

Mr. Pickering: Not in carrying those sandwich boards.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, because Australians would sooner leave the State than carry sandwich boards for a living. It is contended that the new people are cheap from an employer's point of view. Due to lack of experience they are very expensive to our industries. No labour is so economical as Australian labour.

Mr. Pickering: Quite so, but we want more of it.

Mr. MARSHALL: Never in the history of the State was there more unemployment or poverty than exists to-day. It is apparent everywhere. We see fine strapping young men—newcomers to the State—selling in the streets, boronia, matches, brass buttons and all sorts of rubbish. This is an absolute waste of good labour. Doubtless these men tell their friends in the old country how deplorable are the conditions here. It is a bad advertisement for Western Australia.

Mr. Pickering: They need not do that unless they like.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, they have the alternatives of stowing away on an outward bound steamer in the hope of getting back to the old country, or of parading their poverty to one of the charitable organisations. The scheme is rotten in the extreme. It is a good wage-smashing proposition and that is all.

Mr. Pickering: What do you suggest in its place?

Mr. MARSHALL: A wise, sound policy, which is beyond the Government.

Mr. Pickering: Then outline it.

Mr. MARSHALL: The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) referred to the marketing of fruit. I wonder what the Agent General and his staff are doing? The taxpayers are called upon to provide big sums of money annually to maintain the Agent General and his staff in London, and what are they getting for this money? According to statements made by the Premier, a great deal of the money expended on Agents General and High Commissioners is wasted. It appears to me that these officials merely go to England to feather their nests. When their term of office is over, they go into public life in England, having paved the way at the expense of the State. The Premier on his return from England last year said he was astounded to find that the people of the Old Country hardly knew that Western Australia was on the map. They had no conception that the gold and pearls they were wearing had been produced here. Their impression was that Western Australia was a vast desert populated by blacks. Why should the taxpayers be called upon to find huge sums of money annually to maintain in England a pack of parasites, who cannot let the people know that there is such a place as Western Australia on the map?

Mr. Pickering: That is why we are bringing them here—to teach them.

Mr. MARSHALL: The day may come when the electors will ask members opposite why—

The Minister for Agriculture: They will.

Mr. MARSHALL:—one section of the primary producers receives all the concessions from the Government and the other section receives nothing. All I want to do while I occupy a seat in this Chamber is to improve the means of livelihood of those who count, the toilers of the State, and to endeavour to leave this world better than I found it when I entered it.

On motion by Mr. Cunningham debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 15th August, 1923.

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

QUESTION—INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, ADVANCES.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, What is the total amount advanced by the Government on the advice or recommendation of the Council of Industrial Development? 2, How much of the total advances has been repaid up to date? 3, What are the names of the firms or persons to whom advances have been made, and who have not repaid either in whole or in part? 4, From what source do the Government provide the money for making these advances?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, £9,352 18s. 6d. from General Loan Fund. 2, £1,650. 3, The Rowley Forests Products Company finally defaulted to the amount of £3,000. The remainder of the advances are current. 4, From General Loan Fund.

QUESTION—ARMADALE POUND, DROVING CHARGES.

Hon. G. POTTER asked the Minister for Education: 1, What is the total amount collected by the poundkeeper of the Armadale pound from 1st May, 1923, to 10th August, 1923? 2, Of the total amount collected, how

much represented droving charges? 3, To whom were droving charges distributed, and what was the amount received by each claimant?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The Government have no authority over the Armadale pound, the control of which is vested in the Kelmscott-Armadale Road Board. The hon. member could doubtless secure the information on inquiry from the road board.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. G. Potter leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. R. J. Lynn on the ground of urgent private business.

RESIGNATION, WEST PROVINCE.

Seat declared vacant.

The PRESIDENT [4.34]: I have to inform hon. members that I have received the following letter:—

Wellington Street, Cottesloe Beach, 13th August, 1923. The Hon. the President of the Legislative Council, Perth. Sir, I desire to tender my resignation as a member for the West Province in the Legislative Council. I am yours faithfully, (signed) F. A. Baglin.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [4.35]: I move—

That in consequence of his resignation having been received by the President, the seat of the Hon. Frederick Arthur Baglin, member for the West Province, is hereby declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous sitting.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.37:]: In the first place I desire to offer my congratulations to Mr. Ewing and Mr. Kirwan on their assumption of new duties in this Chamber. With other members I recognise that the task which has been undertaken by Mr. Ewing is certainly not a light one. He has displayed considerable courage in undertaking such onerous duties. I feel sure that he will discharge those duties with that energy and capacity which he has at all times displayed in other offices here. I wish him every success. I offer similar congratulations to Mr. Kirwan, whose long experience as a parliamentarian will, I feel sure, enable him to guide us on many occasions when matters of difficulty arise. The experience which he has gained in long years of public life will be of great service to this House. In His Excellency's Speech there are some

matters upon which we may congratulate the Government, and others on which certain criticisms may be offered. The first matter to which I desire to allude is the decrease of the deficit. Whether that be a matter of congratulation to the Government, or of commiseration, I can at the moment hardly venture to say; but I do recognise that the Government are certainly indebted, and that we as representatives of the people are indebted to the excellent services rendered by the members of the civil service and the chief officers in that service in making it possible for the deficit to be no greater than it was. I feel quite sure that had the officers not co-operated with and assisted one another as I understand they have done, it would have been impossible for the deficit to be as low as it actually is. I give expression to those views I hope, therefore, that the Government will not lose sight of the claims of our civil servants, but will give due recognition to them at an early date. When the leader of the present Government first took office it was fondly anticipated by many that the days of deficits would gradually vanish. I certainly looked forward, and think Mr. Ewing, in common with the rest of us, looked forward to the deficits being progressively wiped out, and to their reaching in the near future a point when we would be able to say that we were, so to speak, living within our means. But what do we find? Let me take the position for the last three financial years, or practically the term of the present Government. For the financial year ended 30th June, 1921, 1922, and 1923 I have been supplied with figures showing the position. We are all familiar with the deficit of those years, but with the way in which the total deficit has been accumulated we do not seem to be so familiar. We sometimes forget exactly what was the amount in each year. The total revenue for the years 1920-21, 1921-22, and 1922-23 amounted approximately to seven millions in each year. Out of that total revenue the sinking fund in each case amounted to something between two and a quarter and two and a half millions, leaving net revenues in each case of about four and a half millions. The deficit for the year ended the 30th June, 1921, was actually £686,726, whereas it had been estimated by the Treasurer in his Budget speech that the deficit would be £399,413. There were explanations given at the time, as the year progressed, by the Treasurer as to why the deficit had increased so enormously. His estimate instead of being realised, was exceeded by nearly £300,000. There was trouble, as we remember, owing to increase of wages in the Railway Department; but one of the explanations advanced by the Treasurer was that the trouble was to be found in the business section. I assume he meant in public utilities. He went on to explain how a considerable loss had also occurred in connection with the Railway Department. Even Colliery coal was brought in for a share of the blame. The Government attributed to the use of

Colliery coal a loss of something like £20,000. In 1922 the deficit was £732,135, whilst the estimated deficit had been £370,680, or nearly £200,000 of difference between the estimated and the actual deficit. We come now to the year ended the 30th June, 1923, and we find that the actual deficit is £405,351, as against an estimate which was previously given of £369,609. Having regard to the explanations which were given by the Premier and Treasurer in 1921, it seems to me that the Government have been unfortunate in carrying on business operations or business concerns—I do not care whether they are public utilities or State trading concerns. The Premier has admitted that the trouble is largely to be found in the business section of Government activities. That announcement led me to think that surely the Government must realise their impotency and incapacity in carrying on business affairs.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The loss on State trading has to be added to that.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, that is correct. They are all absorbing a great amount of capital.

The Minister for Education: Do you think they are losing money?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Some are showing a profit. Still it is one of the worst advertisements for the State that the Government should be carrying on State trading concerns in opposition to taxpayers.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is crippling private enterprise.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Absolutely. I have said on previous occasions that those concerns are a deterrent to the development of the industrial life of the community. Even if they are profitable, they are to be deprecated.

The Minister for Education: I do not say they are right.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There will be more loss this year than there was last year.

Hon. T. Moore: You are really pleased that they are not paying?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If they are not paying, they are still a menace.

