

dustries, wheat and wool. This meeting in London reminds me of the building of the Tower of Babel, when men came from all parts of the world to erect as a monument a tower that would reach the sky. Members who are interested can read it all in the eleventh chapter of Genesis. But somebody saw the fallacy of the whole thing and stepped in, and when the men came back to work next morning they all spoke in different tongues. So the bricklayer who wanted a brick could not tell the other man of his need, because the other man spoke a different tongue. So to-day we find all the nations seeking to build a tower of Babel in London; everyone wanting everything he can get for his own country. However, it has fallen through, as all expected it would. I think the completion of that parable was that the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the earth. So we have our World Conference that has been trying to build up a set of conditions which the industries of the world cannot carry. The only way I can see out of the difficulty is to get down to bedrock and let each country produce the article most suitable to its conditions, and produce it at a profit. I repeat that we in this State can do it with wheat and wool, but not by growing wheat 50 miles from a railway, and the Government paying part of the cartage cost, while at the same time land suitable for wheat production is to be found right alongside the railway. There is one mission we all should have in life, and that is to leave this world better than we found it. I do not know how far we are fulfilling that mission, but it seems to me it is the one object we should have in view. It is the duty of all of us to ponder this and see what we can do to meet the existing difficulties. For my part I can assure members that I am backing my own opinion. This year I have in fourteen times the quantity of wheat I had in last year. I am going on producing wheat and wool because I know that if the prices come right I shall be on the right side; if they do not come right, I will be out with a fishing rod and a loin-cloth, as many other people are to-day. That is the view I take; let us go straight ahead as if nothing had happened; reduce the cost of production— which we can—and produce at the price at which we can sell in the world's market. If this be done, we shall have done our part. It can be done and it must

be done. We have valuable assets in this wonderful country—I do not say this in sarcasm—a country with every natural facility for production, but which for the last 20 years at all events has been grossly mismanaged. I hope we shall all put our shoulders to the wheel, try to forget the past and see what we can do for the future. I will support the motion.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-Reply adopted.

FEDERAL SENATE VACANCY.

Joint Sitting.

The PRESIDENT: I have met the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly regarding the message from His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, and in conformity with the Standing Orders relating to the election of a Senator to the Federal Parliament, the Speaker and I have made arrangements whereby a joint sitting of the Houses will be held in the Legislative Council Chamber, on Thursday, 27th July, at 3 p.m., for the purpose of electing a Senator for the Federal Parliament in place of the Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, resigned.

House adjourned at 8.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 25th July, 1933.

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

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

MR. SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 21a, I nominate the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers), the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney), and the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) temporary Chairmen of Committees for the session.

QUESTIONS (2)—GROUP SETTLEMENT.

Judicial Inquiry, Imperial Government.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, What representations, if any, have been made to the Imperial Government for a judicial inquiry into group settlement? 2, If representations have been made, what action do the Western Australian Government propose to take? 3, Will the Western Australian Government, according to election promises made by candidates, endeavour to have such inquiry made?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The previous Government refused to institute any further inquiry into group settlement, but intimated that they had no objection to the British Government satisfying themselves as to the treatment of British born people in Western Australia, and particularly in group settlements, but that such inquiry should be made in their own way and at their own expense. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The Government are not responsible for election promises made by Opposition candidates.

Peel and Bateman Estates, Drainage.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to improve the existing drains on the Peel and Bateman group settlements? 2, If so, when will the work be put in hand?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The matter is under consideration. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

Alleged Mismanagement and Discourtesy.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Employment: 1, Is he aware of complaints of mismanagement by the permanent heads

of this department? 2, Is he aware of the alleged discourteous attitude adopted by the officials to persons applying for relief? 3, If so, what action does he propose to take to correct this, so that persons applying for relief may be treated with courtesy?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: 1, No. 2, No, but if instances can be quoted, inquiries will be made. 3, Answered by Nos. 1 and 2.

QUESTIONS (2)—UNEMPLOYMENT.

Sustenance and Relief Works.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Employment: What number of men on sustenance and relief works are on each of the following units:—14s., 21s., 28s., 35s., 42s., and 49s.?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: 14s., approximately 2,250; 21s., approximately 2,730; 28s., approximately 2,200; 35s., approximately 1,520; 42s., approximately 740; 49s., approximately 560.

Marquis Street Office.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Employment: Is he aware of the shocking state of furniture, cabinets, etc., at the Marquis-street office?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT replied: No, but economy has been exercised by the department. Furniture in the homes of the unemployed is in a far worse condition and requires first attention.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Premier, sessional committees were appointed as follows:—

Library Committee—Mr. Speaker, Miss Holman and Mr. Patrick.

Standing Orders Committee—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Griffiths, Hon. W. D. Johnson and Mr. J. H. Smith.

House Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lambert, Mr. McLarty, Mr. Stubbs and Mr. Wilson.

Printing Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. J. MacCallum Smith and Mr. Withers.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.*Fourth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 20th July.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [4.38]: May I first of all thank the member for Northam (Mr. Hawke) for having moved the adjournment of the debate at the last sitting of the House in order to allow me the opportunity to speak to the motion before the Chair. I am obliged to the hon. member for his courtesy, and I hope that some opportunity will arise when I shall be able to reciprocate. Next I should like to join with those hon. members who have already addressed themselves to the subject of the motion before the House in congratulating the mover of that motion. In the course of his speech the mover showed an originality of thought of a high order, and originality of thought with power to get out of the common rut and to think for oneself is undoubtedly an important and valuable asset; but, unfortunately, in the course of a search for originality—if the hon. member will pardon my saying so—it is possible to run riot with the rules of common sense; as, for instance, in the suggestion to cure unemployment in this State by total prohibition of imports. I wonder if the hon. member has given full and serious consideration to what must be the result of such a policy. This State exports, and sells oversea, far more than it imports and pays for, coming from oversea. It is obvious that if those who live oversea were to adopt the same policy as the hon. member advocates—and, unfortunately, human beings have a habit of treating other people as they are treated themselves—then we must lose far more than we could gain. We should lose the substance merely to gain the shadow, and instead of producing a state of greater employment in our midst such a policy would undoubtedly lead to a considerable increase in unemployment. The true policy for us to follow is, I conceive, to engage ourselves in those industries in which Nature has given us an advantage over our competitors elsewhere—as, for instance, in the growing of wheat, of wool, of fruit, and many other forms of our primary industrial life—and to export the surpluses, after supplying our own wants, produced from those industries, across our frontiers; and, as a consideration for the purchase of those surpluses by people living

beyond our frontiers we should buy from them the products of industries in which they excel. However, it may well be that this subject is irrelevant to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, at any rate until the time arrives when we shall once more have control of our own fiscal policy. I desire also to congratulate the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Wise) on his excellent speech. It is only too true that nothing like sufficient consideration has been given, or is being given, to the wants and necessities of the people living in the far North; but it is useless labouring the point that the few crumbs which have fallen from the table of Dives have come from a Dives clothed in Labour garments. The late Government, unquestionably meant to confer a substantial benefit upon those living in the far North by the legislation which they brought down and passed during the last session of the late Parliament. I do not follow the argument that that intent was frustrated by bad drafting of the statute. As I understand it, the statute in question incorporates all the provisions of the Act of 1917, and the Act of 1917 was passed for a similar purpose, namely to extend the term of Crown leases and pastoral leases, and has worked satisfactorily.

The Minister for Works: The position is that the Act does not do that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is the allegation. There is some difference always between a position and an allegation. I myself, I am afraid, fail to see that the allegation is correct or represents the position; but, if it does, then an amending Bill should be brought down as soon as possible to cure the defect; and I assure the member for Gascoyne that if such a measure is brought down, it will receive every favourable consideration from this side of the House. I desire also to congratulate all those other new members who have come into our midst and who have addressed themselves to the subject of the motion. Naturally, all of us have different viewpoints; and it is in the tolerant consideration of each other's views that the true hope lies for sound progress. Therefore I feel sure the lesson will come home to new members more every day, that one's own wisdom is limited, but that if one is sensible enough to allow the wisdom of others also to guide one it is possible that one's steps will proceed in a more correct and orderly direc-

tion. It is a matter of no surprise, it is a matter only to be expected, that hon. members on the Government side of the House should rejoice, and should to some extent even gloat, over the result of the late general election. I do not question for one moment the extent of their victory, nor do I deny it; but I consider it permissible to inquire into some of the causes that brought the victory about. It was said with a frequency that almost bored one to listen to that the late Government won their way to power by specious promises made to the electors. If we turn to the late election, the boot is entirely on the other foot. What were the promises, direct or implied, which were contained in the speech delivered by the Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, on the 24th February last at Boulder? Amongst other things he said that the Government of Western Australia had been the only Australian Government to reduce salaries and wages apart from awards of the Arbitration Court or of some industrial tribunal. And, moreover, he reiterated that no stipulation bound any Government which became a party to the so-called Premiers' Plan to reduce salaries and wages, that each Government was left to work out its own salvation. That is to say, it was open to the late Government of Western Australia either to reduce salaries and wages or not to do so, and that the late Government, having that choice, had reduced salaries and wages. It seems to me inexplicable how the Premier came to deceive himself into making that statement. If I may be allowed to do so, I would point out, the Premiers' Plan, as it is called—I will show presently that it is an utterly false name—is printed in full in the "Australian Year Book" for 1932, in the appendix to that book, and on page 847 members will find it set out that the Plan had been adopted by the Conference, consisting of every State in Australia and the Commonwealth Government, which at that time was presided over by Mr. Scullin. Then we get this—

The Plan has been adopted by the Conference as a whole, each part of which is accepted on the understanding that all the other parts are equally and simultaneously put into operation.

So the parties to that Plan had no option; they could not take this part or that part, but they had to take the lot or nothing, and

the signatories, by signing the document, accepted the lot. Then it is set out on page 847 that the Plan embraces the following measures:—

(a) A reduction of 20 per cent. in all adjustable Government expenditure, as compared with the year ending 30th June, 1930, including all emoluments, wages, salaries and pensions paid by the Governments, whether fixed by statute or otherwise, such reductions to be equitably effected.

The Premier interjected.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the Premier will allow me to state the full facts, he will take a very different view.

The Minister for Works: You are not stating the full facts; you are stating only what suits you.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the Premier is disposed to challenge what I have to say, I have brought up a Press copy of his speech. I understand from inquiries I made that the report was produced from notes supplied by himself.

