

in humpies, without any of the conveniences of the city, seeing only one or two trains a week, and perhaps an odd individual passing by, to accept the same conditions as those who live in fine houses in Perth, with all the facilities available in a big city. It is absolutely wrong. The Government were not elected on such a programme. Despite the fact that Mr. Harris may have reports of various speeches in his possession, I do not think there was one utterance on the part of Government candidates that suggested that if they were elected, they would attack the standard of living in Western Australia by reducing wages and conditions. The only satisfaction I have out of the position is that there were many Labourites who would not vote for the Labour Party at the last elections. They voted against Labour for reasons it would take too long to explain. About 80 per cent. of them voted for the Nationalist Party and the only thing I am grateful for is that these people, who did not cling to the Labour Party, are now getting the stick where they ought to get it for not having voted with their own party.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th September, 1930.

	PAID
Questions: Unemployment—1. Registrations and engagements; 2. Homes, purchase payments; 3. Railway construction	276
Sanitary Site, Mt. Lawley	276
Address-in-reply, seventh day	277

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

QUESTIONS (3)—UNEMPLOYMENT.

Registrations and Engagements.

Mr. MILLINGTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the number of unemployed registered, and the number of

engagements at the State Labour Bureau—(a) in the metropolitan area; (b) for the rest of the State, for the months of February, March, April, May, June, July, and August of this year? 2, What is the number of unemployed at present in Blackboy camp?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Applications for work, State Labour Bureau—

	1930.	Metropolitan Area.	Outside Metropolitan Area.
February	2,725	436
March	2,939	410
April	3,975	408
May	5,896	1,555
June	6,580	1,460
July	6,653	1,139
August	6,589	Not available
Engagements—			
February	362	81
March	516	116
April	320	124
May	868	606
June	375	318
July	422	199
August	330	Not available

The engagements do not include those engaged through local governing bodies. 2, 970.

Homes, Purchase Payments.

Mr. COVERLEY (for Mr. Raphael) asked the Premier: Is he prepared to receive a deputation of not more than five of the unemployed, who wish to put the cases of dozens of their comrades who are defaulting in purchase payments of their homes, six having been given ejection orders?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

Railway Construction.

Mr. COVERLEY (for Mr. Raphael) asked the Minister for Works: 1, When and where were the men picked up who are engaged in railway construction work? 2, For what length of time will they be employed? 3, Does he employ these men for ten days each and pay their fares to and from their work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The latest general instruction is that 50 per cent. be picked up on the job and 50 per cent. from the metropolitan area. 2, For the duration of the work, provided satisfactory service be given. 3, No.

QUESTION—SANITARY SITE, MT. LAWLEY.

Mr. J. MacCALLUM SMITH asked the Minister for Health: 1, How much longer will the residents of Mt. Lawley have to put up with the sanitary site nuisance? 2, Will he urge the city council to expedite the removal to the new site?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, The transfer of operations to the new site will be completed within two months. 2, The council have already constructed a road, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, to the new site, and two-thirds of the initial work at the site have been completed. The progress being made is considered reasonable.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [4.34]: Before addressing myself to the motion, I wish to offer you, Sir, my most sincere and hearty congratulations upon your elevation to the important position you occupy. I look upon it not only as a compliment and recognition of your valued services, but also as a compliment to the district which you have represented so long and ably in this House. I wish also to offer my congratulations to the Government upon their accession to office, and to say I am glad to know that wise counsels have prevailed in the uniting of the two parties which previously sat in opposition to the late Government. The composite Government, representative of both parties, has been successfully formed and I can only hope this augurs well for the welfare and prosperity of the State. I desire also to say how pleasing it is to know that an extension of His Excellency the Governor's appointment has been arranged, for the present Governor, Sir William Campion, has succeeded in endearing himself to the people of the State. I also wish to place on record my appreciation, and the appreciation of many of my friends, of the able services rendered to the State by the late Government. Putting party politics aside altogether, I think the House and the country can congratulate themselves upon the fact that we have in the House quite a number of ex-Ministers of long service, indeed veterans in politics, to help us to run the affairs of the State. I hope the work of the session will be pleasant and that the Opposition,

realising as they must do that the Government are faced with a serious economic position and with great difficulties—the Leader of the Opposition himself remarked the other night that the Government had many serious difficulties to face—will not allow party differences to interfere with the work of successfully carrying on the administration of the affairs of this country. The Governor's Speech, although disappointing, discloses the necessity that exists for a close scrutiny of the State's economic situation, especially in point of trade and finance. It reveals the need for economy in every Government department. This House will be called upon to face many difficulties, and I think it would be an act of grace on the part of members on both sides of the House if in asking the Government departments and the employees of all Government services to exercise every economy in administration, they themselves gave a lead in making sacrifices to the end that the cost of Parliament might be reduced. Considerable increases have taken place during recent years, and I think it would be furnishing evidence of our sincerity in the desire that the State employees should make sacrifices in view of the altered conditions of finance if we ourselves were to lead the way by making substantial reductions in our own Parliamentary allowances. I understand it is the intention of the Government to make that question part of their policy, and I think that what the country is expecting is that Ministers and members alike will be prepared to make some sacrifice themselves. Although Ministers may be called upon to work harder and give closer attention than has been previously given by any Government to the administration of affairs under the altered conditions, I feel sure they will be loyal to the State and not be afraid to make reasonable sacrifices themselves. This, possibly, may not meet with the approval of all members, for it may be that in some instances a reduction in the Parliamentary allowance would inflict hardship upon individual members. Still, we should be earnest in this matter and not be afraid to face our responsibilities. Suggestions have been offered that a 10 per cent. or even 15 per cent. reduction in our Parliamentary allowances should be made. Personally I would go further and say that we in this House should agree to reduce our allowances by £100 per annum, and ask another place to respond. In my view, members of another place should be prepared to

make an even greater sacrifice and reduce their allowances by £200 per annum. Never in the history of the State or of the Commonwealth has the country been faced with so serious a financial position. There has been a substantial shrinkage in the value of our primary products and our export trade. During the past year, unfortunately, our staple products of wheat and wool suffered a shrinkage of at least 30 per cent. in the value of wheat and 65 per cent. in the value of wool. I do not wish unduly to take up the time of the House, but I seize this early opportunity to ask members to consider what effect the comparative fall in prices has had upon the farming industry. Perhaps I cannot cite a better case than my own. I am proud of the fact that my son and I hold a farm that has been under development for the past 25 years. I will not say it is the best farm in the district, but certainly it is looked upon as being well up to the average of the successful farms down there. In 1928 the net proceeds from our wool was £1,302. We produced in that year 47 bales giving a weight of 15,386 lbs., and the average price per bale was £27 14s. 1d.

Hon. P. Collier: How much per lb. is that?