Hon. J. Cornell: To whom?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: To the progress of the community. They will hinder the development of industrial life.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What do you propose to do?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I will try to show. The mover of the motion (Mr Potter) recognised this position. Also the Minister for Works has announced that it is intended to carry on State trading concerns on fairer business lines than, apparently, they have been conducted upon in the past. It will be remembered that it was a common practice to attach to tenders a condition that materials required for contracts should be purchased from the various trading concerns.

Hon. J. Duffell: They have deleted that.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, I am glad to know it. I congratulate the Minister for Works on having withdrawn that very burdensome and unfair condition.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It will only increase the loss.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: At the same time I give the Minister credit for having done something which will at least serve to place the trading concerns on a fairer basis than before. Previously they were bolstered up largely by conditions such as this. Notwithstanding that this condition is withdrawn, it will not remedy the existing evil. I ask, how can such trading concerns be fair under any conditions? They enjoy an absolute freedom from taxation, and they are backed by the credit of the State. If losses are sustained, the losses are passed over to the taxpayer to make good. They are therefore in an unfair position as compared with private enterprises. At the same time they are keeping out of the State people who would become taxpayers and who would establish industries with their own capital instead of with capital borrowed by the Government. On the 28th July we had in the columns of the newspaper a cable reference to the Federation of British Industries, as follows:—

The immunity of State-owned enterprise to taxation was discussed specially by the Federation of British Industries. In its second interim report the hope is expressed that the Imperial Conference will arrive at a solution of the question. There is an increasing tendency on the part of Governments to indulge in State-owned enterprises. It is not surprising that the commercial community resents opposition of this nature in consequence of the special conditions enjoyed by such enterprises in regard to taxation and other obligations.

What is found in other parts of the world has been found here ever since State trading concerns were established. I sincerely hope something will be done to remedy the existing state of affairs. I give the Minister for Works credit for having expressed the view that State trading concerns should not have been established. But he says that so long as he continues to be in charge of these concerns, it is his intention to make them as successful as possible. I believe he is sincerely trying to do that.

Hon. V. Hamersley: He has added to them since they started.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That exactly bears out what has been found by the Federation of British Industries, namely, that there is a tendency to go on extending these things once they are started. I give the Minister credit for sincerity, but I doubt whether he has considered the question in the full light of circumstances and of the effect these concerns have on the growth and development of our industrial life. The wiser policy would be to sell the concerns at the earliest possible moment, and to encourage people to come here with their own capital instead of the Government having to borrow the capital at a high rate of interest and so burden the taxpayers. In view of the Bill which was passed through this House last session, one would have thought the Government would

se every possible endeavour to put that Bill into law. But we find that, unfortunately, it has interfered in another place. As the Premier stated in 1921 that business undertakings largely caused the deficit of that year, so I contend that State trading concerns are very largely the cause of this year's deficit. If those concerns were disposed of we would not have so large a deficit, and encouragement would be given to people to invest their capital. As it is, when people come here and see the prospects, they hesitate about investing, because of the State trading concerns. In view of seasonal unemployment, the more industrial concerns we can create the better will it be for those subject to periods of unemployment. I suggest therefore that the Government should seriously take into consideration the necessity for passing a measure similar to what was transmitted to the Assembly from this House last year, get the necessary authority to sell the trading concerns, and dispose of them at the earliest possible moment. The second point to which I would refer is that the Government announce there will be no increase in taxation. I congratulate the Government on that announcement, at the same time recognising that in view of the existing high rate of taxation it would be very difficult for them to impose any further burdens on the people.

Hon. T. Moore: You think they have gouged the limit?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They have passed it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, they have passed it. If Mr. Moore will compare our position with those of other States and countries, he will see that we have reached the point where taxation should be reduced. I should have liked to see an announcement that the Government intended to reduce taxation.

Hon. T. Moore: Just before an election, too.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It might have been very helpful to them. We have to remember that we are burdened with Federal taxation, and that if any further increase were imposed by the State, then between Commonwealth and State the people would be very nearly taxed out of existence. A third point on which congratulation may be offered to the Government is the announcement that they did not commit themselves to the proposed agreement with the Federal Government. I was glad to hear Mr. Kirwan's declaration that the Federal agreement was dead and gone.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It's only sleeping.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If it is only sleeping, and should it be awakened, I hope the Government will refuse to recognise an agreement such as was put before them.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would have paralysed the financial position of the State if we had entered into it. In view of the Federal surplus, and of our being bound by the ties of Federation, I think the Federal Parliament should give greater considera-

tion to Western Australia. It is the most undeveloped State in the Commonwealth. Like any undeveloped business in private life, it requires a greater amount of capital expended in it than is needed in the older established States. The older States possess considerable accumulations of wealth. They had the benefit of many years of successful operations, before this State actually awakened. We have a large territory to administer, and a Federal spirit should be displayed towards it something like a spirit of brotherhood. But the Federal Government keep on imposing the same burdens of taxation upon us. We are seeking to carry the burden of developing this huge State, and in doing this are helping forward the entire Commonwealth. In the circumstances we are entitled to more consideration than any other State. Something should be done by the Federal Government towards making further allowances to us, and retiring from the field of direct taxation.

Hon. J. Cornell: That would amount to discrimination between the States.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They cannot discriminate between the States, but they could retire from the field of direct taxation, by ceasing to impose the income and land taxes. They could do that in the case of every State. Where a State is struggling as we are, in an undeveloped manner, and possessing as we do a huge territory, extra concessions and allowances could be made without any undue discrimination, or in any way transgressing the provisions of the Federal Constitution. People speak of the economies the Federal Government are seeking to practise. The people of a State who are suffering under the burden of heavy taxation, can, as onlookers, see that there are many economies which might be practised in various Federal departments. There has been a needless waste of money upon the building of the Federal capital. Millions of pounds, which have been collected from the people of the Commonwealth, are being thrown into this fanciful scheme.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Would the hon. member treat the promise to New South Wales as a scrap of paper?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No. I always believe in honouring promises, but I think having regard to the financial stringency, the people of New South Wales should recognise that, as partners in the Federation, it is essential at times to reconsider a promise and determine upon some other policy which would save money.

Hon. J. Cornell: The sooner the Federal capital goes to Canberra, the better will it be for the weaker States.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I shall be very pleased if that is so. The money so collected might have been applied to some more useful purpose. If what Mr. Cornell says is correct, we shall have every reason to welcome the establishment of the Commonwealth capital.

Hon. J. Cornell: I am only repeating what Western Australian, Queensland and Tasmanian Federal members have told me.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am only looking at the matter from the standpoint of thrift. If money can be saved, it ought to be saved.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There is no need to spend millions upon it all the same.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is how the position appeals to me. Large sums of money have been spent in Federal public buildings. It has often occurred to me that less expensive structures might have been erected and many hundreds of thousands of pounds saved. Not long ago we learned with surprise of the huge salaries that were being paid to members of the Federal Parliament, and to many heads of the Federal Civil Service.

Hon. J. Cornell: Like Charlie's Aunt, they have come to stay.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Unfortunately that is so. I do not know that the services rendered by Federal members are much more valuable than those rendered by members of Parliament in the various States.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Why not raise our own salaries?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Let them all be reduced. The position in which the higher paid officers of our own Civil Service are placed is very invidious and unfair, and the disparity between the salaries paid to the two sets of officers is very marked.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They had a surplus in one year of seven millions and we have a deficit of seven millions.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Exactly. If we could find legislative means by which that surplus could be transferred to our deficit, we could carry on.

Hon. J. Cornell: One set of civil servants renders service in a kingdom in parts, and the other set in a kingdom as a whole.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not say that the services of our own higher officials are of any less value than the services rendered by those who are receiving big salaries in the Commonwealth.

Hon. H. Stewart: You are proposing, are you not, to reduce the deficit and to increase the salaries of our civil servants? What is your method?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We could reduce the deficit by getting rid of the State trading concerns, and could request the Federal Parliament to give special consideration to this State. We are entitled to more consideration than the other States, which have been longer established than we have been.

Hon. H. Stewart: What would be the use of that?