The Premier: I never supplied to any newspaper a note dealing with my policy speech.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I have been informed that invariably, when the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition is making an important speech, the newspaper secures notes of that speech in order that it might be certain of the correctness of the report.

The Premier: The only notes I supplied to the Press were those of figures dealing with finance.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I accept at once the Premier's statement that he did not supply notes to the paper, and that without the least reservation. I have no desire to challenge any statement made here by the Premier; I accept it at once. But the matter was published in the Press.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: And it has remained uncorrected ever since.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If it be incorrect, it should have been corrected at the earliest opportunity. So I take as correct the report that the Premier stated it was left to the Government to work out its own salvation; that it could reduce salaries and wages or refrain from so doing. And from the extract taken from page 847 of the "Year

Book" it is clear that, apart from any statute or any industrial award or agreement, the Governments that signed this document bound themselves to make a reduction of 20 per cent. in salaries and wages. And in addition to that, at page 848, still dealing with the so-called Premiers' Plan, we find set out an official version of that Plan in which, under the heading "Reduction of expenditure," we get the following:—

The Plan provides for Government economy on the basis of an immediate cut, averaging 20 per cent. for all Government wages and salaries below the level of 1929-30.

And on page 850 we find set out the conclusions embraced in this Plan. Conclusion No. 1 reads as follows:—

The Plan agreed upon is an indivisible whole, and the carrying out of any one part is dependent upon the carrying out of all parts.

That is to say, no Government has the right to pick out this part or that part, and the carrying out of any one part is dependent on the carrying out of all the parts. And conclusion No. 4 is thus set out—

To the Government employee the Plan involves a reduction which, with reductions already effected, represent an average of 20 per cent., but it makes his position and future emoluments much more secure.

Surely, in face of those extracts I have read from an official document, there can be no doubt as to the inaccuracy of the statement made by the Premier.

The Premier: I will show there was nothing inaccurate in it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Then the Premier must prove this official record to be inaccurate.

The Premier: We can show that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No doubt the Premier can show anything.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member is trying to show that the Premier said something he never did say.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I have read nothing but official documents. Obviously it was incumbent on the late Government to make the reductions they were called upon to make under that document. That Government could not pass on the job to anybody else, but had to do it themselves. Moreover, it has to be borne in mind that although this scheme was termed the Premiers' Plan, it was brought down by Mr. Scullin and Mr.

Theodore, at that time two eminent statesmen and two pillars of the Labour Party.

Mr. Raphael: It's a good job you think them statesmen. Not many others do.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am sorry that sometimes voices in this Chamber appear to come from empty space. If in the circumstances I do not answer, members will know it is not for want of courtesy, but is the fault of the acoustics of the Chamber. Although this Plan—this indivisible Plan from which no Government had the right to take one part or another part, but must take the whole or nothing—was brought down by Mr. Scullin and Mr. Theodore, nevertheless the Premier held up the late Government to odium for adhering to that Plan in respect of the reduction of wages and salaries. What is the plain inference to be drawn from the Premier's condemnation of the conduct of the late Government in reducing salaries and wages? Surely it was a promise that if his party came back into power the financial emergency cut would be restored. I have no hesitation in stating that every public servant in Western Australia read it in that light and believed that if the Labour Party came back to power, then what is known as the Financial Emergency cut applied to his salary or wages—and there is no real distinction between the two words—that the cut applied to what payment he received for his services would be restored. Undoubtedly the public servants read that promise in that light. And public servants are a very important factor in every constituency, not only as regards their number but even more so as regards their influence. Yet if the Treasurer is at all serious in his undertaking to keep within a Budget deficit of £850,000 for the present financial year, he has not the ghost of a hope of redeeming that promise.

The Premier: I did not make that promise.

Hon. N. KEENAN: When the hon. member has an opportunity, he can inform the House and me in that respect. The statement in the newspaper, he says, is incorrect.

The Minister for Works: That does not appear in the newspaper.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Since it seems I am invited to do so, I will read this extract from the "West Australian" of the 25th February last. In the report of the Pre-

nier's speech, under the heading "The Premier's Plan," the following appears—

Soon after the Mitchell Government took office the Governments of Australia had a Conference from which the Premiers' Plan was evolved. This Plan involved economies by all the Governments, but left the manner of them to the individual Governments concerned. There was no stipulation that wages and salaries should be cut by the Governments adhering to the Plan, but each Government was left to work out its own salvation.

Surely that is an accurate statement of what I have been putting to the House: "There was no stipulation that wages and salaries should be cut by the Governments adhering to the Plan, but each Government was left to work out its own salvation." It is impossible to read the Plan itself and suppose for a moment that that statement is true. As I have said, there is no ghost of a hope, if we are to restrict the Budget deficit to £850,000, no hope of redeeming that promise.

Mr. Latham: It is £750,000 this year.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is only with the £100,000 special grant. I may be wrong, but I made inquiries in the proper quarter and I understand that next year the Commonwealth will make a special grant of £100,000 which will enable the Treasurer to show a deficit of £750,000, when in reality without that special grant the deficit would be £850,000. Now in addition to that promise which I have just dealt with, the Premier, then Leader of the Opposition—

The Premier: Which promise did you deal with?

Hon. N. KEENAN: The promise to restore the Financial Emergency cut.

The Premier: I did not make any such promise.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is clear on the face of it that anybody reading the Premier's speech could have come to no other conclusion.

The Premier: That is not what I meant.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It does not matter what the Premier meant, it is what his words meant.

The Premier: It is not what I said.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is what is printed in the Press. If that which appeared in the Press bears a plain meaning, it is of no use the Premier saying that is not the meaning he intended. Everyone can read the report and judge for himself.

The Minister for Works: But it is wrong.

Hon. N. KEENAN: These flat contradictions are not acceptable, even to Ministers' own supporters. Now let me pass to the next one: To tickle the ears of the farming community a promise was made to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the price of superphosphates. I have often heard the Premier and others speak of what is called specious promises made by the Leader of the late Government in order to win favour, but I venture to say there never was a promise more specious than this one if by the words "specious promise" we mean a promise flattering to the eye and false to the hope. Everybody knows there are only two large manufacturers engaged in the business of supplying superphosphates in Western Australia. Both of them are public companies, and one of those two companies has been unable to pay any dividend whatever on ordinary shares for some years past, while the other has been able to pay only a small dividend. In face of those facts, can it be suggested that those manufacturers are selling their product at too high a price or that there is anything whatever for a Royal Commission to inquire into as regards the price of superphosphates? If it be said that middlemen are obtaining too much for their services, again that statement is inaccurate as regards one company because it employs no middlemen. Even if middlemen are employed and if they are receiving far too much for the service they render, the cure is not the appointment of a Royal Commission: it is for the Government, through some of their agencies, to become gratuitous distributors of superphosphates. Something of the kind was done by the previous Government when difficulty arose about farmers obtaining supplies of superphosphates, but no great splashing of water was engaged in to mark what was a mere ordinary act of administration. It is, of course, an absolutely specious promise to talk of appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the price of superphosphates. No doubt it was made to win the support of some of the farming community. If there is reason for appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the farming industry, the most imperative matter demanding inquiry is the huge debt that lies on that industry. It may be said

that we have already had a Royal Commission in recent years to inquire into the disabilities of farmers. That Commission, on sworn evidence tendered to them, found that the debt that lies on the farming industry amounts to no less than £32,000,000. Even if all hopes of a rise in market prices were realised, it would be entirely impossible for the industry to do more than stagger under such a load. But there is no suggestion made to deal with this acute problem. Now let us deal with the promise of an inquiry into the price of superphosphates. Of course it was something that meant nothing at all, but it was considered to be sufficient to gull poor yokels into giving their votes for Labour.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The Premier: The hon. member is waving his hand towards members on the Opposition side.

Hon. N. KEENAN: They are to be found all over the place. After the Premier, in his speech, had thus ventured into the farming districts, he indulged in much wider scope for his promises. The long-suffering taxpayer was not forgotten in the plethora of promises. The Premier said the late Government had increased the income tax by 20 per cent. and dividend duties by 20 per cent.; had imposed a hospital tax of 1½d. in the £1; increased the stamp duty on cheque forms from 1d. to 2d.; and increased the entertainment tax and the totalisator tax. Notoriously the best way to win the vote of a taxpayer is through his pocket, and taxpayers in some form or other constitute a very large proportion of every electorate. Therefore to abuse the Government who have increased taxation is a clever move to catch votes. "Down with the Government that have done all those things—increased income tax and dividend duties by 20 per cent., imposed a hospital tax, doubled the tax on cheques and increased the totalisator and entertainment taxes! Vote for Labour and you will vote for your salvors!" Let me remind members what the Premier, in a gloriously reminiscent mood also stated. He said the best guarantee of what could be expected of a Labour Government in regard to taxation was to be deduced from what Labour had done when previously in office. Look at their record! Look what

Labour did when previously in office! Labour had reduced the income tax by 48 per cent. What was the long-suffering taxpayer to understand from all that? Members on the Government side laugh. Now that the taxpayer's vote has been obtained, he is laughed at and scorned. What was he to think when the promise was made? He was led to believe that if he voted for Labour and if Labour were returned to power, he would receive substantial relief in the matter of taxation. The man who was drawing big dividends would not have to pay 20 per cent. extra, the man signing a cheque would not have to pay double the stamp duty. In this way taxpayers were to get relief if they voted Labour.

The Premier: Oh, oh!

Hon. N. KEENAN: Will they get any relief whatever?

The Premier: I did not say that they would.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Or will they not be very fortunate if they do not get the load at present lying on them substantially increased? The Premier, by his remark, invites me, I presume, to read once more from his speech. The report stated—

The Premier (Sir James Mitchell) had said three years ago he would reduce taxation, but last year he had increased the income tax by 20 per cent., increased dividend duties by 20 per cent., and imposed a hospital tax of 1½d. in the £1 on wage and salary earners of the State . . . The Premier had also increased the stamp duty on cheque forms from 1d. to 2d. The entertainment tax had been increased; also the totalisator tax.

The Premier: All of which is true.

The Minister for Works: You were a party to the promise to reduce taxation three years ago, and you were a party to making all those increases.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Surely I have some rights in this House, and I ask the Minister to respect them. I did not go to the country on this occasion and say, "If you return to power the party with which I am allied all those things are going to be reduced."

The Premier: Neither did I.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Listen to this language! What did it mean unless it meant that the taxpayer would gain advantage by the return of Labour to power? Here are the actual words—

Mr. Collier said that the best guarantee of what could be expected of a Labour Government was to be deduced from what Labour had done when previously in office.

