wheat. I said once before that we would one day be producing 100,000,000 bushels of wheat a year. We have increased our production of wheat in this State since 1913 by 355 per cent., and since 1921 by 193 per cent. After all, it requires no great optimist to visualise that in the next 10 or 12 years the wheat production will be increased to at least that quantity. One reason for stressing the fact that bulk handling will be more successful in Western Australia than in any other State of Australia, is that we produce a greater quantity per head of the population than any other State of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, our seasons are more regular. We have not had a drought since 1914. Only once since 1921 has the wheat production decreased. In New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia during those years there have been many droughts. One of the difficulties of bulk handling is that a good deal of capital is involved, and if there is not the wheat available to handle in any one year, that must be a charge upon the system. The New South Wales figures show variations in the wheat handled through the elevators from 25,000,000 bushels to 2,000,000 bushels. The production per head of the population in New South Wales for 1931-32 was 21.44 bushels. In Victoria it was 23.29, in South Australia 82.42, and in Western Australia 98.10. We, therefore, produce much more wheat per head of the population than any other State of the Commonwealth. We also export more wheat per head of the population than any other part of Australia. Wheat is more suitably handled in bulk for export than it is for internal consumption. New South Wales in the last five years exported 30 per cent. of its wheat, Victoria 41 per cent., South Australia 57 per cent., and Western Australia 76 per cent. These figures prove clearly that Western Australia is the most suitable State of any for the handling of wheat in bulk.

Canada produces a large amount of wheat. The province of Saskatchewan alone has 3,250 receiving elevators. There has been a three years' drought in parts of that province, and the Dominion Government have had to find 49,000,000 dollars with which to feed 90,000 farmers. They also must have suffered severe reverses in bulk handling. One of the points I wish to make is that we produce a greater amount of wheat per head of the population, we export a greater amount per head of the population, and we export a greater percentage than any other State. Further, our country is more even so far as average seasons are concerned than any other State, and probably than any other country in the world.

Hon. P. Collier: More even, but lower than many other States of Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am alluding to the average season, not to the yield. I mentioned that one of the reasons why bulk handling was not successful in the past was because of the difference in the price paid for bulk handled wheat as compared with bag wheat. We find that when it came to a question of securing charters for New South Wales shippers, the Marine Underwriters' Association made things very hard for the shippers by insisting on certain fittings being provided. This proved very expensive for the shipping companies. Since then, their attitude has been altered. Now there is a greater percentage of bulk wheat sent away in ships from New South Wales than was the case a few years ago. Shipping companies have also reduced their freights. I have here a quotation from Mr. Donnelly, Manager of the Farmers and Graziers' Co-operative Grain Insurance and Agency Co., Ltd., of Sydney, and this I will come to in a minute. Within the last 12 months shipowners have quoted from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 9d. less for bulk wheat than for bagged wheat. One of the biggest wheat merchants in Sydney stated recently that the British Chamber of Shipping was prepared to consider a concession of 5s. per ton for bulk cargoes as against the rate for bagged, as soon as all the main wheat shipping ports of Australia adopted bulk handling. Mr. Harris, manager of the Sydney Elevators, when in London 12 months ago, interviewed the Shipping Board and also Mr. Walker, of Lindley Walker & Co., who was in England at the same time. He was informed

by those gentlemen that if the exporting States of the Commonwealth would go in for bulk handling on a uniform basis, they would guarantee a reduction of 5s per ton on freight. There are 37½ bushels in a ton, and at 1¾d. per bushel there is a great deal to be gained by bulk handling. The stevedoring rates of bulk and bagged wheat in Sydney are as follows:—

Bagged wheat 1s. 2d. per ton, plus 6d. per ton for use of gantry; bagged wheat ex slings, 1s. 10d. per ton (in Western Australia the average works out at 1s. 9d. per ton); bulk wheat 4½d. per ton.