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: We are going to celebrate our centenary shortly.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we could reduce expenditure we could reduce taxation. All these things would help to improve our position. If the Federal Government set a worthy example of true economy, it would help the other States to

pursue the same course, and probably bring us into a better position than we have occupied before. Although the Speech occupies three full pages, there are only two short paragraphs referring to the metropolitan area; one dealing with the extension of water supplies and the other with trams.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is nothing about sewerage.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The remarks about water supplies are very belated. This year we are being called upon to expend a fairly substantial sum to meet wants which should have been supplied years ago. It would not be altogether fair that the Government should claim excuse for their previous neglect to provide an adequate water supply by spending this large sum in the metropolitan area all at once, when it should have been spread over a number of the years that have passed.

The Minister for Education: The cost of money was the reason.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I admit the money is being spent, but it should have been spread over a number of years.

The Minister for Education: The money would have cost much more.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Government have also assumed the responsibility of the sewerage of the metropolitan area, but not a word has been said about that in the Speech. Owing to the growth and expansion of the districts around the city, the question of sewerage becomes more and more acute each year.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The system pays for itself.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. I hope the Government will take this matter into consideration, together with the provision of water supplies. I noticed that the Minister for Education, when speaking on the Supply Bill, said with pride that 61 per cent of loan moneys had been spent in the agricultural districts. I recognise the importance of developing the country districts and that they require the expenditure of a large sum of money. The more we can open up the country and get the people to settle there, the better will it be for the towns of the State. I am not quarrelling with that, but I ask the Government not to forget the metropolitan area. The other question to which I desire to allude as being omitted from the Governor's Speech, is that relating to unemployment. This constitutes a difficulty that constantly confronts us in the metropolitan area. When work is slack in the country between seasons men naturally flock into Perth in the hope of employment being found for them. I recognise the difficulty of the Government in their task of finding work from time to time and of solving these difficulties, but the fact remains that they must be overcome. Unfortunately unemployment exists largely amongst unskilled men. Of skilled artisans, I am informed, there are all too few in Western Australia at the present time. In consequence of this scarcity, many works

are delayed. One naturally asks why in a country like Western Australia we should have so many unskilled labourers.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Arbitration Court prevents them from learning a trade.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is true. I referred to this question when speaking on the Address-in-reply last year, and I still think that the restrictions imposed regarding apprenticeships are largely responsible for the lack of skilled artisans. This is a serious question, but I realise that there are two sides to it. Discussions have taken place between the parties affected and I believe that both sides are earnestly anxious to overcome the difficulty. When the parties themselves do not succeed in solving the problem, then it is time for the Government to step in and assist in achieving that object.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would you not give young Australians a chance?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Of course I would. Only 293 apprentices were registered last year.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You cannot have any more.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. According to the awards and agreements which are in force, only one or two apprentices can be employed to so many journeymen.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The apprenticeship system is out of date. We want trade classes now.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is a direction in which the Government should interest themselves. It is a difficult matter, but it is for the Government to face the question and overcome emergencies as they arise. I hope the Leader of the House will bring this matter before his colleagues and will seek to solve the serious difficulty that exists at present. Serious as it is now, it will become more serious as our population increases.

The Minister for Education: Technical schools are doing a good deal.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They are, but there is more to be done yet.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The extension of trade classes is what is required.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: At any rate, I hope something will be done, and it is important that it should be done without any loss of time. There was another item of importance not dealt with in the Governor's Speech. I refer to the housing problem. It is acute in the metropolitan area and something should be done to relieve the position. The question of the influx of population to the metropolitan area has been discussed here, and an excellent address was delivered by our late Leader, Mr. Colebatch, either during last session or the one preceding that. It was a most illuminating speech and there is no gainsaying the fact that, having regard to our total population, the proportion of the people within the metropolitan area is much greater than it should be, compared with the proportion residing in the country.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I will probably be asked the question: What can the Government do?

Hon. H. Stewart: I suppose it will be said the Government can go on building tramways, for instance.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I will not say that at all, but the Government could provide cheaper railway fares to enable people to live in the suburbs.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What chance have we got of cheap railway fares when the Government build trams in competition with the railways?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I hope that trams will not be built in such a way as to adversely affect the revenue of the Railway Department. I trust that the Minister and the Commissioner, who are in charge of our railways, will see that the trams and the railways do not compete too severely.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do not you want more people in the country?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I will be pleased to see as many people in the country districts as possible, but cheaper and better facilities should be provided for those people whose work compels them to reside in the city.

Hon. H. Stewart: And the cost will probably be passed on to the people in the country in the shape of increased freights.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Not at all.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Some people cannot have push bikes now but want trams.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There is a difficulty here where the position is different to that obtaining in the Motherland. In England people live in large terraces of houses, from three to five storeys high. One acre of land in the Old Country will hold so many hundred people, whereas one acre here is usually cut up into four blocks, and occupied by four families. In consequence of that, our cities are spread over a much bigger area of land than cities in older settled countries. It is essential because of this, that people should be provided with the means of reaching their homes within the suburban areas. Because of high railway charges at the present time, many people are squeezing themselves into rooms and living huddled together in a way that is neither good for the people themselves, nor beneficial to health.

Hon. H. Stewart: A good five mile walk would do those who are not suffering from bad health, a lot of good.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Everyone is not so young as the hon. member.

Hon. H. Stewart: Nor has everyone had as hard a time. During the tram strike many people cheerfully walked long distances and it did them good.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is suggested that some of the difficulty may be overcome by the establishment of a fair rents court. I do not think that would solve the difficulty. If I thought it would, I would support the proposal.

Hon. T. Moore: But such a scheme would keep down rents.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not think so. As a matter of fact, the whole question of rents will have to be determined in much the same way as food prices.

Hon. G. W. Miles: If artisans laid more bricks per day, good would result.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The only way to improve the position is by building more houses so as to provide additional accommodation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: If bricklayers were allowed to lay 1,000 bricks a day instead of 400, the position would be relieved.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. Within the city boundaries the municipal authorities insist on all buildings being of brick, stone, or cement. They will not allow timber houses to be constructed. We are blessed in Western Australia with timber recognised as one of the best fire-resisting woods in the world. I refer to our jarrah. Existing municipal regulations prevent the use of jarrah for building purposes within the city boundaries. Much could be done to overcome the housing problem if facilities could be given by which people living at a certain distance from the actual centre of the city might be allowed to erect wooden houses. This is a plea also for the use of our native timbers. Such a course would provide employment for a greater number of men at the timber mills, and timber yards and also in connection with the erection of houses. The unemployment problem would also be aided to a solution if this course were adopted. Timber houses can be built more rapidly and more cheaply than brick houses. There is only one other matter to which I intend to refer, and that relates to migration. I thank the Government for the opportunity afforded me, in common with other members, to visit some of the group settlements near Denmark and Nornalup some months ago. Such a visit gave me a better idea of the position regarding this question than I could possibly gain previously. A man would indeed be a croaker if he did not wish success to the scheme of settlement, and to the settlers on the land. The men whom I saw on the group settlement near Denmark were a very fine type, taken all round. They were energetic men.

Hon. T. Moore: Were they migrants?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: So far as I know, they were.

Hon. H. Stewart: Not all; some were railway men, some were lumpers and so on.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: At any rate they were a fine type and if they are only given the opportunity and receive a fair deal, many of them will succeed.

The Minister for Education: Most of them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I would like to see them all succeed. The Premier is sometimes met with criticism, and he has referred to people who criticise the scheme as croakers. Men are not croakers because

they criticise. I believe that the criticism which has been offered to the migration scheme by many people in Western Australia, has been offered in the best interests of the State with a view to helping forward the success of the Premier's scheme.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It has never been received as such, has it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, the Premier has not received that criticism in the spirit in which it should have been received and which I should have expected from such a broad-minded man as he.

The Minister for Education: He does not mind criticism.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They why does he characterise as croakers the people who criticise him?

The Minister for Education: There are some croakers, you know.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Perhaps so. If any man is a croaker in the true sense of the word and does not wish success for the scheme, he should be turned out of the State.

The Minister for Education: Quite right.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Everyone gives the Premier credit for having conceived the scheme; but I wish to offer some criticism and I hope I shall not be denounced as a croaker. The Premier should give to his critics credit for being inspired by the same patriotic intentions as he himself is. Let me refer to portion of the Governor's Speech dealing with group settlement—

While the inception of this new scheme of land settlement requires some adjustment of details, it is generally working satisfactorily.

That creates an element of doubt as to whether everything possible is being done to make the scheme an absolute success. We all wish it to be a success, and yet all the Government can tell us is that it is "generally working satisfactorily." That is a most casual way of expressing it.