Mr. PIESSE: It works out at 1s. 8d. In 1929 the average price per bale was £22 6s. 1d., for 35 bales, a total of £780 14s. 7d. which worked out at 1s. 5d. per lb. In 1930 the net proceeds from the sale of 46 bales of wool was £472 5s. 11d. The average price per bale was £10 5s. 4d., which worked out at 8d. per lb. I have given these figures to show that the average price of wool per bale fell in two years from £27 14s. 1d. to £10 5s. 4d. This was a class of wool that has always been regarded as most profitable. The figures will give the House an idea of what the farming community is suffering. I refer particularly to those who are growing wool and wheat and those who are growing wool alone. This shows what an unfortunate position they are in this year owing to the sudden drop in prices. This drop has brought about a good deal of the serious drift in finances. It is said that Australia is suffering a shrinkage in the value of wool of somewhere in the neighbourhood of £30,000,000. In Dalgety's last monthly report a full record appears of the comparisons between different years. If members will refer to it, they will be able

to verify the figures I have already given to the House. This State is depending almost entirely upon primary production. It, therefore, behoves the House to sink party differences and meet the situation fairly and squarely. What would any financial institution do in similar circumstances? In this time of financial crisis everyone is suffering. Not only are the workers affected, but unfortunately many people who have been regarded as wealthy and most successful are also suffering from the fall in the price of primary products. This is common, of course, to the whole of Australia. Our future welfare is so interwoven with the Commonwealth that we are justified in closely investigating our past relationship with the Federal authorities. We want to see how far we ourselves are responsible for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, and how far Federal action has interfered with our finance and our state of prosperity. Our national wealth is bound up in the success of our primary products. Only so long as we can make them pay can the country prosper. It behoves the House, and the Government in particular, to pay the closest attention to the fostering of these industries. I am glad to say the Government have indicated that they are fully seized of their responsibilities. I wish to pay a tribute to the previous Government. There are many people in this State, and in the district I have the honour to represent, who are grateful to them for their past efforts to develop agriculture and our primary industries. In our part of the State we are disappointed that various previous Governments and Parliament have not paid that attention to the lower end of the Great Southern that its importance demands. Had wiser counsels prevailed, and previous Governments been more practical in some of their developmental schemes, particularly with regard to group settlement, we should not be feeling the general depression in trade and consequent unemployment to the same extent. It is no use blaming past Governments. It has often been said that the Government which does not make a mistake does nothing. We have, however, the right to criticise and comment on unnecessary waste. The waste and losses that occurred in the group settlement scheme could largely have been avoided had

it not been for our system of party Government. I am not blaming one Administration more than another, but I wonder how any Government could have lost such a large sum of money on this undertaking. It was enough to gamble a few thousand pounds upon it without gambling in millions. When we come to think of our present difficulties, and of how hard it is to obtain the necessary capital to carry out even the most pressing work, it makes one wonder how it was that so much money was so unwisely spent on the group settlements. It is the duty of every Government to see that greater care is exercised in this respect, and that loan moneys are more wisely spent. Of necessity we must carry out some public works, and as soon as the money market rights itself we may be justified in taking some risk in the expenditure of our loan moneys, but surely we should profit by past experience, and in the handling of our local expenditure see that only necessary and profitable reproductive works are carried on. Something may be said with regard to an early consideration of our State trading concerns. On the face of it they present a very unsatisfactory position. Some of these concerns are carried on to help other industries. I take it the House is prepared, and the taxpayers are prepared, to take a risk in some respects. I do not want to be critical, but it is unreasonable to think that we should go on losing hundreds of thousands of pounds on some of our State trading concerns. As business propositions, at a time of depression like this they are the first to feel the effects.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Would you close down the Wyndham Meat Works?

Mr. PIESSE: There is something radically wrong with them that they should show a loss of £182,000.

Hon. P. Collier: All of that represented interest.

Mr. Coverley: There is nothing wrong with the meat works; it is the Government's system of bookkeeping that is wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: That represented interest on the plant, and was not a loss on working.

The Minister for Railways: There was no loss on the operations.

Mr. PIESSE: Perhaps the Government are paying too much for the cattle.

Hon. P. Collier: If you close them down you will have the interest charges to meet all the same.

Mr. PIESSE: The time has arrived when all Government concerns should stand on their own bottoms.

Mr. Angelo: Ships float on their own bottoms.

Mr. Coverley: And others stand on them.

Mr. PIESSE: No trading bank would carry on any of these concerns on their present balance sheets.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You should investigate the balance sheets before you say that.

Mr. PIESSE: That is my view according to the published reports.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You cannot accept them. We have already seen how one paper has apologised for its mistakes.

Mr. PIESSE: I am ready to be convinced. One of the faults about these State trading concerns is that no provision seems to have been made, as is done with most successful undertakings, to establish a reserve.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That goes into the Treasury.

Mr. PIESSE: It should not go into Consolidated Revenue. These businesses should stand on their own. I hope I am not misrepresenting the position. I have not gone fully into all the accounts.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The hon. member should investigate them closely.

Mr. PIESSE: When I have done so, I hope my deductions will be found to be wrong. I know the position as it is based on the Press reports.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You know the Press is unreliable. The Press has misrepresented you time and again.

Mr. PIESSE: I hardly think the Press would purposely misrepresent the position.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, but it makes mistakes, like other people.

Mr. PIESSE: I can only hope a mistake has been made, and that upon investigation it will not be shown that the losses which have been reported have actually occurred.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You have read the apology the Chief Secretary got.

Mr. PIESSE: Yes. I was surprised that a more careful report had not been made in the first place. We should see that these industries are conducted upon an independ-

ent and business basis, free from political control and party considerations.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And free from newspaper propaganda.

Mr. PIESSE: If they can be made profitable, I would be quite ready to give the Government which brought them into existence full credit for them. At present, however, they do not seem to be in a very satisfactory position, as that term is applied to private business concerns. The farmers have been asked not only by our State Government, but by the Federal Government, to grow more wheat with a view to lifting Australia out of its unsatisfactory position. The unfortunate difficulty, however, is one of finance. Unless the primary producer can continue to avail himself of the financial accommodation he received in previous years, it is not to be expected that he will be able to respond to the call made upon him. He cannot do so without the necessary capital. And that is Australia's great difficulty today: we know there is a shortage or tightness of cash everywhere. The Governor's Speech indicates that the best experience the House can produce should be brought to bear so as to carry the country through the trying period it is facing. To forecast what the wheat market will be is extremely difficult. We hope that it will be favourable. The farmer has to be a man of hope. The wheat market has been dropping for the past few months, and we wonder where the fall will stop. There would be hope if the primary producer were given an opportunity to do what is asked of him; that is, if the necessary capital were forthcoming. Naturally we are anxious to know what the Premier's Budget will disclose. I hope that one of the first things to be stated by the Premier will be that no more taxation shall be imposed on the primary producer, who is already overburdened with Federal taxation.

Mr. Angelo: Two people cannot milk the same cow, and two have been on the stool for a long time.

Mr. Raphael: You do not seem to think of that, though, where the worker is concerned.

Mr. PIESSE: Until some practical move is made to reduce the cost of production, how can the Federal Parliament expect the farmer of Western Australia to grow more wheat and make a success of his enterprise?

The burden of the Federal tariff is felt throughout this State. During the past 15 or 20 years our agricultural machinery has more than doubled in cost. Is the present generation of primary producers to be strangled by a high protective tariff in order that secondary industries may be built up in Australia? Moreover, most of the secondary industries which we are called upon to protect by the high tariff are located in the Eastern States. Day by day we have evidence of the enormous volume of Western Australia's imports from those States. The only satisfactory feature of the situation is that we buy those things from our own Australian people. Nevertheless, we pay a heavy penalty in many directions. Not only is there the adverse trade balance, but there is the continually expanding octopus of the Federal tariff. We are proud of the Australian harvester, but how can we be proud of supporting industries which are based on higher wages and higher salaries than our primary producers are able to earn?

Mr. Raphael: Is the object of the tariff only to protect industries, or is it also to prevent money from going out of Australia?

Mr. PIESSE: While in favour of a reasonable degree of protection, I object to protection which raises farming machinery to more than double its price of 15 or 20 years ago. How can Western Australia evolve from its present position while the producing costs of our primary industries are increased almost daily? Take ordinary ploughshares. A few years ago they cost 28s. per dozen. To-day a dozen of them cannot be bought under about 50s.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Would you suggest that that is due to the tariff only?