The Minister for Works: The same thing could be said of when you were there, and that is the reason you are on the Opposition side now.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am on my feet at present.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Nedlands has the floor.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am glad that somebody thinks I have. May I resume my reading of the Premier's speech, in which he stated what might be expected if Labour were returned to power—

The Labour Government had reduced income tax by 48 per cent.

What was the taxpayer to think of that statement? His only conclusion could be that if he voted for Labour he would be certain or almost certain to get a reduction in the burdens that the cruel Mitchell Government had imposed upon him. Of course there is not a ghost of a hope of redeeming that promise. The very worst form of promise, the meanest form of promise is the one that is not explicit, but is meant to be understood or inferred. Of all promises, that is the worst kind any man can make, but this one goes even beyond that. Surely it is something more than a promise to be inferred! As I said, it will be exceedingly fortunate for the taxpayer if he is not called upon to bear an increased burden instead of getting relief such as what I have read would lead people to expect.

The Minister for Lands: Why get so furious about it?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I remind the hon. member that I have the floor and should not be interrupted. At present I have a position of great freedom and no responsibility.

The Premier: That is obvious.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Now let me pass on to what happened subsequently. The promises made at Boulder were not considered big enough to win wavering or doubtful voters, and so a headline to the Premier's speech made in the Town Hall, Perth, on the 2nd March, states, "Mr. Collier makes further promises."

The Premier: That was the headline?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes.

The Premier: I am not responsible for that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: But anyone reading what follows must agree that the headline was correct. In fact it could not be more correct. The Premier, in speaking at Boulder, said it would be utterly impossible to establish a rural bank now that the savings bank had been handed over to the Commonwealth, but when he spoke in Perth he considered it wise or politic to promise to carry out what he had stated to be an impossibility. So we find that what was deemed impossible at Boulder—it must have been considered impossible if the Premier would not promise it there—nevertheless became possible when the Premier spoke in Perth. Of course there is not a ghost of a hope of redeeming that promise. Where would the finance come from?

Mr. Raphael: They would soon find finance if there was a war on.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No doubt some of the promises made can be fulfilled. The 44-hour week could be established or re-established as the case may be. But I ask whether it would be of any real boon or benefit to the working community. What the worker wants is work. What worker throughout the length and breadth of the land would not willingly work 48 hours a week if only he had permanency of employment. Of what use is it to offer a man who has not got any work, or at best has only part-time work, who has been idle for many days and then worked for a few days, a reduction in working hours? To do so is to perpetrate a cheap and nasty sarcasm. The promise to appoint a full-time Minister to attend to unemployment, and nothing else, was easily and even pleasantly capable of accomplishment, except from the point of view of the taxpayer who has to meet the expense. That promise has been redeemed, though I have yet to learn that the outcome has meant the achievement of anything useful from the point of view of the worker. The most noticeable act accomplished by that Minister is to create, in addition to a board of civil servants, who now as before administer unemployment relief, a second body under a high-sounding title.

Mr. Ferguson: And there is a third one mentioned in to-night's paper.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I have not seen that. So far from being tied down to his office by the arduous nature of his duties, the Minister has found time to attend a peace conference in Sydney. This, like every other

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

peace conference I have ever heard of, has only succeeded in intensifying the thoughts of war.

The Minister for Employment: The hon. member found time to appear in court when he was a member of Cabinet.

Hon. N. KEENAN: As soon as I concluded the outstanding cases——

The Minister for Employment: Of course!

Hon. N. KEENAN: As soon as I concluded the cases I had on hand, I accepted no new brief while a member of Cabinet. There is no comparison between going down Barrack-street for a couple of hundred yards, and travelling all the way to Sydney.

The Minister for Employment: You were drawing big fees all the time.

The Premier: You were drawing your legal fees while at the same time you were drawing Ministerial pay.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If my personal history is of any interest to the House, I may say that I immediately cut down, or entirely abolished doing any work in my profession except to conclude that which was partly done.

Mr. Latham: That is perfectly true.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Not only that, but included in the work that was only partly done was work connected with industrial matters concerning which, as I am a public pleader, and accept briefs from everyone, I accepted briefs from the party sitting opposite. Enough has been said by me of the promises held out to the electors as the opening phases of a new Elysium. Something was going to happen to bring down a Heaven upon earth. Everyone was to get his little share of that Heaven on earth. I would never have referred to these promises except for the hypocrisy which has been flaunted in our eyes on so many occasions. I shall not refer to them again, because it is a matter of small or no interest whatever to me. Moreover, I cannot myself believe that these promises had much influence on the results of the elections. The truth is, the electors wanted a change of Government. This was partly due to a resentment on their part against some acts of the late Government which were wholly unavoidable, however, distasteful such acts were to the individual; and partly due to a resentment over some act of the late Government which, had it had a more keen regard for its chances at the forthcoming elections, it would have taken care to avoid. One of the principal

causes in my opinion was undoubtedly a belief on the part of many thinking electors that no real headway was being made on the road to recovery on a solid and substantial basis. Whether justly or unjustly, rightly or wrongly, many of the electors could not see that anything more was being accomplished than merely to hang on, and wait until the clouds rolled by. It may be said that this is all that a State Government is capable of accomplishing with the present limited powers enjoyed by any Government. I do not share that opinion. On the contrary I believe we should examine the causes of the depression, not the causes which have operated to produce a collapse throughout the world, because those causes, being world-wide causes, can only be cured by world-wide action. They are beyond our capacity to deal with. The development of machinery has reached the stage when it is supplanting, if it has not already supplanted, not merely the hand but even the brain of man. This development has brought the world face to face with a problem of infinite complexity, for the solution of which international action, and international action alone, presents any possibility of success.

Mr. Moloney: What about pending international action?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I was just going to deal with that matter. The world as a whole has been plunged into a maelstrom of finance as a legacy from wastage after the Great War. This can only be cured by world-wide action. But besides these general causes for the depression, which are operating throughout the world, there are local causes in every case. In some cases these local causes intensify the problem, and in other cases they so far modify it as to render it capable of solution. It is with the local causes of the depression that alone we can deal. We can examine the local causes and can determine how best we can reach a permanent cure, and we can so shape our policy that slowly perhaps, but surely, we may bring about an accomplishment of the desired end. If we wish to accomplish any permanent good, we cannot allow ourselves to be diverted from the path by any temporary set of circumstances which present a more favourable outlook. Two of our main exports are wheat and wool. For the moment they have so appreciated in price as to suggest a most flattering hope. Who

would venture to count upon that appreciation being anything more than a mere passing phase! In the case of wheat, the rise in price is due to certain patent causes. The crops in the United States are estimated to be 49 per cent. short of what was anticipated. There is also a serious shortage in Canada. A further reason for the position is that Russia has for the present ceased to be an exporter of wheat. We can find ample grounds for this rise in price, but who can say that these causes will continue to exist next year or in the years beyond that? No one would venture upon such a rash assertion.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: You appreciate the circumstances which exist in spite of the deficiency in production?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, I appreciate the fact that the market is being controlled. In the case of wool, it is more difficult to find a reason for the increase in price. If it has a bearing on the matter, the fact is that China and Japan, who were consistent purchasers of Australian wool, last season bought over 100 per cent. more than they had ever bought in a previous season. Whatever may be the reason for the rise in price, the fact remains that it was a slice of enormous luck for the party now in power. Had it occurred 12 months ago it may very well have altered the complexion of the election.

The Minister for Works: We managed the whole thing.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is said that the devil looks after his own. As things were, when the elections were held, the outlook was as bad as it ever had been. Just as was the case in other parts of Australia, the Government of the day was held responsible for this outlook, and the electors determined upon a change of Government. We now have a new Government in power. Except for taking advantage of the fortuitous rise in the price of wool and wheat, what is the policy of the new Government? If we turn to the Speech to learn what that policy is, what do we find? The Speech consists mainly of a jumble of the market reports of Dalgety & Co., Goldsbrough Mort & Co., the Westralian Farmers, Elder Smith & Co., all nicely jumbled together. Is it possible from the most careful reading of the Speech to find any end in view which the Government propose to accomplish, and

which when accomplished will effect any permanent cure of the ills from which we have suffered and are suffering from to-day? It would be absurd to imagine that one could read any such matter into the Speech. If one could so read it, what is the end in view that the Government have, which is to be reached by certain stages clearly defined and pointed out to this Assembly, and which, when reached, will be a permanent cure for the ills from which we have suffered in the immediate past? What should be that end in view, what is the only possible end in view to be accomplished, if we are to ensure the people of the State against a continuance of existing conditions; or, if there be some temporary relief due to accidental circumstances from a recurrence of that catastrophe, it can be stated in a few words. We must aim at bringing into existence conditions under which our main industries can be pursued at a profit. By the term "main industries" I mean the pastoral and agricultural industries. I do not for a moment ignore the mining industry, for which I have always had and always will have a personal regard. The gold mining industry, is in a very satisfactory and exceptional position to-day. The very disasters of the world have proved its salvation, by increasing the price of its product in Australian currency no less than 90 per cent. If it had not been for that fortunate, and even fortuitous circumstance, the gold-mining industry would have been in just as parlous a state to-day as is the case with any other of our primary industries. Nor do I ignore the timber industry, or any other of the important phases of our primary production. The two industries I have named, however, agricultural and pastoral, overshadow the others both in volume and in importance. If we cannot succeed in producing conditions which will enable these two great industries to be pursued at some profit, we must fail lamentably, no matter how long a time may elapse during which the struggle to exist continues. In what way and by what acts of government, so far as we can guess at them, for it is only a guess so far as anything in the Speech is concerned, does the Government design to bring into existence these conditions in any sense whatever? In no sense whatever! The present Government are doing nothing, nor do they pro-

pose to do anything different from what at least some of the electors attributed to their predecessors in office. All the Government propose to do is to hang on and wait for Divine Providence to find some way out. Just as I pointed out to the House, that is what some electors undoubtedly conceived to be one of the gravest criticisms levelled against the Mitchell Administration. What is the outstanding feature of the Government's proposals? It is to borrow £3,500,000 during the present financial year, and with that money to find work, or part-time work, for the unemployed here, there and everywhere on all kinds of spasmodic enterprises. I estimate the amount of £3,500,000 by the addition of the anticipated Budget deficit of £750,000, after making due allowance for the special grant of £100,000 from the Commonwealth Government, to the amount of the authorised loan of £2,750,000. It is clear that the Budget deficit of £750,000 is a loan of the worst character, because it is a debt incurred in anticipation of a loan without any assurance that the loan will be obtained. If there is one lesson that was universally accepted as having been taught us by the financial disaster from which we are still suffering, is it not that that disaster, in a very large measure, was attributable to extravagant borrowing in the past? The most extravagant years of our borrowing were those between 1923 and 1929.