Hon. J. Duffell: Just "generally speaking."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. The Government should be able to say, not that it is generally working satisfactorily, but that every link in the chain of the scheme is working as smoothly as possible towards definite and ultimate success.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is what we all desire, but unfortunately it is not the position.

The Minister for Education: That is what is happening to-day.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask hon. members to permit Mr. Nicholson to proceed without interruption.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But the Speech does not tell us that it is working absolutely smoothly. About 64 groups have been started and the amount of detail they involve is enormous. Not half a dozen men—much less one man—could carry it out successfully without the aid of the best expert opinion. Every link in the chain should be complete and every effort should be made to ensure the

success of the scheme. If the scheme breaks down, what will it mean to this State? It will mean absolute ruin. I hope the Premier and his colleagues will call in the aid of those best able to advise, that nothing may be wanting to make the scheme a success. When I visited Denmark I saw the men engaged in clearing work. I understood that each settler in a group was to be given a certain area of land completely cleared of all timber, so that he could plough and properly cultivate every bit of it. Instead of that, I found that the five acres of so-called cleared land still had the big karri stumps standing, and the men who take over those blocks will require later on to get rid of the stumps before they can claim to have a cleared block. It will take a long time to get rid of these stumps.

Hon. H. Stewart: They will not have to pay for it twice over.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But the leaving of the stumps will entail extra work afterwards. A good number of stumps have been left in the ground.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And it is much harder work to take out a stump than to take out a tree.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Quite so. While those stumps remain the settlers will not get a fair opportunity to work their land properly and, therefore, they will not have the chance they otherwise would have had to make good.

The Minister for Education: Are you referring to stumps or trees?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This land was cut over by Millars' in the old days and the huge karri stumps were left in the ground.

The Minister for Education: You are creating a wrong impression.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: How so?

The Minister for Education: When dealing with virgin country they take the whole tree out.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The country had been cut over years ago, and in the cutting operations big stumps were left in the ground. Some of them stand 6ft. or 8ft. high. These stumps are now being left for the settlers themselves to clear later on. This will mean additional expense and will impede them in their cultivation operations.

Hon. A. Burvill: To take out those stumps now would overload the blocks with too much expense.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: What would it cost to take them out?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not know.

The Minister for Education: They could be taken out gradually.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I made inquiries regarding the roads constructed there. The party with whom I travelled went over one road which we named "Breakup road," and it was true to its name. That road had just been made; yet, in driving over it, we were nearly thrown out two or three times. The formation was not such as one would have expected

from a competent man. I do not know under whose supervision it was constructed.

Hon. H. Stewart: Probably it was constructed under the supervision of the Lands Department. They have no regard for grades.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: A road such as this would be of very little use to the settlers.

Hon. J. Cornell: I suppose you travelled by air most of the time.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That would have been the safer plan. I asked whether the Government took into account the cost of making the roads and added it to the cost of the group and then allocated the amount over the whole of the blocks.

Hon. A. Burvill: No.

Hon. H. Stewart: They do not know yet.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have not been able to ascertain.

The Minister for Education: I shall endeavour to find out.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the Government apportion to each block within the group served by this road part of the cost of constructing the road, I pity these settlers for having to pay for such a road as "Breakup-road." The whole of that road will require to be re-made. Probably it is being re-made now; if not, I am certain it will not last very long.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Government would not add the cost of the road to the capital of the holdings.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There was some talk of its being done. I said it was unfair, particularly for such a road as this, which was of no earthly use to the settlers. Another matter brought under my notice was that in certain cases timber is being hauled for a very much longer distance over the railways than is necessary. To some of the groups timber could be supplied from saw-mills within a distance of 10 or 15 miles, and yet the timber has been ordered from other mills distant 70 to 100 miles.

The Minister for Education: Are you referring to the State mills?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I cannot say where the timber was being obtained, but the cost of the extra haulage is added to the price. It is the duty of the Government officials to see that every article of material required for the construction of the houses on these group settlements is obtained at the cheapest possible rate. The settlers should not be burdened with any excess charges that can be avoided.

The Minister for Education: I do not think they will be.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: To charge them with the extra freight in this case is unfair. I do not expect the Premier to be able to supervise all these details; nor do I expect Mr. McLarty to do so. Mr. McLarty is probably the hardest-worked officer in the Government service. He should not be blamed for it. Mr. Camm and other officers are in much the same position as Mr. McLarty. But this is a huge organisation, the detail of 64 group settlements is gigantic and, in

order to cope with it, the best expert opinion is required under a thorough general, and it should be so departmentalised that everything may work with the greatest possible smoothness. This scheme should be regarded as a general regards his army. It should be worked on scientific plans so that the scheme will result in success. I would like to refer to a question which has some association with land settlement, and that is whether we are retaining our immigrants, whether our population is increasing as it should increase.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is acknowledged from the figures.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we refer to the statistics with which we are furnished, we find that in 1920 the number of arrivals was 29,930 and the departures 31,277, leaving an excess of departures of 1,347. Last session Mr. Colebatch alluded to that very question. In 1921 the arrivals numbered 29,333, and the departures 29,306, the excess of arrivals in that year being only 27. In 1922 the position improved. The arrivals numbered 31,141 and the departures 28,246, an excess of arrivals over departures of 2,895. That was the best success we had had for many years. For the first quarter of the present year the arrivals numbered 9,081 and the departures 8,100, an excess of arrivals of 981.

Hon. T. Moore: More loan money is being spent.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In the second quarter there is an excess of arrivals over departures of 1,749, the total for the half year being 2,730, nearly as many as we had during the whole of last year. The developmental policy is improving. The question was referred to by Foster Fraser in his book, *Australia, the making of a nation*, on page 28 of which he says:—

The net immigration into the various States for 1908 amounted to only 13,150. In that year of 1908, however, 72,208 immigrants arrived in Australia: from the United Kingdom 21,416, from New Zealand 26,357, from other British possessions 13,481, and from foreign countries 10,954. Here then is a startling result—72,208 immigrants arrived in Australia in 1908 and 59,058 people emigrated from Australia that year.

We were being denounced as though our State was the one which was the most affected by the loss of population. We have occasionally seen references in the Press to the fact that so many people have gone out of the State in this month or that month.

Hon. H. Stewart: Which State is the worst?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have not the details of the other States. It would be worth the while of the Government Statistician to look into this matter thoroughly and to advise the Leader of the House so that he might give us the information that Mr. Colebatch supplied last year, and so perhaps furnish an assurance that we are not suffering the losses we are told we have been suffering and that we are not in a worse position, so far as

population is concerned, as compared with the other States. We have been told that there is a movement of people from this to the other States, but we must bear in mind a fact which is apt to be overlooked, that in a community such as ours we have a large floating population, and that the number of people arriving and departing is considerable. It would be of service if the Statistical Department could find out definitely whether the new arrivals were actually staying. I believe they are.

Hon. T. Moore: Some of them are trying to stow away.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Some do that, but I feel confident that we have the land and the opportunities in Western Australia and that the people who come here will avail themselves of both. I trust that every migrant who reaches our shores will use his best endeavours towards achieving success, and I feel sure that the people resident in the State will at all times render a helping hand towards establishing that success. I intend to support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [6.53]: In speaking on the Address-in-reply it cannot be said that we have a topic put in such form and containing such matter that by any stretch of the imagination it can be regarded as inspiring. The Speech contains sentences that appear to be not connected, while for the greater part the facts that are given are not put up in a way that is not calculated to impart much useful information or data on which one can base criticism, offered of course in a spirit of helpfulness such as we have listened to this evening from Mr. Nicholson, as well as from other members before him. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the latter portion of the second paragraph in the Governor's Speech which reads—

The agreement was signed on the 9th February, 1923, and operates in respect of migrants sailing from England after the 25th September, 1922, and, in respect of the financial clauses, from the date of signing.