This has to be paid by the ship, and here we see a saving to the ship by the adoption of bulk handling. We are told that we require a great percentage of bagged wheat even if we ship in bulk. That was so in the past. Because of the modification by the Board of Trade of shipping regulations, it was found in New South Wales during 1930-31 that the average quantity of bagged wheat required per ship was approximately 4 per cent., which means that 96 per cent. of the wheat was shipped in bulk. For one particular ship, in the previous year 800 tons of bagged wheat had to be carried, but this year owing to the different conditions of loading, bunkers, etc., it took only 120 tons of bagged wheat. In that year also eight out of 66 vessels, and this season two out of 16 vessels, loaded bulk wheat without any bagged wheat whatsoever. Another question that has frequently cropped up is that we shall be unable to find markets for bagged wheat. I said a little while ago that the Board of Agriculture reported that 85 per cent. of the wheat imports into Great Britain are in bulk. Great Britain is the greatest importer of wheat in the world. In the case of the exporting countries of the world, 15 per cent. of wheat is sent away in bags. When we talk about the price of wheat, therefore, we must see that it cannot be governed by the 15 per cent., so that it must be governed by the 85 per cent., which is in bulk. We have been told we shall lose 50 per cent. of our markets in the Orient, and that Japan and China will not take our wheat. I have here copies of letters received from China and Japan.

Hon. M. F. Troy: To whom are they addressed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have been in constant communication with Syd-

ney on the question of bulk handling. Mr. Donnelly, the manager of the Graziers' Co-Operative Grain Insurance Co., has sent me two copies of letters from China and Japan.

Hon. A. McCallum: It would of course be a most unprejudiced source.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot understand that remark. The Co-Operative Grain Company have nothing to do with Sydney elevators, which is a Government concern. The co-operative company are buyers and sellers of wheat both in bulk and in bags. They manage the New South Wales Wheat Pool, apart from the control or management of the elevators. Why are they not unbiassed? Why should the hon. member make such an interjection? I will now deal with the question of the price of bulk-handled wheat. If members will pick up the "West Australian" almost any day in the week and look at the column of market reports that is telegraphed, they will see the price of bulk and bagged wheat in Sydney from day to day. For the last six months the price of both has been practically the same. The manner in which the particulars were published was not quite plain. I wrote to Mr. Donnelly and asked him to explain the matter to me, and this is what he said—

Whilst the nominal quotation for bagged wheat on the day referred to by you was slightly in excess of that of bulk, I am in a position to inform you most definitely that for quite a period quotations for bulk wheat have been in excess of those for bagged. For example, the estimated f.o.b. price for bagged wheat at one period was around 3s. 5½d., representing an approximate return to the grower of 2s. 8½d. On the same day there were buyers for bulk wheat warrants at 3s. 5½d., giving a return of 2s. 9½d. to the growers. This information I feel sure will convince you that although in the early days of the elevator system in this State there was a strong prejudice amongst buyers and also growers, of later years and particularly the last two, the system has been increasingly popular, not only with farmers but with buyers. We here can sell bulk wheat warrants practically any day, when there are times when we find it extremely difficult to find buyers for bagged wheat. In regard to a comparison between local and overseas prices for bulk wheat, there is no set rule; although on occasions flour millers contend that they cannot purchase bulk wheat locally above parity prices, and the market at such periods is controlled by overseas values. Set off against this, however, is the fact that frequently our local prices for bulk wheat are slightly above parity. This is sometimes influenced by reason of the growers not meeting the market freely, but more often, in my opinion, due to the ready negotiability and trading facilities of bulk wheat warrants.

I have referred to copies of letters which came from Japan and China. Here is one sent to me by Mr. Donnelly from Mitsui Bussan Kaisha Limited, of Tokio, and dated the 23rd April, 1932. It is headed "Bulk Handling Accommodation in Japan" and reads—

In reply to your letter in connection with bulk wheat handling accommodation in Japan we would like to report as follows:—