Mr. PIESSE: Australia has made a mistake in trying to build up highly protected secondary industries before building up its primary industries. That is why Australia is lagging behind. What has it cost Western Australia to build up industries? During the last eight or nine years our public debt has increased by 30 millions sterling, whilst in the same period our population has increased by 80,000. Thus the cost of the increase of population is about £400 per capita. We should put our primary producers in a position to operate here successfully and to develop the unused lands within the safe rainfall, lands capable of carrying

hundreds of thousands of people. That cannot be done while all the things the farmer has to buy remain at such high prices. We are still importing huge quantities of dairy and farm products.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: To-day we are producing more butter than we can consume.

Mr. PIESSE: I congratulate the State upon that fact.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We are now cold-storing butter, and our merchants are importing Eastern States butter.

Mr. PIESSE: Our production of butter could be greatly increased if costs were reduced. The butter bounty is one of the very few Federal bounties in which Western Australia can participate. Besides butter, there are eggs, cheese, honey, cream, and condensed milk imported by this State from the East.

Mr. Angelo: Fish too.

Mr. PIESSE: We are importing enormous quantities of dairy and farm products from the Eastern States. One of the first duties upon which our Government should concentrate is to give our primary producers every encouragement and assistance towards supplying the farm and dairy products now imported from the East, so that the money they represent may be circulated here instead of going out of the State. Our adverse trade balance with the Eastern States amounts to nine or ten millions sterling annually. While that condition of things obtains, it is only reasonable to expect that money here will be dearer and less easily obtainable for developing our industries. Should it not be one of the chief aims of both sides of the House to overcome the financial difficulty by producing more in our own State and not sending away so much money to the East? I do not wish to say much regarding Western Australia's relationship to the Federation. I have already pointed out how little the Federal authorities have been able to assist us in the directions where we mainly require help, namely, those directions in which we could reduce the cost of production so as to promote the development of our natural resources. Undoubtedly Western Australia suffers from many disabilities under Federation. I shall not be one to go out and cry for secession as the only cure for our ills. In my opinion it is the paramount duty of both sides of this Chamber to work unanimously and

wholeheartedly for the alleviation of the Federal difficulties under which Western Australia labours. I said on the hustings, and I say here to-day, with all confidence, that it is the first duty of this Parliament to view those disabilities from a non-party standpoint. What would be more agreeable than to see the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier at one on this great subject? It is a vital question affecting our national existence. If we continue to be treated as at present. I am afraid that instead of 50 members here we will have 30 or perhaps 25. Parliament will be reduced to the status of a mere shire council. Already people are up in arms regarding the cost of Parliament.

Mr. Marshall: There are 30 members in the Legislative Council.

Mr. PIESSE: The number there will probably have to be reduced, too.

Mr. Marshall: We could reduce the lot of them.

Mr. PIESSE: The only logical consequence of unification will be that State Parliaments will be done away with. The taxpayers will not be able to submit to the cost of State Parliaments in addition to the Federal Parliament. It is the sacred duty of this Parliament to protect the sovereign rights of the State. Looking back over the years, I cannot recollect any instance of united action being taken by all parties in Parliament for the protection of our sovereign rights. A Royal Commission was appointed by the Federal Government a few years ago, and as a result Western Australia was granted certain concessions. Something like £330,000 was made available annually to this State. I would ask the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition if they think that sum compensates for all the disabilities we suffer under Federation. In my opinion, bearing in mind that nearly half our importations are from the Eastern States, where our trade supports a large section of the people, Western Australia would be entitled to upwards of £1,000,000 a year, and even that would not be quite adequate.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You think secession would alter that position.

Mr. PIESSE: I am not advocating secession. I prefer that we should first exhaust all constitutional methods of putting our house in order by securing fair and proper treatment from the Federal authori-

nies. Under the Federal Constitution the Senate was intended to be the House that would protect the rights of the States. The Senate has failed in that respect, and the members of that House, had they done their duty, would never have allowed powers to be taken away from us as they did in years gone by. We know that there are many instances of overlapping of State and Commonwealth services. Surely the Electoral Department affords one instance in respect of which the State and Federal Governments could reach an agreement and one department only be left to control that work.

Mr. Withers: We tried that here on two occasions, but our proposals were rejected.

Mr. PIESSE: The officers of both Electoral Departments are always courteous and carry out their duties well. Incidentally, I wish to say a word or two in praise of the State Electoral Department in connection with the rolls made available for the last general election. The electoral officers deserve every credit for the preparation of those rolls at such short notice. I think they should receive more consideration regarding the time afforded them within which to prepare the rolls. I know that on the last occasion, owing to the limited time, the names of many electors were struck off, and the time for the service of notice of the action taken was altogether too short. No doubt the Government have this matter in hand, but there are various services that now overlap, which could be carried out by one department. In many small country towns there are officers in charge of the railway station and of the post office respectively. Why could not some arrangement be made whereby one officer could carry out the work involved in the two positions, and thus economise in every possible direction? Surely an agreement of that description could be arrived at between the Commonwealth and State departments and so cut out unnecessary expenditure. The position regarding the savings banks is well known. Why cannot we make some arrangement with the Commonwealth Government and do away with the dual cost of administration there? I believe that in Queensland an understanding was arrived at along those lines, and in all seriousness I suggest that it may not be too late to secure an amalgamation or an arrangement regarding the two savings banks in this State. There are many matters I should like to touch upon at this juncture, and being a new

member, I understand one so placed is granted a little latitude. There is nothing more important that should be dealt with by Parliament at the earliest opportunity than the Workers' Compensation Act. In view of its unfair incidence, I cannot understand why there has already been so much delay in providing necessary amendments so that some of the inequitable provisions might be abolished.

Mr. Raphael: What else do you intend to take from the workers?

Mr. PIESSE: The unfair incidence of the Workers' Compensation Act is well known.

Mr. Raphael: Another election promise to be broken!

Mr. PIESSE: I have some information that I wish to read to the House and if the present Government are not in possession of these facts, it is desirable that they should be. I know of no Act that is more unfair, or presses more grievously upon industry, than the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Marshall: You look at the overdrafts they are working on, and see how that presses on them. You have not said anything about profits or interest yet.

Mr. PIESSE: I have not concluded my remarks yet.

Mr. Marshall: Deal with landlordism, and what it means in the metropolis.

Mr. PIESSE: I am not one of those favoured individuals who make a living as the result of interest paid to them. I have paid away a lot in interest, and am doing so now.

Mr. Marshall: And you blame the Workers' Compensation Act for that.

Mr. PIESSE: I cannot see anything fair in it.

Mr. Marshall: None so blind as those that will not see.

Mr. PIESSE: I quite agree with the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) that it is necessary to protect the worker in case of accident or of incapacity as the result of an accident.

Mr. Angelo: You should also curtail the charges levied by doctors.

Mr. Marshall: And curtail the charges made by the Primary Producers' Bank—when you get an opportunity.

Mr. Angelo: You have never had enough money to put into the bank.

Mr. PIESSE: I do not wish to reflect upon our doctors, who are engaged in an honourable and worthy profession.

Mr. Angelo: You know that exceptions prove the rule.

Mr. PIESSE: The doctors I come in contact with are honourable men, and I would not reflect upon their honesty and integrity. But when we have an Act of this description that lends itself to all sorts of impositions, whose incidence has been almost the cause of ruining people on account of circumstances over which they have had no control, that almost invites improper practices. I cannot understand why past Governments have not amended the Act. I will read one or two extracts embodying information I have obtained regarding the operations of the Act. The first one states—

The 1924 amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act imposed a tremendous additional burden on industry. Besides making workers' compensation insurance compulsory, it extended the benefits to the worker and introduced a new second schedule with fixed amounts for disability caused by the loss of fingers, toes, limbs, eyes, etc., in many cases out of all proportion to the manner in which the earning power of the worker was affected.