That is to say, four months later. I would like a clear explanation from the Minister as to just what that sentence divided into two parts, means, because I do not think there is any hon. member in this House who really understands it. We notice further down the Speech that reference is made to the quality of our products. We have heard that stressed by Governments on various occasions as well as the desire for the establishment of factories. At the same time it was pointed out by the Premier not so long ago that the question of markets in connection with group settlements was a matter which depended on the settlers themselves. It is satisfactory to know, however, that only recently the Premier denied having adopted that attitude, although it is on record in the Press and

can be turned up. The Premier has now declared that it will be the duty of the Government to assist in establishing and finding markets in connection with the development of trade and industry, both primary and secondary, and that the obligation is one that belongs to the Government. I do not propose to offer any remarks with regard to the financial position of the State. The deficit for the year is below the estimate, but I will take this opportunity of deprecating the way in which the present Government, year in and year out, come forward full of excuses to the effect that if this had not happened, and the other had not happened, if Parliament had not done this, or the railways had not done that, the position would probably have been better and the estimates realised. As a matter of fact the results are never very near the estimates. The revenue from liquor licenses is nowhere near the estimate. In this direction so much was expected, and the "West Australian" apologising for the Premier, pointed out that the responsibility did not lie with the Leader of the Government. On the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill the Leader of the Opposition carried an amendment against the Government, interfering with the revenue. What does the Leader of the Government do? He stands firm on immigration and settlement as against the expenditure of money on non-productive works in town. The money is certainly being spent to a large extent in the development of the country, but the Premier acts in a most politic manner. Only two sessions ago a member of the Country Party moved in the direction of reducing the Estimates by a certain amount. Of course he had not the slightest chance of carrying the amendment. The Leader of the Government said he would regard such an amendment as one of no confidence—a very brave thing to declare when it came from one of his own supporters, and when he saw that that supporter would have practically no one with him. The Premier belittled the idea of an investigation of the financial administration on the part of one of those who were keeping the Government in power. But when the Leader of the Opposition brings forward a motion to take away £50,000 of revenue, does the Premier threaten to treat that motion as one of want of confidence? No. The Premier is defeated, and in spite of constitutional precedents he carries on. Then we get forecasts that the estimated deficit will be exceeded because Parliament has declined to support the Premier in his proposals for raising revenue. If he had put down his foot and said, "I mean to have this revenue," would not he have got it? If he had been defeated, and then had gone to the country, he could also have got the revenue. However, expediency rules the Premier; he seeks merely to maintain the position in which he can carry out his

policy of immigration and group settlement. Hon. C. F. Baxter: He is protected by the Labour Party.

Hon. H. STEWART: The Labour Party protect him. The salary grab of a few years ago was made in conjunction with the Labour Party.

Hon. T. Moore: The Labour Party did not protect him in connection with the Lake Clifton railway scandal.

Hon. H. STEWART: Unfortunately they did not.

Hon. T. Moore: But your party protected him.

Hon. H. STEWART: That was not a responsibility of the present Premier. It was done by a previous Government. I regard it as a scandal.

Hon. T. Moore: An absolute scandal, and not a word about it in the Press.

Hon. H. STEWART: The financial position, as shown by the closing accounts of the 30th June, evidences a pleasing improvement. It would be unpardonable if such an improvement had not taken place, because taxation in all its forms is exceedingly heavy. The railway finances have improved, but why? Because there has been a tremendous increase in the imposts charged to the customers of the Railway Department. And the position is similar in connection with the other public services. We want to see further improvement in the administration of the services. There has been considerable reorganisation and improvement in the various departments from an administrative point of view, but I do not think we can take it that the full effects of good organisation and high efficiency have yet been attained in the Government service. As the result of contact with the departments, I know that there is an exceedingly harmful lack of co-ordination between the Agricultural Department, the Lands Department, the Titles Office, and the Agricultural Bank. That lack of co-ordination means expense to the State, because inefficiency and delays result as regards the granting of loans which are necessary for the very work that the Premier cries out must be done—increased clearing and increased farming. I take the same position as Mr. Nicholson. I appreciate that the head of the Government and the other Ministers stand firm, or have until recently stood firm, on the principle that expenditure of loan moneys must be for the development of the country. But I view with considerable alarm the numerous extensions which are being made in connection with the metropolitan tramway system. I fear that those extensions will mean robbing the railways, and will mean an expenditure disproportionate to the demand for tramway facilities, so that the financial results of that tramway system will grow more unsatisfactory. If I were speaking at length to-night, I would go into the matter of tramways, and would point out that only recently the amount of capital invested in them has been increased very considerably, making one wonder whether fair maintenance charges

have been debited against working costs, or whether a proportion of those charges have been debited against capital. In the year 1912, when the Government purchased the tramways, the system made a profit of £30,000, after £10,000 had been set aside for belated repairs. Each year the profit has fallen off by one-third, and under Labour administration the number of employees increased by one-third. In 1917, on entering this House, I forecasted that within a year or two the Government would be losing on the trams. That forecast has been verified. Last year the tramway accounts showed a return of nearly £10,000 from a capital of £800,000, as against a profit of £30,000 upon a capital of £500,000 several years ago. Although the Government have a most capable manager in Mr. Taylor, the system has been so overburdened that with its 40 per cent. increase in capital it is now showing less than half of the net profit, after payment of working expenses, that it paid in 1912-13. Some time ago the Government spoke of the desirability of the municipalities taking over the tramway system and tramway construction, but they have done about as much towards that end as they have done towards getting rid of the State trading concerns. I have tackled the Government about this before, and have the subject at my finger-ends, and know the exact position. I have the tables here, and could read out the exact figures, but I think I can bring the position home to hon. members more forcibly by giving round figures and keeping my eyes on you, Mr. President, instead of on paper. One thing in particular to which I wish to draw attention is the question I asked here on the 2nd August regarding the settlement of returned soldiers. It is a matter which I have dealt with each year since 1919 on the Address-in-reply. I happened to-day to come across my speech of 1919, and glancing through it I noticed that in the early days of repatriation the number of men who had obtained the land qualification certificate was about double the number who had actually got land. Last year I pointed out that up to October of 1921 there were 1,400 men who had the land qualification certificate but had not been settled on the land. About August of last year, when I spoke, there were 1,400 odd men who had got the land qualification certificate, but were not settled on the land. Each year I have asked for an explanation of this position of affairs, but all the explanation I can get is that some men who have the certificate do not apply for land. The matter is one that wants probing. I should be glad if Mr. Cornell could give me some information on the subject, or that hon. member might find out whether there is anything requiring to be done. From returns given to me by the Minister a few days ago; I know that on the 30th June of this year there were 6,608 returned soldiers holding the land qualification certificate, and that 4,910 had been settled on the land and had received advances. It appears, therefore, that at the present time there are about 1,698 returned

soldiers who have the certificate but have not obtained land. The number of such soldiers is greater now than it has been at any previous date.

Hon. J. Cornell: I have a qualification certificate, but I have not got any land yet.

Hon. H. STEWART: I want to know how many of those qualified soldiers do not want land. From the figures it would seem that an astonishingly large number of returned men went to the trouble of getting the qualification certificate and then went no further. Here is the astonishing thing: whereas 12 months ago there were 1,400 of these men, there are now practically 1,700. During the previous 11 or 12 months only 89 of those men with qualification certificates got land. Within the last fortnight there has come under my notice the case of two returned soldiers, married men with wives and children, who, having their certificates, have put up a proposition to the Government, and have been informed by the Controller of Soldier Settlement that the proposition is not remunerative for returned men at the price. I quite agree that the Controller is acting in the interests of the men. Both the men, however, are good and experienced farmers and good bushmen, and are content to take the property at the price quoted.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Is it an improved property?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. The Controller says the price is too high to allow of the returned men making a living on the property. These men, as I have said, are married, and therefore they cannot get round the country to look for other properties. They have to make their livelihood and keep themselves and their families. What can be done, and what is being done, to enable them to get on a property? The onus is thrown on them by the Government. As the Repatriation Department are not giving any help now, the position is extremely difficult for men so circumstanced. If Mr. Cornell can give me any information regarding this matter, or if he can in any way help in connection with such cases, I shall be very glad to hear from him and to have his co-operation.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. STEWART: I listened with great interest to Mr. Nicholson's remarks on group settlement. I, too, made that trip, and I can bear out what the hon. member said. In the Denmark area there is good land, and the people on the groups seem well satisfied. Yet, knowing the climate, I could not help thinking that, housed as they were in temporary camps, their resistance to wet and cold would be thoroughly tested before the end of the first six months. It was gratifying to find in the members of the groups a feeling of extreme thankfulness to the Premier and the Government for the opportunity given to work out their own independence. Some of them asked me how I thought they would do. I told them plainly that if they

were prepared to work unlimited hours for eight or ten years they and their children need never want, but that if they were not so prepared, probably before they had put in many years they would become disgusted with their conditions and leave. I formed a very good impression of the type of settler in the Denmark groups. The personnel included all sections of workers. The great bulk of them were imbued with the belief that if they stuck to their task they would never be in want, either of a job or of food and clothing. I doubt if any section of the community is not wholly in accord with the necessity for a sound policy of immigration and land settlement. Why, then, should the "West Australian" regard all criticism of the Premier's scheme as opposition? Considering how large a sum of money is involved, and having regard to the precarious financial relationship between the State and the Commonwealth, those in authority should welcome criticism that will lead to an examination of the results and improve organisation, which is the most important factor in group settlement. No steps should be prepared to secure the maximum efficiency in the administration of that scheme. I hope that in future those who seek information as to that administration will not be denounced as opponents of group settlement. His Excellency's Speech gave us no information about the administration. On the Denmark groups there are between 20 and 30 children of school age who are getting no teaching whatever. It is not right.