Mr. Raphael: And that by Stanley Bruce and Co.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yet during those most extravagant years, in one single year only did the amount borrowed exceed by any substantial amount a sum of £3,500,000. It must be further borne in mind regarding the loans raised between 1923 and 1929, that they were all obtained for definite public works which presented, so far as examination indicated, every probability of being reproductive. A very small proportion of the money was dedicated to the mere maintenance or repair of existing public works, but in the present instance and in the present year, there is no public works policy before us of a character that would warrant the borrowing of such a huge sum of money as £3,500,000. Nor would we be justified in the circumstances in which we stand, in contemplating a public works policy of so large a description. In truth, this immense sum of money is mainly, if not

entirely, earmarked for the relief of unemployment on all kinds of works, varying from the somewhat large expenditure contemplated for renewals and maintenance of our railways, to most pettifoggish ventures of all kinds of varied descriptions. To me it seems to be absolutely extraordinary how little real appreciation there is of the danger of a rapid return to the evil ways that obtained in the years that are just past. Few, if any, realise what the borrowing of £3,500,000 will mean to the public debt of Western Australia, which is already the highest per capita in Australia. That public debt will be increased by no less than £9 per head of the population, which means every man, woman and child. If we take $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as the rate of interest payable on this borrowed money, it will involve an additional tax of 8s. 2d. for every man, woman and child in Western Australia. Since the number of the actual taxpayers is exceedingly limited, as compared with the number of people in the State, it means an increased annual tax of very many times 8s. 2d. in order to find interest on the borrowed money alone.

The Minister for Justice: Do you not think that any of the work will be reproductive?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I know of no proposal before Parliament except, perhaps, that relating to the railways—and in that instance I think the work should properly be financed out of revenue—but that is another matter, which I am not discussing at the moment. What I am referring to is the colossal nature of the loan proposed. I emphasise the point I have just made, that during the years of our greatest extravagance on one occasion only was the amount we are borrowing this year exceeded by any substantial sum. It is a matter of elementary truth that every penny taken by the Government out of the pockets of the taxpayer represents a penny less which that individual taxpayer has it in his power to spend on the purchase of products of industry, or to use for financing the carrying on of any industry. It requires merely this process to be carried out far enough for all industry to be killed, and I am afraid we are perilously near entering upon the road that will lead to that dire conclusion. Unless a halt is called in our extravagance, nothing is more certain than that we shall enter upon that road. The returns paid in income taxation during the past

three years point clearly to the fact that we are approaching that danger point. For the year 1930-31, the amount of income taxation collected was £246,650, but the amount dwindled for the last financial year to £169,000, despite the increase of 20 per cent. in the rate of the tax, as the Premier reminded his constituents at a meeting at Boulder. The same applies to the amounts collected for dividend duty. From £277,343 in 1930-31, the collection under that heading had shrunk to £168,614 during the financial year just concluded. That result was achieved despite the increase of 20 per cent. in the rate of the tax, a point that the Premier also mentioned to his audience at Boulder. The same position arises in connection with land rents received by the Crown. From £235,441 in 1930-31, the collections under that heading dwindled to £197,412 in 1932-33. Surely those figures, combined with the almost absolute certainty that the present financial year will disclose a still further decline, should make us pause and consider the inevitable end towards which we are travelling. If in every year vast sums are to be collected by way of taxation and every year the resources from which the tax is drawn become diminished, there can be but one inevitable end. Not for one moment do I sponsor the proposition that Western Australia can progress and her industries be fully developed without the aid of loan funds. Of course, it would not be possible. But there is all the world of difference between legitimate borrowing of large sums for reproductive works of such sums as the development of the State warrants and of the burden of which one can be certain of the capacity of the State to carry, and wild reckless borrowing merely to obtain the wherewithal to tide us over the present hour, utterly regardless of the capacity of the State to bear the burden. I would not offer criticism of borrowing far in excess of the capacity of the State to shoulder the burden if we were confronted with an emergency, which there was any just reason to believe would soon pass away; but where, under existing circumstances, is there justification for any such belief? Does anyone for one moment imagine that there will not be an even more imperative demand for borrowing at least the same huge amount of loan money next year, if the Government will not

have to ask for an even greater amount than £3,500,000? And so it will go on for years until the point is reached once more at which borrowing will become impossible because there will be no more lenders. The position then will become far more desperate than that which we have experienced in any of the years past. It may be said: Granted that this is lamentably true, what are you going to do? What will you do in view of the paralysed conditions of our industries and the large army of unemployed tramping throughout the State? That brings me to the very kernel of the problem. We must resuscitate, reorganise and re-invigorate our industries if we are to find the means by which we can permanently absorb those who are unemployed. There is no other way whatever by which that end can be accomplished. There should be no mere spending of colossal sums on works that are dubbed "public works," and which consist of every kind of venture that the Minister has the conscience to sanction; no expenditure of that kind can cure the evil of unemployment. It is true that, for the moment, it may mitigate the evil. To that extent, for the moment, the acts of the Government may be the means of reducing human suffering. I candidly admit that that may be so, and probably will be so, but the relief can be merely spasmodic, and the mitigation of the evil will last for the short space of time that the money is available for expenditure. I have already made it clear that I would offer no objection to even the most extravagant borrowing if it were forced upon us by an emergency, but it would be futile and useless unless we could determine definitely that the state of emergency would pass away, and that normal industrial conditions would be established instead. That brings me back to the only means by which the end desired can be attained. That end is the only one worth achieving, for it will provide a permanent cure for the evil of unemployment that is so manifest to-day. It is by the re-creation and resuscitation of our main industrial life that we will emerge from our times of difficulty. How is this to be done? It can be done only, I submit, by creating conditions in which our main industries can be carried on at a profit. We can at any time create arti-

ficial conditions governing the price of the products of any primary industry, so far as they are consumed in Australia, just as the tariff operates with regard to the products of our secondary industries. But that what be of no value whatever. Only 10 per cent. of the wheat grown in Western Australia is required for all purposes in Western Australia, and only half of 1 per cent. of the wool grown in Western Australia is used within the State. We are therefore obviously entirely dependent upon the world's market price, and over that price we have no control whatever. It is true that the present market price shows an upward trend, and although that upward movement may be ephemeral, it is one that brings with it some measure of relief. If, however, commodity prices in the great world beyond Australia are to be raised by a de-valuation of currency, if that is to happen generally, which would mean assured markets and higher prices, what would be the effect on Australia? It is certain that the rate of exchange between the outside currencies and Australian currency would alter to the detriment of Australian exporters. If the pound sterling, in comparison with the dollar, is so devalued, we shall no longer enjoy the 25 per cent. premium, and the prices brought about by the devaluation of that currency will be offset by the difference in the rate of the exchange. Every legitimate consideration of the problem drives us to the conclusion that the only way to save our industries lies in bringing down the cost of production and marketing. To achieve this purpose we stand possessed of no intent to lower the standard of living. On the contrary, a necessary part of the policy we advocate would be to maintain the standard of living, but to lower the cost of it. During the recent elections I attempted to educate the people of the State to understand this proposition. What I pointed out was that between 1911 and 1929, which may be taken as the peak year of the Australian industrial conditions, the wages paid in industry showed in some lines an increase of 84 per cent. Thus a worker enjoying this rise who received 10s. in 1911 was in receipt of 18s. 5d. in 1929. This was, on the face of it, a rise of a colossal character. But what were the real facts? During the period 1911 to 1929 the cost of living went up 80 per cent.; in other words, for

exactly the same goods and services which constitute the cost of living, the worker had to pay 80 per cent. more in 1929 than he paid in 1911. All his gain was at the most 4 per cent. of 10s., or something over 4d. a day, and this only in exceptional cases where the rise in wages exceeded the rise in the cost of living. In the metropolitan area, for instance, the rise in wages between those dates was only 70 per cent., whereas the rise in the cost of living was 72 per cent. So that in the metropolitan area the actual result, as far as the worker there was concerned, was that with all his increase in wages of 70 per cent., he was actually worse off in 1929 than he was in 1911 with a wage 70 per cent. less. The main factor in raising the cost of living has been and is the Federal tariff. It is unnecessary to give specific instances, especially as from the recent debates in the Senate we are all aware of the huge impost the tariff inflicts on the living expenses of us all. But I may refer the House to the comment of the Commonwealth Statistician appearing in the "Australian Year Book" of 1922. Speaking there of the increment to cost represented by the Massey Greene tariff of 1921, compared with the position in 1913, the Commonwealth Statistician, Mr. Wickens, said—

Taking in the case of the imports of 1913, a composite unit which had been all cleared for consumption within the year and in respect of which the amount of duty paid on such clearance would amount to £13,000,000 under the then existing tariff, the same goods, at the same price under the tariff of 1921 would have paid duty amounting to £25,000,000, representing an increase of 92 per cent. in the average duty per unit of quantity.

Now, of course, this increased duty meant in almost every case a corresponding increase in the sale price of the same goods if made in Australia, as could be amply demonstrated if time were available for comparison of the prices of the articles in detail. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that free of the burden of the tariff, we could give our workers all the comforts and conveniences they enjoyed in the peak year of industrial life and yet reduce our cost of production by at least 25 per cent. In other words, free of the burden of the tariff, we could set up our industries on a basis safe against even the disasters of the world's markets. In that way we would militate against unemployment; we would develop our main industries and so provide increased employ-

ment, first of all in the industries themselves and further by reason of the profits being spent in Perth and other centres.

The Premier: There would be an increased production from the industries.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No doubt.

The Minister for Justice: Where would you get the market?

Hon. N. KEENAN: If we were in a position to be free of the burden of the tariff, we would find markets, but at the present time the world's markets are closed to us because of the cost of production.

The Minister for Works interjected.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We have a special advantage by reason of the comparatively short haulage to the seaboard, shorter than that in any other part of the world. Let me make this clear: If the cost of production came down to a reasonable figure, to what extent would development take place? There would be an enormous increase.

The Minister for Justice: How should we get a profit from our wheat when it is shut out from European countries?