1. Quite contrary to your expectations, all wheat discharging ports in Japan are accommodated with complete facilities for discharging bulk wheat, and the flour mills of Nippon Seifun Kaisha (controlled by Mitsui Bussan Kaisha Ltd.) situated not only in Yokohama but in Moji, Kobe, Nagoya and Tokio, are all provided with suction pipes, the suction power being from 50-100 tons per hour at their inland mills, such as those situated at Takasaki and Oyama, they have accommodation for storing bulk wheat after the wheat has been discharged at Yokohama and sent over to the mills in the bulk state. The only hindrance is that overseas vessels cannot be put alongside the mills, owing to the depth of the water, and consequently as a rule all bulk wheat is discharged from overseas vessels into lighters. The discharging capacity being as customary, 500 tons per hatch per day, and in the case of a full cargo several hatches being put on work, it is quite possible to discharge 2,000 to 3,000 tons per day.

We have been told that if we sent bulk wheat to Japan the market would go to America. In the case of American and Canadian wheat there have been no shipments of bagged wheat; it has been discharged in every port in the bulk state. The letter goes on to deal with other questions, but I will read no more of that one. I have also a copy of a letter from the firm of the same name written from Shanghai in China, and dated May, 1932. Part of the letter reads—

The question under issue can be decided, after all is said and done, by the difference of price between bulk and bagged wheat, and for the present China is buying bulk wheat from New South Wales, Australia, as well as from America. This fact shows that it does not mean that China would not buy unless bagged wheat. As for American wheat, the quality of cornsacks being inferior and also the price for bagged wheat being exorbitantly high, China is fulfilling all her requirements in bulk wheat.

It is plain that China takes bulk wheat. Now, it is also said that by adopting bulk handling we shall lose our Indian market for wheat.

Hon. A. McCallum: Did not 40 per cent. of our wheat exports go to China last year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not greatly concerned if 100 per cent. went to China.

Hon. P. Collier: The facts indicate where the preference is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These letters from two large Far Eastern wheat merchants show that the Far East is prepared to take all the bulk wheat Australia will send there. And yet hon. members say it cannot be done. Until two or three years ago, no Australian wheat went to the Near East. All the wheat that in the past has gone to the Near East, has been sent in bulk.

Hon. A. McCallum: Those countries are now buying wheat because it is cheaper than rice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is probably true. However, I shall not enter into questions of economics. Again dealing with shipping freights and the price of wheat, only this year the South Australian Co-operative Wheat Pool sent a bulk shipment of wheat as a trial. The price obtained was 3-16ths of a penny per bushel less than for bagged wheat. Ocean freight was less by 2s. 6d. per ton on the bulk cargo, or .81d., leaving a difference of .62d. per bushel in favour of bulk wheat. These figures prove the case. Another statement which has been made is that bulk handling will prove detrimental to the State railway system. The opinion of those in control of the South African State railway system is the other way. I have here a letter from the general manager of the South African railways, which says—

Although, with the exception of one year, the system has shown losses since its inception, our elevators have come to be recognised as an integral part of our transportation system for the efficient and economical handling of our maize export traffic, and from the experience we have had with both bag and bulk handling, I must say that a bulk handling system is essential to ensure efficient and economical working on any railway system which is faced with the seasonal rushes of a large volume of grain traffic requiring to be transported from inland producing areas to coast ports for shipment within a specified time. Our elevator system has also been the means of minimising cross haulage of grain traffic, resulting in substantial savings being effected in the actual ton-mileage hauled as compared with the mileage charged for, and this is an important economic factor which cannot be estimated in terms of pounds, shil-

lings and pence. This Administration has complete control of the elevator system, and is responsible for the grading, warehousing, transporting and shipment, etc., of all grain deposited in the system. This scheme of centralised control, which of course ensures co-ordinated effort, has proved most successful in securing the utmost economy and efficiency in the general handling and movement of our grain traffic.

In the report of the United States Department of Agriculture, from which I quoted previously, the question of rail transport is also discussed, as follows:—

Saves in railroad transportation. Cars of bulk grain are loaded and unloaded at modern bulk handling plants in much less time than it takes to load and unload cars of sacked grain at the warehouse or elevator. In moving grain from the country to the terminal in the rush season, the railroads are often hampered in their operations by a shortage of cars. Yards at terminals are frequently so full of cars of grain that an embargo is placed on the further movement of grain to the terminals until the congestion is relieved. When such a condition exists at Pacific coast points, it is often due to the slow rate at which sacked grain is unloaded. Cars of grain are loaded to capacity more easily when the grain is in bulk, than when the grain is in sacks. The breaking of sacks in poorly coopered cars brings additional losses. Efficiency of freight cars on Pacific coast railroads would be increased if all the grain were handled in bulk from the country to terminals.