Mr. McCallum: Which insurance company typed that out for you?

Mr. PIESSE: I can vouch for it that the information came from a reliable source.

Mr. McCallum: Are you interested in any insurance company?

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member's interjections will not deter me from bringing before the House the standing disgrace of this Act, which stands also to the disgrace of the Minister who administered it in the last Government.

The Attorney General: Why does not the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) leave the hon. member alone? It is his first go!

Mr. McCallum: Why, he has been in politics longer than I have!

The Attorney General: But he has not been a member of the House for many years.

Mr. Marshall: But he was a member when things were much warmer than they are now.

Mr. PIESSE: When I approach this subject it makes me feel warm. I have knowledge of facts that more than ever convince me of the unfairness of the

Workers' Compensation Act. Within the last few months there was a serious case of injustice and there are others, too, quite apart from those relating to accidents in which the patients, who could probably be dealt with in a few hours are kept on under treatment for much longer periods. I have in mind the case of a farmer in the Cranbrook district. I shall not mention any names, but two farmers were concerned in the matter. I do not wish to bring individual cases before the House, but I cannot give a better illustration of the unfairness of the Act than is disclosed by the particulars of this case. There were two farmers whom I will call A and B. A had a crop of 40 acres of wheat on his property, which adjoined B's property, and B undertook to strip the crop. B wanted some seed wheat and a satisfactory understanding had been arrived at to divide the wheat on the usual terms. B did not live on his property but sent over his man and harvester to do the stripping. A carried on his farm with the aid of his wife and son, employing no hands, and therefore having no insurance policy. During the process of stripping, the man in trying to extract some obstruction from the machine had two of his fingers pulled out. Everyone felt sorry for the injured man; it was a most unfortunate accident, and it is reasonable that he should be protected by insurance. He was protected while he was working on B's farm, the man by whom he was employed, but the insurance company disclaimed liability. B also claimed that the man, while operating the machine, was in the employ of A. The victim of the accident claimed against A and was successful in getting £300 or £400 damages and costs, amounting to £900 in all. A writ of *fi fa* has been served on A. He is a frugal man and was able to raise some £400 and settle the claim on the basis of deferred payment. He paid £400 cash and the balance is to be paid at the rate of £100 a year.

Mr. McCallum: The whole trouble is that the man was not covered by insurance.

Mr. PIESSE: The man was on the place for only three days. Surely it would not be unreasonable to expect the employee to protect himself as well.

Mr. McCallum: Surely you do not expect him to lose two fingers for nothing.

Mr. PIESSE: While he was working on B's farm, he was protected.

Mr. McCallum: It does not matter for whom he was working.

Mr. PIESSE: The Act should be amended.

Mr. McCallum: Why?

Mr. PIESSE: Because insurance is made compulsory on the part of the employer. A was not employing labour and why should not the onus rest on the man's employer? There should be some provision in the Act requiring notification to the man for whom the employee was actually working.

Mr. Marshall: The employers have as much right to know the liability as have the employees.

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member does not care—

Mr. Marshall: You have a very bad case there.

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member does not care if the farmer is ruined.

Mr. Marshall: I do care about the man.

Mr. McCallum: We do not want any man to be ruined, but a man who is maimed should not be denied compensation.

Mr. PIESSE: I wish to illustrate further the unfairness of the Workers' Compensation Act. The amended Act introduced a new impost whereby the employer was made liable for hospital and medical expenses up to £100 for the treatment of the injured worker. This new £100 clause may be termed the doctor's benefit clause, as the doctor is the sole arbiter whether the whole or any portion of the £100 is to be extracted from the employer or his insurance company. Members will agree that this tax on industry must be lifted. In many cases the doctor gets more out of an accident than does the injured worker, and it seems impossible to place a check upon the doctor's charges. The chief trouble seems to be the Second Schedule, which in my opinion should be amended. A man who depends for his livelihood upon using his fingers, such as a musician, a typist, or a person engaged in handling delicate instruments would only receive as much for the loss of a finger or thumb as a labourer whose earning power was not affected by the loss of a similar member. Similar anomalies exist throughout the schedule. Surely this House will not permit such an unfair Act to remain on the statute-

book. Some protection must be given to employers. I would be the last in the world to say that any man who is injured should not be protected, but we should not allow these improper things to happen under the schedule. The schedule really lends itself to fraud. If we employ labour on our farms for a fortnight we must protect ourselves, and these cases of imposition have led to the agricultural rate being increased. The insurance companies say they are not looking for the business, and that on it they incur a loss even at the present rates. The cost of this insurance must be borne by the employer. In 1920 he could, if he so desired, insure his liability under the Workers' Compensation Act, if he was a farmer, at 22s. 6d. and 27s. 6d. per cent., if a butcher 27s. 6d. and 32s. 6d. per cent., and if a builder 40s. and 70s. per cent. Because of the 1925 amendment, it now costs a farmer 65s. per cent., a butcher 90s. and a builder 70s. and 300s. per cent. In addition insurance is now compulsory. If a man, unemployed, comes looking for work and one is willing to give him a month's work, one must insure him at the rate of at least £150 a year and pay 65s. per cent. That is an imposition. To give a comparison, the premium charged in Victoria is 16s. 6d. and in South Australia 25s. whereas here, as I have stated, it is 65s. per cent. If there is anything I can do in the way of helping to amend the Act to make it more equitable, I shall be only too pleased to do it. Yesterday I asked the Attorney General whether it was intended to introduce this session a Bill to amend the Act, more especially in regard to the liabilities and crushing burdens upon industry, and he replied that the matter was under consideration. It will be necessary to delete the Second Schedule, and set up some authority or qualified board to deal with any case of injury and determine the extent of the disability. Let me show what a burden this legislation is on the agricultural industry. For five years prior to the introduction of the 1924 Act, farmers paid £34,000 as a cost under the Act then in force to meet their liability, whereas under the new Act the cost for three years has been £141,000. There is a reference to workers' compensation in the report of the Commissioner of Railways published in yesterday's "West Australian." I understand that the department have their own insur-

ance fund. The Commissioner states that contributions from the working expenses and general loan fund for workers compensation totalled £188,349 for the past two years, while the payments from the fund amounted to £182,275. If the railway claims have been decided by the same process and on the same basis as those of other employees, I should say it is necessary for the Government to investigate the railway fund closely and bring about an early amendment of the Act. One member made reference to the high rates of interest prevailing throughout the Commonwealth militating against the development of primary industry and retarding the progress of all industry. It is indisputable that if interest is high, there is less inclination to borrow money. Seeing that so many of our agriculturists have to resort to national assistance, it is important that we should know more about this important question. I congratulate the member for South Fremantle on his excellent address, and the able manner in which he applied himself to the question of our loan indebtedness and more particularly our war debts. I have lived in this country all my life and have found it necessary to watch the interest rate closely in the course of my business, and it is only natural that members should view with some alarm the increased rates we have to pay, not only for agricultural development but for every business undertaking. I cannot see for the moment how we are going to get cheaper money. I have been told by financial people, who know more about the matter than I do, that the only solution of our difficulties is increased production of wealth. We must ask the people to work harder. I am not going to say that we are a country of shirkers, but there is a tendency, a great tendency indeed, to build up artificial conditions industrially, which cannot be sustained. No one would be more sorry than I to see a reduction brought about in wages. With the present high cost of living I am quite certain that the average worker has not very much left to spend on commodities other than those required for domestic purposes. I regret to say that, consequent upon decreased production, and because of the stoppage of loan expenditure, the State will see even worse times. In expressing this view, I hope I shall not be considered a pessimist, but I really fear that we have not touched