Hon. N. KEENAN: The European countries are shutting out not only our wheat but our sheepskins. What is being done by those countries is entirely retaliation.

The Minister for Justice: Retaliation from the rest of the world.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Those countries were forced to take that step because they were not in a position to pay for their imports by their export of goods to us. The same thing applies to Germany and Belgium. Belgium was taking 83 per cent. of the output of the Wyndham Meat Works, but when the Commonwealth prevented the importation of Belgian goods we were given notice that Wyndham meat would no longer be admitted to the Belgian market. I assure the House again that it is quite clear, were we free of the burden of the tariff, we could establish our industries on a basis that would save us even from the disasters of the world's market. This brings me to the last matter I wish to lay before the House in my observations on the Address-in-reply. I shall put it in two propositions. Firstly is there any reasonable hope whatever of obtaining any relief from the burden of the Federal tariff if we remain within the Federation; and, secondly, if we do not obtain that relief, is there any hope whatever of the State reaching a position of safety? Dealing with the first of these two questions, what hope

is there of any substantial or real revision of the tariff being undertaken by the Federal Parliament at any time? If there were a prospect of any political party coming into existence and gaining office in the Commonwealth at any time which would honestly face the tariff problem, we might endeavour to bear our sufferings and wait. But there is no such prospect. The tariff is not a dividing line between the political parties of the East. Even the Country Party stands sponsor for the tariff. Dr. Earle Page, the leader of that party, was a member of the Ministry which brought down the two infamous Pratten tariffs of 1925 and 1927. It was said of those tariffs by visiting economists that there existed in Australia no industry too trivial, too artificial or too uneconomic, not to find a protection in one or two of the tariffs. And what do we learn by recent events in the Senate and in the House of Representatives when the tariff was under discussion? Scullinites and Langites and Lyonites all trooped in the most amicable fashion into the same lobby to record their votes in favour of any item that was challenged in the tariff. For the time being all other reasons for discord were forgotten. The Scullinite marched arm-in-arm with the Langite, with Sir George Pearce and his merry men of the U.A.P., fraternising and consorting with both those wings of the Labour movement. Nor is there any difference outside Parliament. There is a difference inside Parliament on other matters but it is forgotten when the tariff comes up. What is the position outside Parliament?

The Premier: All those members and the great majority of the electors are like the Irish soldier—all out of step except Patsy.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I was reminding the House that that is the position inside Parliament. Let us see whether there is any alteration in the position outside Parliament. The Eastern manufacturer has no political preference. He will back Scullin or Lyons, just as one or the other promises still higher protection, still greater opportunity to exploit the citizens of Australia. Let me recall the historic statement of the chairman of the Australian Glass Company to his shareholders. This company is a big million-pound concern having its head office in Melbourne. Because it did not obtain an increase of duty which it was seeking—in

addition to the very high duties already existing protecting its products, and exceeding in some cases 100 per cent.—the chairman in addressing the shareholders told them that he had backed Mr. Lyons at the late Federal elections and supposed they had done so too, but that because of the then refusal to grant their demand for higher duties he thought they had backed the wrong horse. Such is the position which exists in the Eastern States outside Parliament. I have already stated what it is within Parliament. Surely it is not necessary for me to elaborate on the fact that no one but an absolute fool would believe in the possibility of any real or adequate relief being obtained in the burden of the tariff if we remain within Federation. No one who does not shut his eyes deliberately to all the facts and all the history of Western Australia can doubt that unless that burden is lifted this State is doomed, however fortunately such doom may be delayed by a fortuitous rise in the world's markets. Therefore it is of vital importance that the expressed will of the people, to take the only course open to obtain a fiscal policy which will permit them to live and their industries to thrive, should be pushed with all the vigour and power we are possessed of. Despite many powerful influences working against secession, despite the lever of the daily metropolitan Press, despite the advantage of having large sums of money remitted from the East to spend in propaganda against secession—

The Premier: Is that a fact?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am told so. Despite, further, the visit of the Prime Minister and our local Minister. Sir George Pearce, to oppose it, despite all these powerful factors, secession received the colossal approval of just on two-thirds of the electors.

The Minister for Mines: But the secessionists paid for those two men to come over here, knowing that those two men would get them votes. They certainly got secession thousands of votes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No money whatever was paid.

The Minister for Mines: I am merely repeating what was commonly reported.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Let me point out that secession was entirely a non-party question at the last general election. I

never once spoke on it in my own electorate. It is a non-party question to-day, and the one question which really matters. If we fail in our demand for the freedom which alone spells safety and success, we are unquestionably doomed, and it will not matter who may be the occupants of the Treasury bench—they will be merely filling the role of undertakers to bury the dead hopes of our people, and their functions, powers and authorities will be handed over to the Federal Government. I do not wish at this stage to go further, nor does any true friend of Western Australia wish to go further, than to urge the earliest possible action on the part of our Government in implementing the secession vote. I am quite sure that the Government will take the proper steps, and neither I nor any other true friend of Western Australia will want to embarrass them in taking those steps. It only remains for me to thank the House for the patient and attentive hearing given to me. Of course, as I said at the beginning of my speech, we all of us have different views; and, naturally, knowing of these different viewpoints, it was not unexpected on my part that there should be a considerable amount of interruption. In my opening remarks I spoke of matters which are highly controversial; but they are matters in which I personally take very little interest, and only in justice to others have I spoken as I did. The past is never a matter of any importance compared with the present or the future. Let me assure the Government, as regards the present and the future, that I and those who sit with me, and whose views I have a right to attempt to announce in this House, are possessed of one idea, and one idea only—to assist the present Government in the difficulties with which they are faced. Let the Government but take us into their confidence, and if only it is possible to work together for the ultimate good of the State—and surely that must be possible—we shall not be wanting on our part in any effort to achieve that desirable result. After all, no matter in what part of the Chamber we may sit, we are just as the great God has made us—persons with some virtues and with many faults. Can we not pool our virtues in the service of the State which we all love and hope to serve, and can we not strive to get away from our faults in order to make that

service more efficient? If we do, may we not hope that the success which is so vital, so necessary for the happiness of our people, of whose destinies we are the guardians, will be the reward that Providence will give to those who have proved themselves worthy of it?

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [6.10]: It is not my intention to delay the House unduly, as I know hon. members are waiting to discuss highly important legislation which is to be brought down; but I would like to offer a few comments on the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. Before doing so—as congratulations seem to be the order of the day—I would like to add mine to those already offered to the leaders of the various parties in this House, and also to yourself, Mr. Speaker. Again, I must thank the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) for his references to the new members of the Chamber. As a matter of fact, I myself had thought of congratulating the House upon the number and also upon the calibre of the new members, more especially as we tend to bring new viewpoints into the deliberations of the Chamber. I trust that some at least of our suggestions may be deemed worthy of consideration by members older in political and parliamentary experience. I do not see anything to lead me to believe that the older members of the Chamber have a monopoly of brains, and I consider that the opinions of new members should be accorded a little more than the usual mild tolerance which ordinarily greets them. Before proceeding to discuss matters connected with the North-West generally and my electorate particularly, I desire to refer to the appointment of Sir James Mitchell as Lieut.-Governor. Various protests have been uttered in this Assembly, and I desire to add mine to them. In the Speech the Lieut.-Governor stresses the need for most stringent economy. To me it seems anomalous that the person who is the Government's instrument for announcing such a policy should be the means of increasing the State's expenditure by a sum of about £2,000 per annum, and, further may prove the means—not through himself but through his appointment to the office—of increasing that expenditure by a sum of up to £4,000 per annum. I am given to understand that the Imperial Government, in appointing Sir James Mitchell to the office, stated that they did so without prejudice

to their right to appoint a foreign Governor.

Members: What?

Mr. RODOREDA: I mean, a Governor from outside the State.

Mr. Raphael: The Governor we have is pretty foreign to our ways of thinking.

Mr. RODOREDA: I ask hon. members to note that there is nothing personal in this protest, which is directed merely against the manner in which the appointment has been made. Surely it is extraordinary that Western Australia should be led into such expenditure without having a say in the matter at all. Indeed, it would be a graceful act on the part of the Imperial Government to send along a cheque for the Governor's salary. I trust that later there will be an opportunity to discuss the matter at greater length. May I congratulate the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) on his speech, though certainly on many points I cannot agree with him, as, for instance, that we have to depend wholly and solely on our export industries to improve the condition of the State. I can quite conceive of a point being reached where, even if we cut our production costs down to the minimum, we would not be able to sell at a profit in the world's markets. The member for Nedlands stated that we had no control whatever over the prices of our primary products sold abroad. Unquestionably that is so, and therefore his whole argument amounts to saying that if those oversea prices are less than our production costs, we must produce at a loss. That seems to me not a policy which could be followed with any wisdom. This is all I have to say at present upon the speech of the member for Nedlands. The member for Gaseoyne (Mr. Wise) touched on North-Western matters as a whole. I propose to go somewhat into detail.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. RODOREDA: I admit that the North-West presents a big problem to any Government, but not, I submit, an insuperable problem if it be tackled sympathetically. The North-West depends mainly on the pastoral industry, and will do so for some considerable time to come. There are other industries up there, chiefly mining and pearl fishing. All the various industries should meet with sympathetic treatment from the Government, inasmuch as the

conditions there are so different from those obtaining in the southern part of the State. To start with, our isolation presents a big problem. The major portion of the North-West is more isolated from the south of this State than is the State itself isolated from the Commonwealth. That should be borne in mind. I wish to bring under the notice of the Government the necessity for a reappraisal of the leases in the North. The population there is steadily decreasing, largely because of the same factors as have caused the loss of employment in the South, namely, the introduction of machinery. The bulk of the transport up there is done by motor vehicles, and the station owners have to use their motor cars in the management of their properties. This makes it possible to dispense with the great bulk of the employees. The leases were previously appraised chiefly on their proximity to port. In the instance of my electorate this appraisal basis has lost its value, inasmuch as the jetty has been destroyed and has not been replaced. This re-appraisal proposal has been put up to successive Governments, but without avail. On the last occasion the present Leader of the Opposition received a deputation in Roebourne, and said it could not possibly be done. An alternative suggestion was that the Government should pay a subsidy towards the lighterage costs of getting goods into and out of port. This also was turned down, and nothing more was heard of it by the residents in my electorate until, on the eve of the elections, the late Government of their own initiative, decided to grant this concession. I have no fault to find with the concession; it should have been granted years ago, when first asked for; but the way in which it was ultimately granted made it purely a monetary gift to the electors in my constituency. I do not suppose the fact that the election was approaching had anything to do with it, but that is how it worked out. And instead of making this subsidy begin from the date on which it was announCED, the late Government made it retrospective to August last, which as I say, was purely a monetary gift from the Government to the electors. The late Government put through an amendment of the Land Act providing for an extension of the leases. Nothing more detrimental to the North and North-West could have

been put on the statute-book. The country up there is capable of carrying three times the present population, by which I mean the number of men on their own holdings. The greater portion of the land leased is not being used by the lessees, and especially in the coastal areas the country could carry at least three or four times the number of station owners. If a man were to secure the lease of a property on which he could run 12,000 or 15,000 sheep he could employ a number of men, and do better for himself than the holders of bigger stations have been able to do for themselves. Then I should like to bring before the Government the necessity for applying the Closer Settlement Act to various parts of the North-West, more particularly around the town of Onslow. No vegetables can be grown in Onslow, and so the place is dependent on vegetables sent up from Perth. Yet within 20 miles of the port there is abundant land on which to grow vegetables. The trouble is the people cannot get the use of that land. It is a scandal that we should have to import all our vegetables from the South. The late Government brought down a Bill to restrict the output from the pearling industry. It is a debatable point whether the restriction has increased the price of shell, but there is no shadow of doubt that the method employed for the restriction of shell has increased the cost of fishing that shell. The method adopted was to reduce the output of each boat, which necessarily means that if the output of a boat capable of fishing 10 or 12 tons per season, is reduced to six or seven tons, her fishing costs are increased.