Hon. P. Collier: Only one member of the Country Party present in the Chamber. Very interesting!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Further in connection with that matter—

Mr. Doney: As a matter of fact, I can count four Country members.

Hon. P. Collier: Look at the empty benches!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. Collier: Country Party members are extremely interested!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The construction engineer for the Victorian railways—

Hon. P. Collier: Empty benches!

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask hon. members to keep order. I again ask them to bear in mind that the Minister for Works is addressing the House.

Hon. A. McCallum: There are many chairs vacant, Mr. Speaker.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Bock, the engineer for construction in the Victorian Railway Department, when discussing bulk handling with me said that for

30 years he had been an advocate of the system. that he had prepared reports for Royal Commissions on the subject, and that he considered the introduction of bulk handling would increase the efficiency of the Victorian railway system by at least 10 per cent. Another matter for consideration is the saving likely to result from bulk handling to Western Australian wheatgrowers. Large numbers of bags are imported into this State. In 1929-30 Western Australia imported 1,379,129 dozen bags valued at £590,759. For 1930-31 the imports were 1,598,935 dozen bags, and the value was £549,732. These figures have been furnished to me by the Government Statistician, and the values quoted are *c.i.f.e.*, not including landing costs or profit. The cost to the wheatgrowers would probably be not less than 25 per cent. above the figures quoted. Summarised, for the period 1920-21 to 1930-31 this State imported 10,695,780 dozen wheat bags, for an overseas expenditure of £4,752,875, representing an average price of 8s. 10½d. per dozen. Therefore bulk handling would save a great deal of money in that respect. At present the cost of bags goes out of the State.

Mr. Withers: What do you mean by "a great deal of money"? What is the proportion?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that later. Bulk handling, I repeat, would save the wheatgrowers considerable money. I have given the details in at least an endeavour to convince hon. members. As regards Western Australia, the position is that we have had bulk handling here. This year some hundreds of our farmers delivered their wheat in bulk. That bulk handling was only a limited matter, and was not port bulk handling but only bulk handling at the siding; and these farmers were charged the same handling rates for bagged wheat, and received ½d. per bushel lower price. The fact remains that hundreds of farmers saved from 2½d. to 3d. per bushel. I have here actual statements from farmers who have saved money. In my opinion, and in the opinion of many practical farmers, once bulk handling is established no more cornsacks will be bought, because, although certain receptacles will be needed to hold the wheat when taken from the harvest, it is quite possible to use manure bags, after hav-

ing been washed, for next year's crop. I speak from definite knowledge when I say that hundreds of farmers will buy no more cornsacks. Hon. members will ask, "What about the one-man farm?" I agree that the amounts saved would vary; one farmer will save considerably more than another. The holder of a one-man farm, having harvested his crop, will need something to hold it in; but he will need only a third of the bags he requires at present; and he will be able to use the bags for at least three seasons.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Use his super sacks for three years?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. He can do as hundreds of farmers are doing this year—wash the super bags, when they will be quite good bags to use for wheat next year. That statement is the result of practical experience.

Hon. A. McCallum: Can you give any assurance that that system will be acceptable?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am talking about delivering wheat in bulk, and about something to put the wheat in for conveyance to the silo. I do not want bags to be acceptable. In New South Wales bulk wheat and bagged wheat are sold side by side. What is the reason why such a position obtains at almost every siding in New South Wales? The reason is that the elevator system will take only *f.a.q.* wheat, while large areas of New South Wales are badly infested with weeds and the wheat from them is not accepted by the elevator system. But there is yet another reason. If I deliver wheat in a second-hand bag here, I am docked 6d. In New South Wales, on the other hand, bags which have been used for three years are accepted. At harvest time one can get a little better price for bagged wheat. Wheat sold as bagged produces perhaps a halfpenny or three-farthings per bushel more.