bedrock. We shall have less than two millions of loan money to spend this year, and we are not sure even of that. We shall also have a million less to spend on main roads than was spent last year, and there is also less activity in development of agriculture generally, because that development does not now offer the same inducements as other avocations. Who is going into the country to open up our undeveloped areas and put up with all the inconveniences associated with such work, perhaps in country where there are no water supplies, for the purpose of carving out a home? I cannot see anybody doing that under existing conditions. It behoves this Parliament to apply itself diligently and earnestly to fostering and encouraging settlement in the country and making it more attractive. We should give the farmer some assurance that as soon as he builds up an asset, he is not going to be taxed until he has nothing left. A tax on unimproved land, that is, land not being put to its best use, is all right and something might be said in favour of it. But a general land tax is an old-fashioned idea of Henry George. Why should we impose a tax on land that is being properly used, and about which there is a doubt as to whether, while being properly used, it is proving profitable? At the present time there are many sheep owners on the bread line. I have already pointed out that wool has dropped from £27 a bale to £10 a bale. How can sheep owners pay land tax in such circumstances? If Parliament thinks it is going to lift the State out of its present financial difficulty by renewing the land tax, it will realise its mistake. Many of our landholders will not be able to pay it. Therefore, I hope that hon. members will get it out of their heads that land is the first source of taxation. Where is the encouragement to put one's money into land and develop it, when it is possible to invest in Commonwealth bonds and get 6 per cent., together with exemption from Federal taxation? That is one of the positions the Government will have to face, and I hope there will be a measure of relief—if it is at all possible for the Government to introduce it—in the direction of reducing the tax on land. We know that the unimproved values increased considerably last year as the result of the high price wool realised a couple of years ago. Now one of the first duties of this House is to bring down taxation to a

reasonable limit. I desire to remind the House of some old promises made by previous Governments in regard to railway construction. I shall be brief because there will be another opportunity of referring to the matter. There has been a long delay in carrying out the construction of the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. If this line had been built six years ago, when it was authorised by Parliament, many of the settlers in the Cranbrook area would not be in the difficult position in which they find themselves to-day. I agree that this is a bad time to ask the Government to build railways, but I do suggest that the position should be thoroughly grasped, and that to make the areas that have already been taken up more productive, the advisableness of constructing this line should be earnestly considered as soon as money for this kind of work becomes available. Another line that is badly required is the Needilup extension, about which the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) knows a good deal. When that hon. member was Minister for Works in 1914 I accompanied him on an expedition to that district. The settlers there have been long-suffering and some have almost gone to the wall because of the absence of railway communication. I hope that this matter also will not be overlooked and that, when funds are available, the work of building the line will be carried out. If the hon. member made a trip to that district to-day he would be surprised to note what had been accomplished by the settlers. They have remained there and carted their produce over long distances. Had they been given the same facilities that have been accorded to other parts of the State, I am certain that it would have made a great difference to the financial position of Western Australia. Theirs is a very good claim for early consideration, that is, immediately funds are available. They are intensely disappointed with past Governments for having neglected their interests. For nearly 20 years they have been asking for this railway, and what I cannot understand is that the vision of Parliament never seems to go beyond Wagin. I congratulate the Speaker, who is the member for Wagin, on his success in having secured so much for his district. As far back as 1910 Bills were passed for the construction of certain railways which were part of the development policy of the Government, and although something like 25 millions sterling was spent from loan funds by the Government that has

just left office, we find that only 22 miles of railway were built in the Great Southern district. When we remember that we are still spending two millions annually on dairy produce that we are obliged to import from the Eastern States, it is regrettable that so little attention has been given to the provision of railway communication to those districts that would have helped considerably towards reducing that great drain of wealth from this State. The ex-Government and previous Governments neglected the Great Southern.

Hon. P. Collier: Poor representation!

Mr. PIESSE: That part of the State will carry more people in the not distant future than any other part of Western Australia. There are great opportunities there for small holders. It has been found that it is possible to do better on 500 or 1,000 acres than on holdings of greater area. The Government are aware of this and I understand the Minister is considering the matter and that investigations are being made with a view to closer settlement there. What has kept it back so long has been the neglect to spend public money there. I wish to say a few words on the subject of hospital accommodation. This is a matter of pressing importance so far as the country districts are concerned, and I trust that the Government, however stringent the financial position may be, will be able to give the subject immediate consideration. There is one other matter to which I wish to refer, and it is the development of those light lands that for so long have lain idle. Perhaps it would be better if hon. members could have a personal knowledge of that land before they attempt to follow what I mean by the development of those light lands. There is adjacent to the various railways in my district many thousands of acres of light land which could be brought into profitable use if the conditions of improvement were satisfactory and the assistance given was in the right direction. I hope the Minister for Lands, just as soon as he has time to spare, will go down to that district. The people down there have extended to him an invitation and I am sure they will be able to put up to him a practical proposition. It will be of great benefit to this country if the policy of light land development is seriously entertained. Now I want to say a word or two about the insinuation made that I did something of a questionable character in re-

gard to the railway employees. No one could be more sorry than I am that the Government should be faced with the position of having to do something in regard to hours and district allowances, including those relating to railway employees. I want to take members into my confidence and to say straightway that the insinuation that I went to a meeting of railway employees for the purpose of making promises that I could not carry out, is absolutely incorrect. I value the friendship and support given to me during the elections by many personal friends that I have in the Railway Department. I want to make no secret of it; indeed no secret of it was made at the time. I met those men in conference and, as was stated last night, on a Sunday morning. Surely there was no harm in my meeting them. I was very pleased to receive their invitation, but I made it clear to them that I felt they had not asked me there in order to extract some impossible promises from me. It was explained that it was all done in a friendly way in order that I might understand more thoroughly their position. Certainly there was no misunderstanding between the railway employees at Katanning and myself. During the whole of the election campaign I was not asked a single embarrassing question by any of the railway employees. I take it they were pleased that I was standing as a candidate, and as far as I knew then or know now, they were ready to give me liberal support. I made no promise to those gentlemen beyond safeguarding their interests, and I made no secret of my visit to their meeting. It was held in broad daylight, and I cannot see anything improper in my attendance there. Those men are my own townsmen, and very estimable people they are. My desire was to do what I could to assist them to any extent that might lie in my power. Last night Mr. Willcock said I had definitely promised them something. So far as I can remember, I did not touch on the 44-hour week, although it was a prominent question at the time. As to the district allowances, I realised that this question might arise sooner or later, and probably I said that if it did arise I could not see, unless an injustice was being done to the railway employees, that it would be proper for me to interfere. What is the Arbitration Court for, if it is not to remove all these questions

from political influence? If there are anomalies in the service, surely the very best tribunal to which they can be referred is the Arbitration Court. We have not yet touched bedrock in the present serious position, and at a later date Government employees might be very glad to uphold the Arbitration Court as the best possible means of settling anomalies.

Mr. Withers: Was it not said at your meeting that if Mr. Thomson were returned something would happen to the railway men's wages?