Hon. T. Moore: The same condition of affairs is to be found all over the State.

Hon. H. STEWART: The sooner it is remedied the better. There are in my province several groups of children who are not getting simple primary education, which is compulsory and free.

Hon. A. Burvill: And for which their parents are taxed.

Hon. H. STEWART: True. The Minister cannot say that the children on the Denmark groups are getting any educational instruction whatever.

The Minister for Education: The matter is in hand now.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am not blaming the Minister, but I say that those 20 or 30 children of school age should have at least some sort of primary teaching, if only in temporary buildings.

Hon. A. Burvill: There are 40 or more of them.

Hon. H. STEWART: Well, it is idle to question the number, whether it be 30 or 40. It is as well that hon. members should know that while money is being allocated to tennis courts and gardens in Perth, no provision is made for the education of those children at Denmark.

Hon. J. Nicholson: No money is provided in the Education Vote for tennis courts in Perth.

Hon. H. STEWART: Well, there was last year. I had that information in answer to a question I asked in this House. It is not right that 20 or 30 children in the Denmark groups cannot get primary education. I do not agree with Mr. Baxter's contention that further officers should be added to the Agricultural Department. I have not heard of any being needed there at present. The department has its several experts, all trained men, including four University graduates as agricultural advisers. Mr. Baxter seemed to think he would like to see the Director of Agriculture outside lecturing all the time. I and others who understand agriculture think it would be pretty difficult to get a better man at the head of the department than we have at present. The Minister showed great judgment in putting the department under a technical head, and in choosing for that head a man who has won the ungrudging respect and appreciation of the farmers. Mr. Dodd again brought up the question of a tax on unimproved land values. After my investigation of land legislation and taxation, the results of which I gave to the House when speaking on the Closer Settlement Bill last year, I am of opinion that before any alteration is made we should have a well-thought out, equitable and systematic Act for the valuation of land, something on the lines of the New Zealand legislation. It is all very well to look at things from the academic point of view, and to raise the slogan "taxation on unimproved land values" or "rebate on freights." Before any step is taken which may seriously prejudice the State the matter must be well considered. No additional taxation should be imposed on those whose avocation is not so attractive as to cause numbers of people to rush from the city to share in the profits of those who follow agricultural or mining pursuits.

Hon. T. Moore: You say there are some people rushing for land who cannot be placed.

Hon. H. STEWART: All men can get on the land.

Hon. T. Moore: What about the soldiers you mentioned?

Hon. H. STEWART: I said that certain soldiers who had land qualifications had now yet been settled. A man can get land if he wants to, but not always the land he requires or the terms he seeks.

Hon. T. Moore: A man wants to make a success of the land when he gets on it.

Hon. H. STEWART: The interjection is not in accordance with my remarks. There are many hundreds of returned men who have land qualifications, but no land. If 50 per cent. of these want land, I hope it will be found for them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Perhaps many of them do not want land.

Hon. H. STEWART: I have repeatedly asked the Leaders of the House to explain this credit balance that now stands at 1,700 returned men. On the 2nd instant I asked certain questions with regard to our settle-

ment scheme as now laid down. My questions were as follows:—

1, In what group settlements are the settlers residing in their own respective cottages on their own blocks? 2, For each of the group settlements given by answer to Question 1—(a) what is the cost per cottage? (b) what is the area of cleared land per respective settler? (c) what is the cost per acre of such cleared land? (d) what stock and plant have been supplied to each settler? (e) what is the total indebtedness per settler? (f) what steps are being taken to ensure production by settlers of agricultural produce which will enable them to make a living and meet their interest obligations?

These questions are simple ones, and the answers should be of interest to every member of this Parliament. The answers also should be on record in the department, which has been working for 12 months on group settlement. If we neglected to ask for information of that sort we should be extremely culpable. Notice of this question was given a fortnight ago, and the Minister said a return would have to be prepared. I have had a great many years' experience in mining and smelting operations. In connection with those enterprises we always knew what our mining and smelting costs were from week to week. The Railway Department brings out expensive returns from time to time. If they had a proper costing system, such as I have mentioned, the railways would be much more efficiently and economically controlled. The present system of making returns is a generation behind the times from the point of view of watching the costs. I showed the Royal Commissioner appointed to inquire into the railways certain forms used in other businesses. These forms are ruled into squares and columns and show the whole of the working of the businesses, and enable anyone who understands figures to arrive at the exact position. The Royal Commissioner said he had never before seen anything of the kind, and commented upon the great amount of information the forms disclosed. The Railway Department might well adopt a similar system to the great advantage of the State. The point I am leading up to is that if the information I sought by the questions I have read had been in the departments, the answer could have been furnished within 24 hours. A fortnight has now elapsed and we have not yet had the return furnished. I do not know how many settled groups there are, or anything about the cost of those groups. If the work of the department was being controlled under the highest type of business organisation and efficiency these questions could have been answered at once. The information would have been in the office in tabulated form for immediate use and the guidance of others. The information should have been available from the time the first group was settled, so that upon it might have been built better organisation for the second group. An officer capable of compiling such information should be attached to each de-

partment in which there is industrial work and heavy expenditure going on. If these were done, it would be much better for the Premier's estimates and the control of expenditure and loan moneys. It is only by organisation and the systematic checking of expenditure that the system of departmental administration can be improved. The delay in answering my question shows that the highest method and the best organisation in connection with land settlement and development have not been followed. Meritorious as the work may be, it has not reached the acme of perfection. I congratulate Mr. Kirwan upon his appointment as Chairman of Committees, and Mr. Cornell upon the great measure of confidence he has won from his colleagues in the House. I also join in congratulations to the Leader of the House upon his accession to Ministerial rank. I also congratulate the Minister upon his appointment as a member of the University Senate. I hope in the latter capacity he will play a useful part, and will be more often in attendance than his predecessor.

Hon. E. ROSE (South-West) [7.58]: I join with others in congratulating the Minister upon his elevation to Cabinet rank. I do so with great pleasure. I also congratulate the Government upon having him in the Ministry. He has a wide knowledge of the South-West, and as a surveyor he will be of great assistance to the Government in their land settlement scheme. I also congratulate Mr. Kirwan upon his appointment as Chairman of Committees. His great knowledge of Parliamentary procedure and his tact will make him a valuable officer of the House. I also congratulate the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the settlement of soldiers on the land. Their report is a credit to them, and bears out what many of us have said in the past. Some four years ago Mr. Ewing, the late Mr. E. M. Clarke, and I endeavoured to have a clause inserted in the Bill whereby returned soldiers would be relieved of their interest for at least five years. We also considered later that a lot of the land was being purchased at too high a price, and that clearing was too costly. I hope the Government will carry out the recommendations contained in the report, and reduce the price of land taken up by the soldiers. If the rate of interest cannot be reduced, I hope the men will at least be given time in which to pay. Though there are many matters referred to in the Governor's Speech, there are only two or three I wish to touch upon. It is pleasing to see that our railways are paying better this year than has been the case for years past. There is still room for improvement. As business men we know that by spending £1,000 or £2,000 in alterations and improvements, we are repaid two or three times over. The same principle applies to our railways. In different parts of the railway system very steep grades rule, making the haulage of goods considerably more expensive to the primary producers. On the line from Collie to Brunswick, the department has

to provide two engines in order to haul a small load over the greater portion of the route. Some years ago an alternative route was reported upon by Mr. Stoddart, an engineer and surveyor of some note. He stated that a good level route could be secured from Collie through the Ferguson district to Bunbury. That line would open up a large area of splendid country. When we remember the amount of coal hauled over the Collie line, we will recognise at once that the construction of another line would be warranted, not only on account of the coal, but of the wheat and timber which is hauled there. The coal output from the Collie mines during 1921-22 totalled 459,381 tons. That is very heavy traffic for a single line during 12 months only. If we consider in addition the enormous quantity of wheat conveyed through that district, it will be appreciated that this, too, represents a very substantial item. In 1922, 51,093 tons of wheat passed over that single line, to say nothing of timber and other produce from the district. The railway is often congested and that shows that there is the necessity for duplication. The only economical way to carry out that work would be to construct another line as I have suggested.