Hon. A. McCallum: My interjection was as to whether wheat was acceptable in super bags. Super is poison.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member interjecting will have his opportunity later.

Hon. A. McCallum: Yes, I will.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am speaking from practical experience, having washed super bags and then used them, during a period of 20 years. Every

year I sell my oats in super bags. After a super bag has been in water for 24 hours, there is no poison in it. The acid, being soluble, disappears in the water. I wish to refer once again to the report of the United States Department of Agriculture. Bulk handling came in along the Pacific coast in 1921, and gradually extended even to the inland States, where a large quantity of wheat is still sold in bags, the reason for this being that not every siding possesses a bulk-handling installation. The three gentlemen who made the report investigated the matter on the spot. Conditions on the Pacific coast are the same as conditions here—a long, wet winter, and a dry summer. Harvesting there is done with the same machines as we use. Those officials went on the farm and made exhaustive investigations, and they furnished their estimates. They took the years 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, and 1927, and showed that the saving under bulk handling, as compared with bag handling, represented 13.48 cent. per bushel. That applies only to savings on the farm and on transport to sidings. Hon. members may regard that saving, which amounts to 6¼d. per bushel as too over estimated. They went further and investigated storage and handling phases right through to the ship. As a result, they worked out the saving at 16.4 cents. a bushel, or over 8d. per bushel. I do not propose to advise the House that the saving under the scheme will represent that amount, but I do stress the fact that it is only the farmer who will go into the matter thoroughly and be prepared to make his bulk handling savings on the farm itself, who will be able to benefit to anything approaching that extent. On the other hand, I say that even the individual who is content to continue without showing any initiative or putting forward any special effort to show any savings under the scheme, will still secure the advantage of 3d. a bushel. The man who endeavours to effect savings all along the line will ultimately benefit by at least 6d. a bushel under bulk handling. The report furnished by the three officers who investigated the position under instructions from the United States Department of Agriculture concluded with the following statement:—

In practically every movement of grain in its journey from the field to its destination at the terminals, the charges and costs for handling of grain in bulk are lower than the charges and costs for handling sacked grain. There

appears to be sufficient saving to make the change from sack to bulk handling desirable for everyone connected with the grain industry. Farmers have much to gain in the reduced cost of harvesting and handling bulk grain on the farm. The country grain dealers, by changing to bulk grain, can save in the cost of handling and then can conveniently add valuable services such as cleaning, washing, scouring and otherwise conditioning the grain, and preparing seed. The railroads would gain by having their freight cars used more efficiently through reduction in idle time, in loading and unloading, and by the loading of the cars to their full capacity. The terminal grain dealers and exporters could greatly increase their capacity for rapid receiving, conditioning, and shipping of cargoes with marked economy if they used the bulk method. The steamship companies can receive and discharge cargoes of grain much more rapidly when the grain is in bulk, thus shortening the ship's time in port.

Those are the conclusions of men who can be regarded as independent authorities, with no axe to grind. The United States Department of Agriculture sent the men to the Pacific coast to report on the position and that is the result of their inquiries. They report a saving of 8d. per bushel on grain sent out in bulk as against the bag system. They have taken all possible precautions to make their investigation complete. I do not propose to say that our farmers will effect that saving, but I do say that in this State, if we establish the bulk handling system, we can save at least 3d. per bushel to the farmers. The condition of the wheatgrowing industry to-day is such that we must do something to help it. We cannot give the farmers money, but we can reduce their cost of production. I do not intend to deal with the Bill in detail because the Government desire it to be referred to a select committee representative of both Houses. We can continue the discussion of the Bill when the committee report back to us. I do not want members to look at this question from a narrow point of view. They should regard it from the standpoint of the State. Look at the question from the standpoint of the wheatgrower, and if members do that, they will do it from the standpoint of the State. Do not let us regard the position from the point of view of the wheat merchants or the lumpers, which are but sectional interests. Have in mind the extent to which the State will gain. The introduction of the bulk handling system will help to restore prosperity to the wheatgrowers, and that is synonymous with the prosperity of the State. Let hon. members view the problem along those lines. If they do so they