Mr. PIESSE: I will be perfectly honest; I believe something of the sort was said. There was a great deal of anxiety in the minds of the railway men at Katanning. I told them at the meeting that as far as I could see a certain section of the railway employees had enjoyed these privileges for many years past, and for the life of me I could not see, so long as they were justified and part of the policy of the Commissioner of Railways, why the permanent way men and engine drivers, who performed very valuable skilled services, should not enjoy those privileges. I pointed out it was all a question of finance, and that the control of the railways was exclusively in the hands of the Commissioner of Railways, and that under a special Act members of Parliament were expressly precluded from interfering, even to the length of introducing deputations. Nobody could be prouder of the services rendered by the railway employees than am I. In them we have a very estimable lot of men, efficiently performing very valuable services. But of course there are improvements that could be made in the railway service. One of the greatest blunders made by my friends opposite, who are so anxious about this question and so ready to criticise the Government over their moving of the Arbitration Court, was their failure adequately to deal with the railway finances. Had they stood up to that obligation, probably there would not be any necessity for the present Government to approach the Arbitration Court now. When I returned to the State five years ago and drove up to Northam, I was astounded to find the road in an appalling condition owing to heavy traffic, including loads of galvanised iron. That was five years ago. I want to know why a Traffic Act preventing competition with our railways by motor vehicles.

was not put through Parliament years ago. And what have we done in regard to main road construction? When you travel along the Albany-road, you find that the natural barriers have been graded down and thousands of pounds have been spent in improving the main roads. Why should a Government make it easy for a motor truck to carry 30 cwt., where previously it could not have carried ten? No wonder our railways are feeling the pinch. To grade down the natural barriers of the Darling Range was a mistaken policy. Why should we make it easier for motor trucks to enter into competition with the railways? I repeat, it was altogether a mistaken policy.

The Minister for Works: The Main Roads Act specifies the grades.

Mr. PIESSE: Well, we might well have deferred that work for years to come, and so given the railways some protection. I think a great deal might be done towards popularising the railways now that petrol has increased in price. I want to know whether the Railway Department cannot hold out increased inducements to travel by train rather than by motor vehicles. I suggest to the Minister for Railways that a return ticket issued at a reduced rate might do much to induce people to travel by train. Certainly many people who come to Perth by road would use the train if they could get a return ticket at a reduced fee. I am not sure that the time has not arrived when we should erect a toll gate on the Albany-road and charge 5s. for each passenger vehicle and 10s. for each truck passing through the gate.

Mr. Brown: Is that a national road?

Mr. PIESSE: I do not know that in our time we shall be able to build many national roads. At present we have not the money to carry out necessary services. The general consensus of opinion is that a road like the Albany-road should be wholly constructed out of national funds.

The Minister for Works: It is so now.

Mr. PIESSE: I understand that under the amended Act the local authorities have to pay annually a certain proportion of the costs of the maintenance of that road. I am not throwing bouquets at members opposite, but I think we are very fortunate in that our railways have not shown a greater shrinkage than actually obtains. In the Eastern

States the railways have made tremendous leeway. As I say, we are fortunate in that our losses are not greater even than they are. But that is no reason why the Minister for Railways should not devote himself to bringing railway expenditure within revenue.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. PIESSE: It is the duty of every member, both by act and by suggestion, to do all in his power to assist the Commissioner to make the railways more profitable, and consequently to increase the work for railway employees and make them contented. I suggest to the Minister that on long-distance journeys some special reduction might be made in return fares, and that on certain days the speed of trains might be accelerated, especially where the railway mileage exceeds that of the road route, in order to make railway travelling more popular with the public. Inconvenience is being suffered by passengers on the Great Southern line because of the lack of adequate refreshment room provision. Probably the Commissioner was justified in discontinuing the running of the dining coach, because so far as I could judge it was not patronised sufficiently, but something like the provision made in South Australia should be adopted here. I do not see why passengers should be required to line up at a refreshment room and scramble for refreshments when that could be avoided by accelerating the speed of the train and cutting out unnecessary stops, as could be done on a couple of trains a week. This would make train travelling more popular with the public and more remunerative to the department. At present there are many unnecessary stoppages on long-distance journeys. The Minister might consider the question of building the refreshment rooms at Spencer's Brook. We have every reason to be proud of our railway employees who, so far as one can judge, give good service. At some of the country stations, however, particularly those of the larger towns, a little more attention might be devoted to providing seats for passengers and attending to their comfort generally. In the old days the stationmaster made it his duty to ensure that passengers were comfortably seated before sending his train out. This is

still done on the Perth station, and it might well be done at the large country stations.

Mr. Wansbrough: Especially when passengers are joining a train after midnight.

Mr. PIESSE: Yes. Often they crowd a compartment, thus causing discomfort to others, when there is plenty of room on another part of the train. If stationmasters gave a little more attention to the comfort of the travelling public, it would encourage people to patronise rail rather than road transport. Let me refer to the responsibility that rests upon Parliament to devise means for providing the necessary capital for carrying on the ordinary avocations of the State, even if money cannot be made available for expenditure on loan works. I have been supplied with some figures, which to my knowledge have not been published, but which fairly show the precarious position of the State as regards its need for finance for the carrying on of business. The banks are refusing to make advances for various activities, which fact is accounted for by the serious falling off of deposits. This statement shows a comparison of the banking figures in Western Australia—

ADVANCES.

Quarter ended June 24, 1929.	Quarter ended June 30, 1930.	Increase.	Per cent.
£17,471,000	£19,707,000	£2,286,000	12·8

DEPOSITS.

Not bearing Interest

Quarter ended June 24, 1929	Quarter ended June 30, 1930.	Decrease.	Per cent.
£5,582,000	£4,607,000	£1,075,000	19·26

Bearing Interest.

£5,758,000	£5,696,000	£62,000	1·08
Total £11,340,000	£10,203,000	£1,137,000	10·02

Those figures show the seriousness of the position. We cannot carry on our ordinary business avocations unless we have a reasonable supply of money available at a reasonable rate of interest. The remedy is to inspire confidence in the country and encourage people possessed of capital to come here and produce more wealth. Undoubtedly the present low prices for exportable commodities will greatly militate against increased production. Wheat to-day is quoted at 2s. 10d. at sidings, at which figure members will realise that farming is not going to be very profitable in future. It

should be our aim to assist the settlers who are being hampered by shortness of cash and low prices of produce. I hope every member will fully realise the responsibility devolving upon him. This is a time for co-operating, not for emphasising party differences. The country expects us to unite and give our best service to assist the Government in carrying out the administration of affairs. I regret that unemployment in the country is so acute. Many people are in a very sorry plight, much of which, it seems to me, is due to want of thrift and care to provide for a rainy day. During the last few months many unemployed have been tramping the country, including my district, and it has become a very difficult matter to provide them with temporary sustenance to carry them on. I cannot understand how it is that able-bodied young men, born in this country and only recently thrown out of work, should be already suffering want. Seven young men of 25 to 30 years of age, who must have earned £4 or £5 a week for years, came into my office begging for bread. Is there anything more pitiable than to see athletic young fellows begging for bread? They told me they belonged to Kalgoorlie and Boulder and had been in work up to two or three months ago. Surely they could have saved some money during the years they had been in work. It shows a lack of frugality on the part of our people. When others have denied themselves in order to save a few pounds for the lean times, the improvident cannot expect to be carried on their backs. Steps should be taken to create an insurance scheme against unemployment. The present position is degrading. I hope the Government will not be hindered in their performance of the onerous duties that rest upon them. I shall do my utmost to assist them in their undertaking and help the country out of its difficulties, so that our people once more may have full-time work restored to them and may be enabled to enjoy a reasonable standard of comfort.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin)

[7.45]: I believe I shall be associating myself with the prevailing sentiment of this Chamber if I congratulate you, Sir, not only upon your acquisition of the very high position which is now rightly yours, but also upon the very marked unanimity of opinion as to the fitness and propriety of your occupying a place of such distinction.