Hon. A. Purvill: What is the present grade on the Collie line?

Hon. E. ROSE: I cannot say off-hand. These improved railway facilities which have been asked for so often, should be provided. The cost will not be so great, particularly when we remember the large amount of money it is proposed to spend on the Brunswick station and carrying out alterations there in order to provide extra facilities for Railway traffic. If that is taken into consideration, the Railway Department should recognise that it would be a cheaper proposition to construct a fresh line and leave the existing one for the Collie-Perth traffic, which in itself is considerable. If the railway officials went carefully into the Stoddart report of 1912, they would come to the conclusion that it would be in the best interests of the State to act upon it. As to land development, I am pleased to note the settlement that is taking place throughout the State generally. There is considerable settlement in the wheat areas, in the North-West, and in the South-West. In the last-mentioned portion of the State, we have alongside the present railway line and within distances of from 12 to 14 miles, thousands of acres of land between Pinjarra and Busselton where we could put 1,000 or 1,500 more families.

Hon. T. Moore: Why the necessity for further railways there?

Hon. E. ROSE: I will come to that later. With a little extra drainage, some expenditure on roads, and the provision of improved railway facilities, we could establish people on really first-class land in that district. The land there was classified recently and I am pleased to inform hon. members that the classification showed that some of the land was far ahead of the Peel estate. We have mag-

nificent swamps there that only require drainage and railway facilities to enable them to be opened up.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That will fix Mr. Moore up all right.

Hon. E. ROSE: I fail to see why we should send new settlers to centres hundreds of miles away from the city when land is available at a reasonable figure so much closer to existing centres of population. We should not send people so far out until the land closer to settled areas is occupied. The same thing applies to the land along the Albany line. Much of that area has not been cultivated and many settlers could be placed there. I have been through the group settlements from Perth to Manjimup, and within the last few months I have visited nearly all the groups. The settlers I have met are all in good heart and appear to be satisfied with their prospects. All are working well and looking forward to the time when they will have comfortable homes for their families. There is a certain amount of healthy rivalry between the groups that is pleasing to see. In company with the Leader of the House, I attended the Manjimup show last April, and when speaking there I stated that I regretted that many members who talked about the South-West lands being sour and taking 15 years to sweeten, were not present to see what could be grown there. I saw produce grown on land that had been under cultivation for only two years.

Hon. J. Duffell: We can show you that on the Peel estate without taking you so far away.

Hon. E. ROSE: Produce exhibited at the show took first place and yet it was grown in land that had only been cultivated during the previous eight months. We can grow magnificent vegetables and produce there.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No one has disputed that fact, but when you grow your vegetables, what are you going to do with them?

Hon. E. ROSE: That is what one would expect from the hon. member. What is generally done with produce that is grown? When we realise the price that is paid for goods it is apparent what must be done, and yet Mr. Baxter says, "What will you do with your products?"

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you import vegetables?

Hon. E. ROSE: The land in the South-West is eminently suitable for mixed farming. I refer to the country particularly from Pinjarra through to Busselton. Mr. Baxter stated the other night that the Government should have stayed their hands when 10 groups had been settled. He claimed that a halt should have been cried then. What does he suggest? Are we to stagnate for 10 or 12 years and then see how the scheme is developing, and how the produce is being marketed? In the South-West we grow the finest root crops imaginable. We produce the finest peas, barley, and maize. What more

could be required? We grow everything that is required for dairying and pig raising.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Then go ahead with that.

Hon. E. ROSE: Mr. Baxter asks: Where is the market? Look at the overseas market for bacon and pork. The London market absorbs vast quantities of these commodities, and we can produce as good an article as can be obtained from any other part of the world. Mr. Baxter referred to what could be done in the wheat areas. That part of the State is quite all right for wheat growing, but I do not think that area is as suitable for mixed farming as is the South-West. We know of the butter factory which the Government have had to take over because the co-operative company could not run it profitably. That factory was situated in the province that he has referred to.

Hon. T. Moore: Have the Government taken that factory over?

Hon. E. ROSE: Yes. In Bunbury alone we had a mortgage of £7,000, which had been provided by the Government in the interests of our butter factory there. We were able to wipe off the balance last week. That is a record any district should be proud of and that is the district where we can settle groups to advantage. It is indeed admirably suited for closer settlement. I do not agree with Mr. Baxter when he says we should stay our hands and not have any more groups. On the contrary, we should continue them. We have fine men in charge of the group settlements in the South-West, men with practical experience in that part of the State, men who know how to clear land and what it should cost, men who know the best methods to cultivate the land and what the settlers should go in for. I hope the Government will be able to provide equally practical men to take charge of future groups and if the Government can do that, I have no fear whatever of the groups being a failure.

Hon. J. Duffell: Mr. Miles will tell you that you could make more money by settling people in the North-West.

Hon. E. ROSE: That is all right, but few people are likely to stay there very long under existing conditions. I had 20 years' experience in the North and I know what the difficulties are. How many young men nowadays would tackle the country as we did in our youth? You, Mr. President, have done your share of pioneering.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Did you make your money in the North or the South?

Hon. E. ROSE: That is a question I do not think it necessary to answer, because I think most people who went north, stayed there with the intention of making money. I hope, and feel sure they took capital away with them when they left that part of the State. I am perfectly satisfied with the South-West and what I made in the North I have invested in the South. I am still a primary producer; I have been all my life and I hope I shall be to the end.

Hon. J. Duffell: And you will be a primary producer in the next world!

Hon. E. ROSE: Throughout the South-West the country is suitable for settlement of this description and I trust we shall see not only the 64 groups which were established up to the 30th June last, but hundreds of groups. I believe in the Premier's policy. I believe he is on the right track. It is for us to advise him in every way possible so as to assist in furthering his land settlement scheme.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You should know that the Premier will not accept advice.

Hon. E. ROSE: On the contrary I know very well that he will accept advice, because on many occasions I have advised him on different matters in the South-West. He has been only too pleased to accept that advice if it comes from a practical man who knows what he is talking about and can give advice. If one is a practical man, the Premier knows what the advice is worth and will take it. The Premier is not too old to learn.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He is a good judge of a practical man!

Hon. E. ROSE: I would like to see the Government go closely into the question of better facilities for getting produce to market. No matter whether it be by rail or main roads, the fact remains we must have good roads through the South-West. All the great nations of the world are spending more and more on roads and no progressive country can be developed without good roads. In the South-West it is almost impossible to get a spring cart, much less motor traffic, over a lot of the roads.

Hon. J. Mills: What about the Federal grant?

Hon. E. ROSE: A lot has been said about the Federal grant. If the Commonwealth Government gave us £90,000 or £100,000 per annum, it would be no more than they should do, considering the amount they take out of Western Australia, and the number of returned soldiers and new arrivals we have settled on the land. The Commonwealth Government have received many millions of pounds from us, but precious little have we received from the Commonwealth. The Eastern States, having their secondary industries, have benefited to a large extent from Commonwealth expenditure, but Western Australia has received no benefit at all. Ninety thousand pounds will go a very little way towards making our roads, even though the State Government subsidise it pound for pound. A sum of £200,000 per annum would be of some benefit. I do not know whether the Government intend to bring in a Roads Bill this year, but some alteration should be made. I am not altogether favourable to the nationalising of roads; I think the Government should subsidise the road boards more than they have done in the past. The road boards are more capable of constructing good roads and they construct them more cheaply than can the Government. Some of the Government roads constructed during

the last three or four years are in a bad state of disrepair, in spite of the fact that they cost so much owing to the high rate of wages paid.