Mr. Ferguson: What was the alternative?

Mr. RODORED: To reduce the number of boats

Mr. Ferguson: That is what your people objected to.

Mr. RODORED: Please do not think I am blaming any particular Government for their treatment of the North-West. I am blaming all past Governments. In my view we are here to get consideration for the North from whatever Government may be in power, and I think I can say the Government will hear more about the North-West during the next three years than has been heard down here at any time previously. As I have said, the method of restriction of the output of shell has increased the cost

of fishing that shell. I have just received from a master pealer a letter reading as follows:—

There are no restrictions at Darwin, therefore it is no advantage to restrict our boats here to a tonnage, and would only tend to force us to send our boats to Darwin, which would be a great loss to our State.

I might also mention that at the present time on the seven boats licensed here, there are 14 white men employed, but if the 7-ton limit is adhered to these men will be on the labour market, as it would be impossible to work the boats at a profit and keep them on.

As you know, we are trying the white diver experiment here, and it looks as though he is going to make a success of it. Young Jones had only three months' diving last year, and I think if he is left alone this year he will get eight tons, and I feel confident that next year he will beat the Japs, and I do not see why we cannot work all white divers if we got the right men and trained them, which would mean keeping more money in the country, as the Jap divers are the only members of the crew that take much out.

We have seen the introduction of the white diver in the industry. Previously it was said he could not possibly compete with the Japs, that he could not do the work. But it is now proved that he can, and I suggest to the Government that instead of renewing all the Japanese licenses next year, they should renew a portion of them and give a percentage to white divers. This would give a start to the system of employing white divers exclusively. Last year we had one boat manned exclusively by whites and the fact that the men have all gone back again this year suggests that they were well satisfied with the conditions. Various mistakes have been made in the North-West for want of knowledge of local conditions. More particularly has this been so in construction work, amongst the engineering branch. In support of this I quote the fiasco of the Beadon jetty, a jetty constructed after some nine months surveying by so-called competent surveyors and engineers. After construction it was found that the jetty was against the run of the tide, and when the jetty had been bashed about by a few steamers, the Harbour and Lights Department would no longer allow steamers to berth at the jetty, except on the ebb tide, thus making practically another tidal port on the coast. This could very easily have been avoided had the engineers taken notice of persons with local knowledge, but they will never do that. Another fiasco was the water supply provided at Beadon, again by

supposed competent engineers. After about three months the water turned out to be as salt as the sea, and within the last six months the people have been paying 4s. per 100 gallons for fresh water carted around to them by a motor truck. The Government were so disgusted with the position that they handed the water supply over to the road board free of the capital cost, and since then the road board has received a subsidy from the Government, with the result that after experiment they have solved the water problem. It is appalling to consider the losses occasioned and the money wasted by the Main Roads Board in constructing roads in the North-West, again, through want of local knowledge and because the different condition prevailing in the North-West were not considered. The same specifications were applied to works there that are applied to main roads around the city. Had that work been left to the local authorities, hundreds of miles of usable roads would have been constructed in lieu of the few odd miles of road that now adorn or detract from the beauty of the surroundings. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) spoke of the need for reducing production costs. There again, the varying conditions ought to be considered, especially in regard to the license fees charged for motor trucks. There has been a big agitation throughout the North-West to have the Traffic Act reviewed—I refer to the heavy traffic charges—inasmuch as the bulk of the work in the North-West is seasonal and comprises mainly wool carting, which takes place from May till towards the end of the year. Consequently truck owners have to license their vehicles for the full year. They license for the last six months of one year and the first six months of the next year, because their vehicles have to be used in the two periods. They get no benefit from the half-yearly licensing arrangement. They should be allowed to license in quarterly instead of six-monthly periods. The charges also are too heavy. We get no benefit from the heavy license fees paid. We have no roads to travel on, and after an inch of rain motors cannot get through the country for a week.

Mr. Latham: All the money paid in license fees goes to the local authority. It does not come down here.

Mr. RODOREDA: That does not help the producer. The carter cannot cut his costs when he has to pay excessive license

fees. The few pounds paid to the road board would not help much in the way of road construction. Those men have to travel 200 or 300 miles with their loads. There is a great agitation in the North-West for adequate medical service and hospital facilities. The Leader of the Opposition is well aware of what we have to put up with in the way of medical service. After his last visit, we understood that conditions would be improved, but not much has been done yet. A scheme was suggested, to be worked in conjunction with the Australian Inland Mission. I would like to hear something from the Government about that proposal. People will not stay in the North-West unless they can get adequate medical attention, especially for the women and children. They are mostly isolated; some of them are 200 miles from the port, and sometimes when they get to the port there is an incompetent man in charge, or the hospital is not up to standard. The late Government hit on a brilliant scheme of economy by leasing the hospitals to subsidised matrons. Consequently, where we had two nurses at the Roebourne hospital, we now have one lady who is not under the control of the doctor appointed and subsidised by the Government. The doctor has no control over the hospital, and I leave members to imagine the result. If the doctor and matron are not good pals, the patients suffer. It is time that state of affairs was altered. There would be quite an uproar if the scheme were adopted in the city where the people could make themselves heard. I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle on the question of education. Not nearly enough money is being spent in the right direction. It is difficult for the Government to find any more money for education, but the people who are helping to develop the country should have greater consideration than they receive at present. The subsidy to the University amounts to £18,000 or £20,000, and I do not see much benefit being derived from it. We are turning out a lot of students with degrees of law and medicine, etc., and later on half of them go out and break stones on the roadside for sustenance. The money could be better expended in providing University scholarships. A free University is all very well when we can afford it, but I cannot see why people who can afford to pay for their children's education at the

University should participate in the benefit of the £20,000 provided by the Government while the children in the backblocks are neglected. To-day I made a request for a monitress for the Beadon school, but because the number of children in attendance was one or two below the total stipulated by regulation, no monitress could be supplied. That request could be met at no great cost to the Government and it would be of great benefit to the children attending the school. The member for Gaseoyne (Mr. Wise) mentioned the royalty charged on kangaroo skins. This seems to be a somewhat humorous matter to members, though not to the people engaged in the industry. The anomalous position exists that no royalty is charged on skins shipped from the Hedland district, but royalty is charged on skins from adjoining districts. That difference is due simply to the fact that the member for Pilbara was more active when the subject was under discussion and secured the exemption of his district. No declaration is required regarding skins shipped from Hedland, no matter where they are obtained, but skins shipped from Roebourne are charged royalty.

Mr. Ferguson: We reduced the royalty 50 per cent.

Mr. RODOREDA: That helps us, but it does not reduce the price where no royalty is charged. We have the ridiculous position that the Government charge a royalty on kangaroo skins on which the vermin boards up to a few months ago were paying 6d. each, which amount has since been reduced to 4d. The vermin board were treating kangaroos as vermin and paid 4d. for their extermination, and out of the 4d. the Government take 2d. royalty. One might as well tax the rabbits down south.

Mr. Ferguson: We would willingly, if we could get rid of them.

Mr. RODOREDA: The hon. member will not get rid of the kangaroos by penalising the man who goes out hunting them. Inquiry should be warranted into the industry of tanning and disposing of the skins. America has a complete monopoly of the trade, and I do not see why she should have it. There are great tanning works in England, and we also have tanning works in this State. The price charged for the tanned skin is out of all proportion to the price paid to the hunter of the skin. Mining is the only bright spot in my electorate on

which I can congratulate the Government. The present Government have assisted greatly both with the institution of the prospecting scheme and with the provision of crushing facilities. The member for Nedlands mentioned that gold was of such great value to the State owing to forces outside our control. The same thing could equally well be said of wool if its price went up, but that does not alter the fact that, without the assistance of the mining industry in the last two years, this State would be in a bad position indeed. I do not think members representing southern constituencies fully realise how greatly the gold mining industry has helped the State. It is not only the number of men employed on the mines that we have to consider; we have to take into account the hundreds of men scattered throughout the gold-bearing areas, chasing the weight. Of them, no proper record is made in the official returns. A considerably larger number of men would be on sustenance in the North-West if it were not for the little gold being found there. In my district I believe there will be big developments within the next 12 months. There is auriferous country at least 200 miles long that has not yet been prospected, and no assistance to the industry can be too great. I congratulate the Government and the Minister for Mines on the prospecting scheme. Why other Governments have not taken action in the matter, I am at a loss to understand. The loss of the jetty at Roebourne needs to be reviewed. Eight years ago the jetty was blown away, since which time the people in my electorate served by that jetty have paid £25,000 in lighterage charges. That is a very large sum for a population of fewer than 300 people who were served by the jetty. That amount has been paid mainly by people in the pastoral industry. Any assistance the Government can give to remedy this disability should be forthcoming. If the Government are seeking big works on which to employ men, I can suggest no better scheme than that put up seven or eight years ago, namely, to build the jetty again at Sampson. The money would be expended mainly in labour. There is enough stone within a square mile to build five or six jetties or breakwaters, and all that would be necessary would be the pro-