I believe that the ready acquiescence by the House in the ruling given by your predecessor, Mr. Speaker—I refer to the member for Kanowna—arose from his capacity to forget, whilst in the Chair, the particular political party to which he belonged, a very rare trait in a gentleman in that position, but in the case of the hon. gentleman in question seemingly quite a natural one. I believe you, Sir, will be just as keen as he to isolate yourself from party desires, and I believe you will be no less successful in that direction than was your distinguished predecessor. I take this opportunity also to compliment those of my colleagues who have attained Ministerial rank. I am very confident in the ability of each of them to fill with success the position he occupies. In my mind's eye I can easily see members of the Opposition at this time clasping their hands and thanking God that there no longer devolves upon them the responsibility of governing the country during this very troublesome period.

Hon. P. Collier: We are not so certain about that.

Mr. DONEY: There are at least two points of similarity between this and the previous Government. The present Government, as was the case with their predecessors, consists of men with a broad State outlook, each and all of them, and, everyone will agree, each is loyal to the best interests of the State. No doubt, as was the case with their predecessors, they will make many mistakes, for the correction of which they need the tolerance and helpful and constructive criticism of members of the Opposition. No one will deny that Parliament is charged with very responsible duties, demanding of it a broad national outlook. Woe betide us, therefore if we adopt a merely sectional viewpoint, and thus hamper the best endeavours of those who are charged with the administration of affairs during this most stressful time. The deliberations of 50 earnest, loyal members is a service the Premier has a right to depend upon at this critical juncture. Despite that, we find, unfortunately, that we cannot apparently commence our duties here without the same wretched old routine of discrimination, which used to characterise the first assembling of every Parliament that immediately followed a general election. If we are to have that sort of thing, let us get it over quickly. We do

not want it to crop up time and again right through the session, parrot-like repeating itself. I am not advocating that members opposite should cease their opposition: far from it, for I like the sting and colour of fight, but I do urge that party feelings may be set aside during the session to the utmost extent that is humanely possible. As a comparatively new comer, here, I hoped to commence this session with a serious-minded House, unitedly discharging our duty in the face of the troubles that surround us. Instead of that we find an obvious straining after party advantage by fighting over again the meaner aspects of the last general elections. No one seems to be satisfied with the contents of the Speech. I do not wonder at it. I am not satisfied with it myself. I question whether the Premier is satisfied, or whether His Excellency the Governor was satisfied. Without it we know the worst and the best. Plainly, the Speech has now lost its point.

Hon. P. Collier: No one takes any notice of it.

Mr. DONEY: The march of financial events since has placed it out of date. It bears no relationship to the position that resulted from the Premiers' Conference.

Hon. P. Collier: The Speeches usually aim at concealing the policy of the Government.

Mr. DONEY: Our backs are flatter to the wall than we thought they would be, but we know now how we stand. I am sure every member feels relieved to have the assurance of the Premiers apparently with the concurrence of Sir Otto Niemeyer and Sir Robert Gibson, that if we observe the arrangements entered into by the Premiers, we shall gradually draw clear of our trouble. Most people take a very melancholy view of things. We have a Government charged with enthusiasm, ripe with schemes to increase productivity in Western Australia, and schemes for social reform, brought to earth by the declaration of the Premier of a bankrupt Treasury, by the sight of our city streets swarming with unemployed, and the unfortunate knowledge that our sheep and our wheat have lost their value. It is pretty manifest that for a while we can make no forward movement. It is merely a matter of hanging on, consolidating our position, digging ourselves in. It is apparent that members of this House must combine for

strength, analysing carefully this method and that method of extricating ourselves from our troubles, but always with a critical eye upon the welfare of the State. The best that can be said is that we are better placed than our neighbours in the Eastern States, who, having produced less than we and spent more are now reaping the reward of their thriftlessness.

Hon. P. Collier: Thank God we are not as others are.

Mr. DONEY: It would be a great pity if we had not something on which to compliment ourselves. It happens that there are several bright spots upon an otherwise rather dull horizon. Without doubt the crops are showing great promise, and I question if they have ever looked better at any time in the last 15 years; the South-West is in remarkably good heart; from the unusual activities of our prospectors, and the adoption of modern methods, it seems that our mining industry is in a very refreshing state. The group settlers too have come to the end of their long lane, the temper of the people seems to be healthy and sane, and the unemployed seem to be displaying moderation and to have a sense of responsibility.

Mr. Raphael: For the next month only.

Mr. DONEY: It is realised that the Government cannot be held responsible for a change that is world-wide.

Mr. Raphael: There will be a change with the unemployed next month, old chap.

Mr. DONEY: We are not alone in our troubles which have arisen because of the extremely low price at which we can sell our primary products. This position has left our primary producers of all classes with less money to spend upon manufactured goods. The consequent decreased demand for the manufactured article, involves manufacturers, industrialists, primary producers and their friends in the same ever-expanding sea of trouble. Parenthetically, I may mention another pleasing feature. Only recently I was moving with certain friends through a factory owned by the W.A. Wire Netting Company. I saw a bunch of gates done up apparently for export. It was with pleasure that I learned they were bound for Somaliland, to fill a contract with the British Government which, in the face of keen opposition, had been placed with the company to which I refer. It is well known by this time that the amount allotted to

Western Australia by the Loan Council is £1,750,000, £3,000,000 below normal expectations. A fair deduction to make is that if we had the £3,000,000 we should have no unemployment. It is equally obvious there must be serious unemployment since that money is not available, and this unemployment must necessarily continue until an assured harvest allows us to begin rebuilding our position. Additional to that we are hampered by the knowledge that general revenue is sure to show a big decline. This indicates that certain departments of Government activity have not the same amount of work to do they once had and gives rise to a rather disturbing question. It may have to be determined whether it is best to eliminate surplus officials, and add to unemployment—a method of righting the position with which no one is in favour; or to ration all the available work until a return to normal prosperity permits of the resumption of full-time occupation—a solution which, I suppose, is more in accord with the popular idea of what is just and expedient. It is the duty of the Government to see that our meed of ill luck is not scattered abroad in lumps, hitting some and escaping others, but is spread as evenly as possible over the population of the State. To me it appeals as fair that those in the best position should yield most ground, that those who have the most should give the most. Recently we have heard a little about reduction of salaries. Very good; I suppose we have to take a sip out of the medicine bottle in the same way as other people. Probably we shall be called upon to forego a portion of our salaries comparable with the general decline in the earnings of the people of this State. A number of my friends, opposite, in discussing the matter, have told me that they cannot afford a reduction in their salaries. I know that. For myself I know it as well as any other member knows it. Recently I have stood more of the financial stress and strain of contesting elections than other members. However, the question is not whether we can afford it. If I estimate the position aright, we shall have to afford it. A workless man cannot afford to go on without work, but he has to all the same. A farmer cannot afford to sell his wheat at 2s. 11d., but he must do it notwithstanding. He cannot afford to have sheep at a figure that pays neither to