Hon. J. Duffell: You cannot get them made any cheaper in the country than in the city.

Hon. E. ROSE: I do not know about that. Anyone travelling over these roads cannot fail to realise their bad state. If we could ascertain their cost, I believe it would be found to be nearly double what the road boards could have done the work for. Construction by the Government seems to mean higher wages and less work. I am opposed to State trading concerns. If I had my way every one of the trading concerns would be sold, and then the deficit would be wiped out very quickly. Not only road construction but other works carried out by both the State and the Commonwealth Governments cost more than they should, and are not done so satisfactorily as they would be if done by private individuals or road boards.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Does not that apply to the work on the group settlements?

Hon. E. ROSE: That is a different thing. We have to find work for the new arrivals. They have to be taught to use the implements of the farm and, generally speaking, I think it has been worth the extra cost to teach them. The rainfall throughout the South-West is very heavy. Therefore our roads require to be built much more solidly than usual and given good drainage.

Hon. J. Mills: Why not block roads?

Hon. E. ROSE: One cause of trouble is drainage. The country is very flat and it gets boggy and, unless the roads have a good foundation and are well drained, they become impassable. A tremendous amount of money has been expended by the Government on some roads, but if the road boards had carried out the work, it would have been done very much better. The road board at Balingup have resigned in a body. The returned soldiers pay no rates, and I expect the same rule will apply to group settlers. The Balingup board could not get any rates from the returned soldiers; nor could they get any assistance from the Government to enable them to keep the roads in order. The Balingup roads are almost impassable. Miles and miles of roads serve soldier settlements, and the board are expected to keep them in order without receiving a penny of revenue or any Government contribution towards their upkeep. Therefore the board were justified in resigning and throwing on the Government the onus of this work.

Hon. T. Moore: Justified in taking direct action?

Hon. E. ROSE: Every facility must be provided for marketing the produce raised on group settlements. The produce should be shipped from the nearest port. I care not whether that port be Esperance, Albany, Busseton, Bunbury, Fremantle or Geraldton.

These ports should be improved to accommodate all the boats likely to call there.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about the cost?

Hon. E. ROSE: It was gratifying to read the report of the Minister for Agriculture regarding the country at Esperance. As a practical farmer he should know what he is talking about and what the country is capable of.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He has never seen it.

Hon. E. ROSE: He recently visited Esperance and he has seen similar country in the Eastern States, and should be able to say whether the expenditure of money in the Esperance district is warranted. I would pay more attention to his report than to Mr. Baxter's opinion.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The difference is he has not seen it and I have.

Hon. E. ROSE: The Minister travelled through the country, and has learned from his officers what the country is capable of. Money will be necessary to open up the port of Esperance, and if only for the sake of economical working, I think the Esperance-Northwards railway should be linked up with the Eastern Goldfields line. Each of the harbours I have mentioned should be improved so that the produce raised in the hinterland might be shipped from the nearest port. On the Geraldton harbour £400,000 is being spent.

Hon. T. Moore: Very slowly, though.

Hon. E. ROSE: Before the work is completed, it will cost a million of money. If there is sufficient trade to warrant the expenditure, it is only right that the harbour should be improved. At Fremantle a large sum has been spent and the same applies to Bunbury. The late Engineer-in-Chief advocated an inner harbour at Bunbury, a different harbour from what is provided at present, and though the Government have gone on piecing and patching, the harbour cannot accommodate the boats that are calling to-day. The depth of water is insufficient.

Hon. T. Moore: It is worse than it was 10 years ago.

Hon. E. ROSE: Yes. When I explain the exports from Bunbury members will realise that an improved port is warranted. During the 12 months ended June, 1922, 139,422 loads of timber of 50 cubic feet were shipped. During the same year 202 vessels, aggregating 693,200 tons, called at the harbour. A few years ago Bunbury was the third or fourth largest export port in Australia, but to-day it ranks about fifth or sixth. During the year 1922, 46,592 tons of coal were shipped. The export of coal will increase as the bunkering trade is developed. Of wheat 51,092 tons were shipped and, as the country east of Wagin to Lake Grace and Newdegate is opened up, Bunbury as the natural port will export a considerably greater quantity. The quantity of goods exported last year was slightly less than during the previous year. A large quantity of wheat was sent to Fremantle, largely owing to the acquiring agents being changed from the pool to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. Fremantle was considered to

be the more suitable port for shipment, because the vessels, it was said, could get quicker despatch. If money is to be spent on the railway from Narrogin to Dwarda in order to shorten the distance to Fremantle, it will be a crying shame if the grades are as represented by Mr Greig and the Railway Department. It is contended that the grades are too steep, just as the grades on the Collie line are too steep. At one time a good deal of wool was shipped from Bunbury but, owing to the sales being held in Perth and Fremantle, the wool is now railed to the metropolis.

Hon. A. Burvill: The same applies to Albany.

Hon. E. ROSE: All our out-ports will suffer to some extent, but we cannot complain at this. It is pleasing to know that last year 750 tons of fruit were shipped from Bunbury, whereas in other years it has all been railed to Fremantle. This proved of very great benefit to the fruitgrowers, as it relieved them of an enormous amount of expenditure for extra haulage from Bunbury to Fremantle. A few years ago some people ridiculed the idea of shipping fruit from Bunbury; to-day they are satisfied that it can be successfully handled at that port. It was handled as quickly, cheaply and as well as at Fremantle, and the shippers were very pleased with the results. Although the shed for inspecting the fruit was at the land end of the jetty, over a mile from the shipping, the work was carried out expeditiously. If we had an up-to-date harbour, with fruit sheds, grain sheds, cold stores and coal bins, the shipping business of the port would be greatly expedited.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the depth of water at Bunbury now?

Hon. E. ROSE: At low tide 27 feet 6 inches is all that can be depended upon at the end of the jetty. The boats calling range in draught from 25 feet to 35 feet. Therefore it is necessary to deepen the harbour so that the larger boats may call for our produce. The dredge we have has been of very little use. The harbour is continually silting up, and something more effective must be done to improve the depth of water. When we see the quantity of stuff that is hauled over that jetty we can get an idea of the trade of the port. How much less would the cost be to the producer if we had an inner harbour.

Hon. T. Moore: How much has been spent there already?

Hon. E. ROSE: I have the figures here and they show that the harbour has been over-capitalised. There has been spent £450,000, of which sum £260,000 has been the cost of the breakwater.

Hon. T. Moore: It is a lot of money for what has been done.

Hon. E. ROSE: But not when we consider the importance of the port. If the group settlements succeed, as we all expect they will, we must improve the port so as to provide adequate facilities for shipping. The improvements which we are asking for and re-

quire will have to be revenue producing. We have too much now that is non-revenue producing. At the present time I do not think any wharfage charges are levied on coal, wheat or fruit.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you mean to say those are free?

Hon. E. ROSE: I have been informed that the port dues on these items, if they exist, are very light. Of course we want to encourage the export of these commodities as much as possible, and it is right that the Government should grant concessions in that respect. Timber pays a large sum, not only to the Government, but to the ports. I do not know that it is necessary for me to deal with the Speech at any further length, beyond to express the hope that the Government will consider the advisableness of extending the harbour facilities so that those on the group settlements may benefit when the time for exporting the produce arrives. It has been said that we have no markets, or that the markets we have will be glutted. But we have means of conserving our produce. Take potatoes for instance. We have in the South-West to-day in good condition potatoes which were grown six months ago. They have been kept without the aid of cool storage. Why should we not encourage the growing of potatoes and other root crops and go in for mixed farming?

Hon. J. Duffell: This would be a good time to sell those potatoes.

Hon. E. ROSE: I have no time for people who say we should stagnate for the next three or four years. Possessing the huge territory that we do we should encourage settlement to the fullest extent. I am confident that those who are becoming producers will make a success and that before many years have passed, we shall have the greater portion of the State settled. I do not intend to say anything about the North-West; I will leave that to Mr. Miles, who represents the North Province. I trust the Government will take heed of what I have said about harbour facilities, because if a country is to be developed—and I have in mind Esperance as well, where the Minister for Agriculture declared that there was such a vast area of first-class wheat land—we must provide means which will enable the producers to export without any difficulty. I support the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. T. Moore debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.37 p.m.