will agree that the State will benefit. We will save £500,000 a year that is now sent to India for the employment of black fellows. That money will be retained in the State. The scheme will do more than anything else towards bringing the State wheat production to the 100,000,000-bushel mark. The wheat industry is the greatest in the State. Some may say that the wool industry is greater. The greater the wheat production, the greater the number of sheep that will be grown in the State. In the wheat belt sheep cannot be run under natural conditions, and only by first ploughing the land and growing wheat, can our flocks be increased. A man cannot grow wheat successfully unless he has sheep as well. Let hon. members realise the position and help to place our wheat-growers on a footing that will enable them to compete with the rest of the world. There is another means by which help could be extended to the industry, but that is not within the control of this Parliament. I ask members to view this question on the basis that agriculture is the one great primary industry that we can develop without diminishing the inheritance of future generations. It is the industry around which all others revolve and is the industry by which Western Australia must stand or fall. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. McCallum: What is in the Bill?

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister did not once mention what was contained in the Bill.

Mr. Withers: He wants it referred to a joint select committee.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

As to Tabling of Documents.

Hon. M. F. TROY: During the course of his speech, the Minister quoted from a number of documents. As it is a rule of the House that all documents quoted from shall be laid on the Table, is it the intention of the Minister to make those documents available?

The Minister for Works: I quoted from the published report. You can have that.

Hon. M. F. TROY: But the Minister read letters from Japan and elsewhere.

The Minister for Works: I read from my notes.

Hon. P. Collier: You made quotations.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the motion you wish to move?

Hon. M. F. TROY: I do not wish to move any motion at all. I am pointing out that, in accordance with the Standing Orders, if a member quotes from letters or documents they must be placed on the Table of the House. I suggest the Minister observes the Standing Order and makes the documents available for our investigation.

Hon. P. Collier: It does not rest with the Minister; it is the rule of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am prepared to place on the Table of the House the type-written notes from which I have quoted. Such a request has never been made before. If an hon. member should read an extract from a letter, which is not in his possession or is not in the House, how can he place it on the Table? To suggest that I should table my notes is most unusual.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member has not asked for the Minister's notes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have my typewritten extracts available.

Hon. P. Collier: They are extracts from documents.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member requires them, I have no objection to handing them over.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister need not be annoyed. I have merely drawn attention to a rule of the House that documents quoted from should be laid on the Table.

The Minister for Works: I am not annoyed.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am not suggesting this from mere curiosity, but we should have an opportunity to investigate the documents quoted from.

The PREMIER: Can any hon. member be required to table any document from which he may happen to quote, even though the document is not in his possession?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Surely you are not ashamed of the sources of your information?

Hon. P. Collier: We ought to have that information.

The PREMIER: I quite realise that if an hon. member has a document in his possession here and quotes from it, the document should be tabled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

The PREMIER: But the Minister did nothing of the sort. As far as I am aware, it has never been the custom to ask for the tabling of a document quoted from, in the circumstances members have witnessed this evening.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is not the position at all. I know the position well because I have insisted upon the course being pursued myself. The Minister quoted from certain documents. We do not want his notes but we do require that the documents he quoted from shall be laid on the Table of the House. The rules of the House demand that that course shall be followed.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course, that is the position.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I know that is so.

The Premier: You always know a lot.

Mr. SPEAKER: On the point at issue I quote the following from "May":—

Another rule or principle of debate may be here added. A Minister of the Crown is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other State paper not before the House, unless he be prepared to lay it upon the Table. This restraint is similar to that rule of evidence, in courts of law, which prevents counsel from citing documents that have not been produced in evidence.

If the Minister says he has only his notes and not any documents, I am not in a position to deny it.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not a question of notes, but of quotations. We do not want the Minister's notes.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Minister read quotations during the course of his address—

Hon. P. Collier: He read several.