vision of a locomotive, some rails, and a few trucks. I suggest that the Government consider the matter when searching for schemes on which to employ men. The great burden pressing on the industries of the North-West, particularly the primary industries, is that of interest. This applies equally to the farming industry. It is the greatest burden our industries have to bear. I do not see how they can possibly carry on unless that burden is reduced. I am in a position to state that a few stations with no interest bill to pay have made profits every year in the last four years, which covers the period of the lowest price for wool. The interest burden, however, is killing other stations. They are all over-capitalised, but the financial firms interested will do nothing to help them in this direction. The writing-down of debts is necessary, and many people will have to lose money that was foolishly advanced when the market was at the peak. No industry can carry on under such terrific burdens. I am pleased to see reference was made to this in the Speech, and I hope the Government will do all they can to reduce this interest burden on primary products. I hope that, in any legislation that is brought forward, consideration will be given to the varied conditions applying to the North-West. This is a vital matter for the people there. Most of the blunders which have been perpetrated in the past have come about because this was not taken into consideration. The people of the North-West contend they have not received value from the Government for the taxation imposed upon them. This covers all Governments. They have not received value for the money they have been called upon to pay. Great dissatisfaction is expressed everywhere in the North-West because of this, and, unless a change is effected, an agitation will arise for the formation of a new State up there. We have just as much right to demand secession from the southern portion of the State as Western Australia has to demand to secede from the Commonwealth. I notice that one of the papers which was most active during the secession campaign scouts the right of the North-West to decide for itself whether it should secede or not. If we follow the argument to its logical conclusion, the whole of Australia should have taken part in the referendum held in Western Australia. If

we as a State have a right to secede from the Commonwealth, the North-West has a right by its own vote to determine whether it shall remain a part of Western Australia or establish a new State.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [8.3]: I have already conveyed my congratulations to you, Sir, upon your accession to the high office of Speaker. I will now deal with a few items which I think should be looked into by the Government before we can bring about a rehabilitation of the wheat and wool industries. As I have been returned as the representative of the chief wheat-growing constituency of Western Australia, I trust some notice will be taken of my remarks. There is great suffering, it will be admitted, amongst primary producers. The greatest problem the Government have to tackle is that of the farmers' debts. Until this is solved, the farming industry will not function smoothly. Whilst it remains in its present unsatisfactory condition, the whole State must suffer too. It is of national importance that this problem should be solved, and I trust the Government will look upon it in that light. Due to the fall in the price of primary products, the producer has lost all power to meet his obligations. His assets have depreciated to such an alarming degree that he is forced to view his property more as a liability than as an asset. His equity has disappeared. He has not received sufficient for his products to enable him to pay his way. If something is not done in the near future to relieve the situation, the whole industry will be engulfed. In my view a board of inquiry should be constituted, free from Government, debtor or creditor influences, so that unbiassed recommendations may be made to Cabinet. In all cases of accrued debt there should be a writing down to manageable proportions. Every case should be thoroughly investigated, compound interest should be stopped, and interest in general should be brought down to the lowest possible level. It should be the aim of the Government to enable primary production to compete on the basis of world's parity prices. To bring this about the cost of production must come down. The writing down or freezing of debts or liabilities would greatly assist to this end. There should be fewer charges

against the crop. If this were brought about, the farmer would have greater heart to proceed with future cropping. He would make every endeavour to retrieve the position, and would have his heart in his work. The result would be better crops to the acre. Something must be done to assist along these lines. When that happens it will mean that the industry will be put on a payable basis, and once we arrive at that stage we shall be taking the first step out of our troubles. The farmer, too, must have greater security of tenure. He is passing through times unparalleled in history, and is the victim of circumstances over which he had no control. He has the haunting fear of being dispossessed of his property. That is confronting nearly every farmer, and must be removed. It is a harmful factor against good work being done on the farm. Whilst he faces that we can never expect him to carry on and do good work. He does not know from month to month whether he is going to remain on his farm or be obliged to accept the dole. It is not enough to tell him, as he was told by Ministers in the last Government, that whilst he does his best and plays the game, he has nothing to fear. Bitter experience has taught him otherwise. That is not sufficient protection for him. He was told that the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act and the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act would give him all the security he wanted, but he finds that is not so. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act will not assist him. Once a creditor has decided there is no further advantage in carrying on a farmer, the stay order is allowed to lapse, the law is allowed to take its ordinary course, and he is thrown upon the goodwill of the creditors. Some security must be given to the farmers. If his debts are frozen he will have that much security. In most of the holdings the farmers have invested their life savings, and put in years of hard work. In many cases they have carved out a national asset from the virgin bush. It is the moral right of them all to demand security of tenure, and I hope consideration will be given to that matter. A man must have a reasonable living allowance from the products of his labour. It has been the age-long right of a man to participate in the fruits of his labour. No farmers should be denied this. Why

should a man, knowing that his product is the life blood of commerce, give it away without retaining sufficient to provide food for himself, his wife and his family? There is no law on the statute-book to permit it. If the creditors have a lien against the crop, they can take the whole of it, and very often do so, having been assisted by the Government through the statutory lien. Many farmers have been left without any food on their farms, and no wheat with which to carry on. They have had to leave their holdings and join the unemployed in Perth. If they had been treated in the same way that stock is treated, they would have been afforded protection. There is nothing to protect the farmer from starvation and yet there is an Act which provides that the farmer must feed his horses, his sheep and his pigs. Apparently the farmer and his family are of less value than his stock. After fighting for years the farmer has seen his wife grow old and his children wedded to hard toil. Each year he has expected to advance sufficiently to enable him to send his family away to be educated. He has been prevented from doing that because soulless institutions desire to take away the whole of his products. The farmer must be relieved of interest charges so that he may be able to keep sufficient food for himself and his family. It is a God-given right to a man that he should participate in the fruits of his labour, and he should never have been denied that right. We know that merchants supply super, seed and bags, and receive payment, but the man who grows the nation's corn is often left without any food. He must have sufficient to enable him to discharge his duties to his wife and children. Where have our farmers' friends in Parliament been for many years to permit such a state of affairs? The producers have been led to believe that something would be done for them, but nothing has been done. We talk about British justice, but all the justice that has been done to them amounts to shame and iniquity. To think that a Government can live on the exports of primary production while the producer himself, his wife and children are starving! I trust the present Government will take a different view of the situation, and see that more reasonable consideration is given to the man on the land.

Mr. Raphael: You are bringing blushes to the cheeks of the Opposition.

Mr. WARNER: Amongst these men we have many who proved their pluck overseas, and they have proved it again by hanging on as they have done in the last two or three years. I have the fear that these noble spirits will be broken, because no man will stand the strain too long when he sees the suffering of those who are dear to him, his wife and children whom he loves. He has had to put up with worse than he met with at the fighting front. It has been said, when requests were made by farmers to be allowed to retain sufficient of their products to keep themselves and their families, that this would spoil credit. Where has credit been given to any farmer by any of the institutions, except through a lien over the crop? This matter demands immediate attention, otherwise men will leave their farms, drift into the city and be added to the army of unemployed.

Mr. Raphael: Blame the previous Government.

Mr. WARNER: I believe this is about the first time anyone has been audacious enough to put these problems to the House. I have been returned as a farmers' representative, without any ties, and I am going to endeavour to be their friend without being obstructive to the Government. During the past two or three years I have been fighting for the good of the farmer. I have seen a great deal of suffering on the part of the man on the land. I heard the member for Maylands say that while visiting the groups a little while ago, he saw men sleeping on super bags. In many parts of the wheat belt, where they have been obliged to sell their good bags in order to buy food, they have only the torn ones upon which to sleep. Imagine the position of the man who knows one wheat crop will supply enough flour to keep him for a lifetime, and yet cannot buy two loaves of bread! I feel keenly regarding the position of those settlers for I have seen their suffering. I have pleaded for consideration for them when I have approached many of the soulless institutions in the city, but I have received none. The time will come when the farmers will realise that so long as they remain quiet, the boot will be put into them. They are showing indications of waking up, and unless the Government do something to assist them, they will perchance do something for themselves. Men will not be

beaten for very long without turning, and when these courageous men do turn, there will be bad times ahead for this State. I plead with the Government to do something in the interests of the farming community, more than has been attempted in the past. I also feel keenly regarding the unemployment problem, which is one of the most momentous confronting the Government today. I trust they will be able to place the men back at work, but certainly not on sustenance or on the dole. They should be employed on reproductive work and be paid the basic rate of wage. They must be put back at work before we can emerge from our troubles. It cannot be denied that the presence of so many men out of employment has a hampering effect upon industry. Normally they are the purchasers of goods produced by our various industries but, being out of work, they represent so much less spending power in the community. On many occasions we have heard it stated that there is over-production. I will not admit that for one moment. In my opinion the trouble is not over-production but under-consumption. Men in my constituency are in need of food and clothing. I could load up the heaviest wagon in Perth with working trousers, shirts, boots, and other requirements and by the time I had reached the top end of my electorate I would have an empty truck. There is something wrong somewhere. In the "West Australian" we sometimes read of the enormous quantities of food and clothing held in store in various countries, and in the same issue we may also read of people eating human flesh because they cannot purchase food supplies. In the face of that, how can it be argued that the world is suffering from over-production? Another peculiar matter is that we read announcements that America holds a sufficient surplus of wheat to provide for her requirements for two or three years, and yet when her current crop is supposed to be a partial failure, we read of the price of wheat going up so much per bushel. If gambling on food supplies is going on to that extent, why should we not dispose of the surplus wheat to people who require it and are faced with starvation? In my opinion, the monetary system has failed lamentably and that is the root of the whole trouble.

Mr. Moloney: Hear, Hear! Come over here.

Mr. WARNER: I believe that all sections of the House should assist the Government in getting our people back to work, and that those men should receive the basic wage. Another phase of the matter requires attention. I refer to the point of view of people who have been out of work for so long. Some of those individuals are the most loyal we have in the country and yet they are talking Bolshevism, Communism and so forth, believing that they will secure some benefit from such doctrines. That section represents a hotbed for the breeding of such theories. On the other hand, give those people work with sufficient pay to enable them to buy the necessities of life, and, having secured their rights as citizens again, they will have no concern whatever for the view of preachers of strife. It may be that some are "unemployables" but that cannot be said of the boys and girls who have left school during the last few years. They have not had any opportunity, and what outlook is there for them in life? The only prospect for them is the dole. If they are to regard themselves as so much human debris, they will develop into a menace unless something is done to prevent a continuance of their unenviable position. I will help the Government in every direction to provide work for such unfortunate people. Another matter that will require much attention relates to the bulk handling of wheat. I have been a member of a board of inquiry on that subject and I believe the installation of that system will save to the farmer at least 2d. or 3d. per bushel. I expect that question will be dealt with later on, and I trust that whatever system is adopted with the aid of Government assistance, it will be one that will ultimately be owned and controlled by the growers themselves. I also trust that when the scheme is paid for and handed over to the farmers it will not amount to a worn-out contraption.