Mr. SPEAKER: —and copies of letters not in the possession of the House—

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, several.

Mr. SPEAKER: —then I must uphold the point raised by the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) that the documents should be laid on the Table of the House, as they are in the possession of the House.

The PREMIER: It is amazing to me to think that a member may not make a quotation from a book or a document without laying it on the Table of the House. It is often done and no one has suggested the tabling of the information. It may not be in the possession of the member making the quotation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have given my ruling.

Hon. P. Collier: What the Speaker has read from "May" is an answer to the Premier.

The PREMIER: I am not in a position to question Mr. Speaker's ruling, but it is an extraordinary position. I have never been asked to table documents in such circumstances during the 26 years I have been in Parliament. What the Minister has done has been to refer to extracts that were included in his typewritten notes. It will be almost impossible to carry on the business of the House, if the Speaker's ruling is to be strictly adhered to.

Mr. Kenneally: The Minister read particulars from letters and gave us the name of one firm.

The PREMIER: I have never before known such a contention to be raised regarding the tabling of documents quoted by Ministers during a speech such as that of the Minister for Works.

Hon. M. F. Troy: On a point of order: Does the Premier question the ruling of Mr. Speaker? If not, why is he continuing to argue the point?

The PREMIER: What has it got to do with you?

Hon. P. Collier: The Speaker has given his decision. The Premier is arguing against it.

Mr. SPEAKER: If my memory serves me aright, the Minister for Works on several occasions read letters and said whom they were from. Therefore, in my opinion, those communications are in the possession of the House, and I have given my ruling accordingly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What do hon. members require? I tried to pronounce some names. Is that what the member for Mt. Magnet is inquiring about? I will let him have those particulars if he desires them.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not what we require. We want the documents that you quoted from.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I want to know what I am expected to lay on the Table.

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Speaker will decide that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If Mr. Speaker will inform me what is to be tabled, well and good.

Hon. M. F. TROY: May I respectfully suggest that the Minister must table all the documents that he used.

The Minister for Works: Nonsense!

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Minister quoted from the sources indicated, he must table the documents. That is my decision.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Surely the Minister is not ashamed to do that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This discussion must cease.

House adjourned at 9.1 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 22nd September, 1932.

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

ELECTORAL, NORTH-EAST PROVINCE.

Seat declared vacant.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.33]: I move—

That this House resolves that owing to the death of the Hon. Frederick William Allsop, late member for the North-East Province, the seat be declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Nathan, leave of absence granted to Hon. J. M. Macfarlane (Metropolitan-Suburban) for six consecutive sittings of the House on the ground of urgent private business.

MOTION—MINES REGULATION ACT.

To disallow Regulations.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the previous day of the debate on the following motion by Hon. J. Nicholson: That the additions and amendments to Regulations under the Mines Regulation Act, 1906, published in the "Government Gazette" on 27th May, 1932, and numbered 1529/17 and 1010/30, and laid on the Table of the House on 16th August, 1932, be and are hereby disallowed.

On motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Twelfth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [4.36]: Before addressing a few words to the motion I desire cordially to endorse the expressions of other hon. members in congratulating you, Sir, on continuing to preside over the debates in this Chamber. Also I welcome the new members. If Messrs. Bolton, Moore, Clydesdale and Piesse, none of whom is present just now, attend to their duties and prove to be as eager to put a spotlight on to any legislation brought forward as were their predecessors, the late Mr. Lovekin, Sir William Lathlain, and Messrs. Kempton and Glasheen, we shall be able to say of them that they have not neglected their duties. One of our new members burst into song in the first speech he made, declaring that we could dispense with Parliament and this Chamber and delegate the duties and responsibilities to seven business men.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Would he be one of them?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: From his remarks I presume he would be. He seriously put forward that proposition, but I suggest that when he was on the hustings he did not make that an important plank of his platform, he did not ask the electors to send him to Parliament in order to have Parliament abolished and its duties delegated to somebody else; in other words, he did not suggest that his services as a member of Parliament were not required. In the