Member: Is it not true that bulk handling is responsible for your appearance here?

Mr. WARNER: The Government should consider the advisability of dealing with the marketing question, and should appoint an officer to go into marketing matters at this stage. In the near future, when Western Australia will become a dominion, it will be necessary to find our natural markets in the Near East. It would recompense the Gov-

ernment if they were to appoint an officer who could advise the producers of world parity prices of wheat instead of the farmers having to rely on merchants to provide them with the desired information. I told my electors that I was strongly in favour of a reduction in the number of members of Parliament, and I am sincere in my views. I believe that there should be representation of areas equally with that of numbers of people. I trust that this reform will apply not only to the Legislative Assembly but to the Legislative Council as well.

Mr. Raphael: Wipe out the Legislative Council!

Mr. WARNER: I would wipe out 10 per cent. of the members. At the same time I believe that the greater reduction in the numbers should affect the metropolitan constituencies and that the country representation should not be so drastically affected. Much has been said regarding the public works to be carried out. I realise that work will have to be found for the unemployed, but I trust that the work undertaken will be reproductive wherever possible. There are many works in my constituency that would be reproductive if undertaken and would employ a large number of men. A water supply scheme is required at Koorda and if a reasonable sum of money were provided for work on the rock catchment in that vicinity, a large number of men could be employed. The whole of the money would be spent on materials procured locally and on wages. An extension of the water scheme at Kodj-Kodjin could also be undertaken with advantage. Most of the money required for that work would be spent on labour and those who would benefit by the extension of the water supply are engaged on reproductive work. Regarding railway matters, I am opposed to the extension of our railway facilities except so far as promises have been made to farmers that lines would be constructed past their holdings within a reasonable time after they had taken them up. One line that should be constructed is the Kalannie northwards railway. That work was promised four years ago and has been side-tracked ever since. There are two or three other railways that could receive attention.

Mr. Griffiths: What about the Yarramony line?

Mr. WARNER: I believe that line is the hon. member's long suit and I shall support him in his advocacy of it. If that line is to be side-tracked because it is too close to railways on either side, I hope the Government will consider the advisableness of constructing roads for road trains. I understand an inquiry is to be undertaken regarding the Agricultural Bank, and I trust the outcome will be the writing-down of existing debts of the bank's clients. The institution should be converted into a rural bank and operated on proper banking lines. In that event, men who are assisted but cannot keep solvent, should be allowed to fall by the wayside. I am sure that if the debts of the settlers are written down they will be able to carry on successfully. The secession issue has been decided by the people and I hope the Government will not attempt to evade their mandate. I trust that before long, endeavours will be made to separate this State from the rest of the Commonwealth, which has kept us in poverty too long. In conclusion, I desire to indicate my intention to assist the Government wherever possible, and I shall at all times endeavour to do my best while I am a member of this Chamber.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.28]: In common, with other members who have spoken, I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to your present position. I also desire to voice my appreciation of the appointment by His Majesty the King of Sir James Mitchell, one of the stalwart sons of Western Australia, to the position of Lieut.-Governor. I regard the appointment as a fitting reward for His Excellency's past services, irrespective of what our views may be regarding the method by which the appointment was made. I am indeed glad that Sir James Mitchell had that honour conferred upon him. I do not intend to embark upon a mass of details to-night, but I have prepared certain matters to place before the Premier because they will be of assistance to him. A more fitting opportunity to discuss them will be provided when we are dealing with the Estimates.

The Premier: You had better let me have the information early.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Warner) mentioned various matters affecting the farming industry such

as the payment of sustenance, the conditioning of debts and the granting of security of tenure. The Premier has practically pledged himself to do something in the matter of granting security of tenure and reasonable sustenance for the men worthy of it, namely, the triers and the good workers. Regarding the conditioning of debts, a deputation from the Primary Producers' Association recently waited on the Minister for Lands and received a very sympathetic hearing from him. The question as to whether debts should be funded and what should be done to relieve the crushing burden of debts was dealt with, and I expect that something will be done during the life of this Parliament. The great question is how are we going to make the growing of wheat, wool, meat, etc., a payable proposition and thus keep the men on the land? My leader pointed out the other evening that it was not within our power to raise the price of commodities produced from the land. That is true, but a reduction of costs over a wide range could be brought about.

Mr. Raphael: You should not be speaking from a back seat. Why are you not on the front bench?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Whatever I say is said with sincerity and received with sincerity, I believe, wherever I speak from. As to easing the interest burden, something has been done, but more requires to be done. Bulk handling was mentioned by the previous speaker. My views on that question are well known. Bulk handling represents one direction in which a considerable reduction in the cost of handling can be brought about. Other ways in which costs can be reduced are by lowering transport charges, taxation, largely on the Federal side, and Customs duties, again a Federal matter. The question is will the Federal Government help in reducing costs, which will be the ultimate salvation of the industry? There are many other items such as agents' charges, saleyard charges, insurance etc., in which there is scope for reduction. The recent improvement in the prices of primary products has led many people to believe that the primary industries will revive and rehabilitate themselves. Wool prices improved considerably, but it is estimated that only about 5 per cent. of our wool was sold at the enhanced price. Con-

sequently our woolgrowers generally will receive little benefit at the moment from the recent rise in prices. The men on the land, during the last three or four years, have suffered heavy losses. They are well behind scratch, and it will take many seasons of profitable crops to enable them to get out of the rut. We as a people would be extremely foolish if we imagined that the primary industries could continue to carry the excessively heavy costs by which they are burdened to-day. The men on the land desire public opinion to recognise that they cannot continue to bear the present heavy load, and that something of a drastic nature must be done by Governments. It is for them to bring about the improvement we are all so anxious to see. Assuming that the price improvement is maintained, the gap between costs and prices is too great. It is within the capacity of Governments to bridge that gap and enable the producers to remain on their holdings. Over nine months ago the Commonwealth Wool Inquiry Committee, after thorough investigation, stressed the urgent necessity for further reduction in all the main costs of pastoral production, transport, distribution, taxation, Customs duties, etc., and they argue that Governments have failed to give effect to this need. All that is worth while in our community will win through and prosper when and as soon as the primary industries work through to prosperity. Our Australian problem is as simple and difficult as that, and just that. There is nothing sectional in this remark. It is a life-and-death matter for the country that we maintain the agricultural industries and keep them going until they reach a self-supporting stage. Regarding unemployment, we shall never get our workless people back to prosperity until we get the wheat, wool, meat and other primary industries on to a payable footing. Whatever is being done now is only tinkering with the problem. The lesson of the depression is gradually being learned by the people of the city. They realise that as the country suffers the town assuredly must suffer also. To me it has been appalling, going around the city, coming into contact with prominent business men—men not intimately connected with the primary industries—to find the ignorance that prevails regarding the crisis that exists. I uphold much of what has been said by the member for Mt. Marshall. Undoubtedly in

the other areas there is considerable distress amongst the farmers. I do not blame the late Government altogether that that distress continues. They did much to relieve it, but they were more curtailed in the matter of cash than are the present Government. The outlook for the present Government appears to be brighter and I trust they will be able to do some of the things that sheer shortness of cash prevented the late Government from doing. Many farmers who have put in crops are doubtful whether they will realise the cost of putting in and taking off the crops. In Europe and America a guaranteed price is provided for the grower of grain. In contrast to that, the average farmer here is doubtful whether he will get back the money cost of cropping his land. We should do everything possible to reduce the cost of production, and prevent the industry from being submerged in a maelstrom of distress and debt. The point I wish to stress is that the existing state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue and that drastic action is necessary. The disparity between the low level of primary products prices and the cost of the service in goods that the farmer requires to follow his avocation is too great and must be bridged. Governments can and must bridge that gap. If they are going to preserve the industry the question must be tackled and tackled promptly. The Premier has practically promised certain things, and we shall naturally expect those promises to be fulfilled. Whether he will be in a position to fulfil all his promises remains to be seen.

Mr. Hawke: You have a lot of promises still to fulfil.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No; I fulfil all my promises, and always have done so. The member for Northam has many promises to fulfil, as also have those gentlemen who went around my electorate and spoke about the great things that would be done immediately Labour got into power. However, I do not believe in holding post-mortems. What I promise I carry out. I come here and state boldly what I have to say, and I have not been guilty of falling down on my job. I do not desire to detain the House. The lowering of the costs of production, I consider, will be the salvation of the industry.

The Minister for Mines: By what means?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have already indicated certain directions in which costs could

be lowered. When the Estimates are under consideration I shall give the details. There are various costs that could be reduced. Take one, not a Governmental activity. The power fuel used by tractor farmers costs 4d. per gallon, plus 4 per cent. to the importer, and the farmer is charged on rails 1s. 2d. Consequently one is driven to the conclusion that there is too wide a margin on that line. The banks and financial institutions could reasonably afford to grant relief and should be called upon to make available to farmers accommodation at the lowest possible rate of interest. Federal taxation presses heavily on the primary industries, particularly the pastoral industry. The Federal authorities might well be called upon by the Government to give consideration in the matters of taxation and of Customs duties. The Customs duties on many articles essential to primary production could well be reduced. I trust the Government will do everything possible—

Mr. Latham: To carry out their promises.

Mr. Wise: No prompting.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Avon does not require much prompting. I trust that the Government will endeavour to bridge the gap in production costs. I regard this as the most important item because, once we get the primary industries flourishing and prosperous, unemployment will disappear.

On motion by Mr. Hawke, debate adjourned.

FEDERAL SENATE VACANCY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to announce to hon. members that in accordance with the Standing Orders for both Houses of Parliament, and the resolution of this House, arrangements have been concluded whereby a meeting of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly will be held in the Legislative Council Chamber on Thursday next, the 27th instant, at 3 p.m., for the purpose of electing a Senator to the Federal Parliament in the place of Sir Hal Colebatch, resigned.

House adjourned at 8.43 p.m.