market nor to keep. He cannot afford to pay interest to his banker, taxation to the Commissioner, or rent to the Lands Department, but he has to do these things whether he can afford them or not. These remarks probably apply to a third of the farmers of Western Australia. I fervently hope they do not refer to a larger proportion. It is obvious to all of us who have observed the distress of the man on the land, that if he is to be carried through intact to better times, if the equilibrium of our principal industry is to be, as for the sake of the State it must be, preserved, Ministers must insist upon the various collecting departments that come under their control showing the utmost sympathy and tolerance in the exercise of their functions. Everyone will agree with me that wholesale threats of legal proceedings or of repossession are utterly useless. In these distressful times threats should not be employed unless close investigation has shown that there is ability to pay. Much quite unnecessary mental distress is caused to many a good man upon the land who, from the very loneliness of his life, is compelled to chew the cud of his worries over and over again, whether in the yard, at the plough, or in his bed. Such is the situation in which, unhappily, hundreds of our farmers find themselves. At all events, I appeal to such Ministers as may happen to be listening to direct their responsible officials not to employ threats except in those comparatively rare cases where investigation has shown threats to be a just expedient. Ministers know just as well as I can tell them that consideration during the next year or so will be amply recompensed in the following years, and they know too that the big business of land settlement attains success largely upon the approval of men already settled. The member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) made some references to successful farmers. That is a problem to which little regard has been paid in this Chamber. One of the worst features of such times as these is the crippling and occasionally bankrupting effect they have upon farmers whom we are accustomed to regard as successful, men who have passed through the pioneering stage and have attained to what looked like financial stability. The depression has forced the associated banks to call up mortgages showing a con-

siderable margin of safety even on the basis of depreciated values. I do not believe that the associated banks will often proceed to the length of actual re-possession; but even so a problem of equal magnitude remains behind, in that the banks nowadays are not able to finance their clients to the extent of carrying them through to the coming year. It is just as well not to overlook the problem of the so-called successful farmer at the present time. In view of the hugely lessened incomes of farmers generally, I must point out that if the farmer receives less for his wheat, and less for his wool and so forth, he is entitled to say, "I must pay less rent, pay a lower rate of interest, pay less for my stores and machinery." Equally the wage earner who is rationed, or who for any other reason is receiving a lessened wage, is entitled to pay less for everything that he buys. And similarly the manufacturer and the retailer must sell for less, either because of a reduced purchasing power on the part of the people, or by reason of legislative compulsion. Not that much legislative compulsion in the form of price-fixing is likely to be needed in order to depress the prices of necessary commodities. I think the prevailing depression will do that without any assistance from Parliament. The question is constantly being put whether we intend to maintain the present high standard of living. Undoubtedly we do. A proportionate all-round reduction in the prices of all commodities will manifestly leave us in the same position relatively as before. I believe it has become plain to everybody here that a cut of 10 or 15 per cent. is necessary in the price of all things transferred from one person to another, if we are to maintain trade at its proper balance. There is every indication that the present low prices, subject to slight rises or falls according to whether, for the moment, supply or demand is in the ascendant, will stand for several years to come. We may therefore as well begin straightway to adjust ourselves to the new standard by the gradual process which is necessary if trade is to be maintained on an even balance. The reduction must be made gradually, so as not to entail the bankrupting of merchants and others holding large stocks. As a matter of fairness, there should be no exception to the general rule that everything must come down, and that general rule would connote

the imposition of a special investment tax to deal with Government and municipal stocks and bonds which, as we know, are not taxably reached by the Commissioner of Taxation. Here, for what it may be worth, I will indulge in the rather unusual desire of passing on information to the Commissioner of Taxation. Since that official is likely to suffer considerably in his returns for the current financial year, I suggest to him that he recommend the Premier to institute a regimentation of the earnings of the people, with the object of having all wages and salaries compulsorily placed by the employer in either the State Savings Bank or one of the associated banks. That course would enable the Commissioner of Taxation to put his hand upon persons who for years have been evading him without just cause, and at the same time would instil a spirit of thrift into the people. Further, it might indicate to the Treasurer another method whereby occasionally to recoup a depleted Treasury. I do not assert that the suggestion is of any use to the Commissioner, but if it is, here I make it available to him. Like every other member of the Chamber I have some ideas on the subject of secession. I do not want secession for its own sake; I question whether any hon. member does. If we do secede from the Commonwealth, it will only be as a duty to ourselves, because there seems to us no other exit from our economic troubles. Sentimentally I am a Federationist, but I feel that we cannot allow Western Australia to be ruined for the sake of a sentiment. For our own sakes we should approach the question calmly, cautiously, and calculatingly. I suggest that we should have drawn up for us by the Under Treasurer, assisted possibly by the corresponding officer of the Commonwealth—although that may be rather much to hope for in the circumstances—a statement indicating to us our payments to the Commonwealth Treasury under the present regime, our liability to the Commonwealth following upon our assumption of such Federal buildings and services as will be necessary to our new status, together with the cost of such additional new services as our status as a Dominion would necessitate our installing. It is plainly desirable that we should have such reliable data to guide us, although, even without such a statement, I have little doubt myself that the value of

the Commonwealth services to this State is amply covered by the Commonwealth collections made within the State. Despite that, common prudence would bid us secure all the information possible about the road we intend to travel. To force a primary producing State like ours, with no industries of its own worthy of mention to protect, to submit to a tariff policy of high protection with absolutely no power to handle those tariffs, to have our markets ruined by that policy, to be forced to pay double the proper price for our implements of trade and thus sadly hamper our agricultural and general development by depressing profits made on farming, to impoverish us so that Queensland may grow wealthy, to pay three or four times what we ought to pay for our sugar, and all this for the sake of protecting and bounty-feeding those industries in the Eastern States, to which more than anything else is attributable the responsibility for the position we are in to-day—these things rankle with me and with most of us, irrespective I imagine of on which side of the House we sit. Is it any wonder that, in these circumstances, Western Australia should talk secession? This stand-and-deliver attitude does not appeal to anyone. I can quite imagine the people in the East saying to us, "My God, you are in the Federation now; we will squeeze you." For the disabilities we suffer from here, no one dreams of blaming any individual or any party; we blame the system, and a rotten system it is, too. I feel we shall never make any marked forward movement in Western Australia unless, and until, we free ourselves from Federal tariff control, and secure the right to impose a revenue tariff for revenue purposes only. We would then be able to admit, free of impost, tools of trade necessary for our development, and place the manufacturers in the Eastern States on a competitive basis with manufacturers overseas, without any additional protection other than that afforded by the freights to be paid by their overseas competitors. I will never be convinced that any law-abiding people, such as we undoubtedly are, should be compelled to support a system that is distinctly harmful to their interests, as is this policy of high protection to the farmers in particular and to the people generally throughout this State. No one here can truthfully assert that the large implement manufacturing firms in the East-

ern States that are constantly referred to, have been, in any sense of the word, beneficial to Western Australian farmers. On the contrary, members on both sides of the House believe that those firms, and the system they represent, constitute the main contributory factor in promoting the ruin that is confronting thousands of farmers in this State. Those firms are sheltering behind the high wall of protection—and a very thick wall it is, too—well to the leeward side of competition, and carrying on all the time their profitable and comfortable trade of exploiting the real man of industry—the farmer. Let us protect during infancy those useful industries that look likely to develop into a thriving adulthood. I regard that as protection of a quite sensible type, but to take profits from our primary industries away from debt reduction, which, to minds of normal discrimination, appears to be their proper function, and to use those profits for the purpose of making good extravagance and losses made deliberately by other departments of national activity that can never be successful, and to do that year by year, is plainly nothing but stupidity of the worst description. To permanently protect a crippled industry always reminds me of that Greek trader who was constantly complaining to his fellow traders that what he made on the peanuts, he always lost on the bananas, and yet had not the sense to drop the banana trade. He is not the only fool. Business men who persist in trading in a department that can never show a profit would rightly be regarded as fools. So, too, are Federal Governments, irrespective of party, who waste these profits as indicated, who pay the secondary debts, if they may be so termed, of Victoria and New South Wales with the primary profits of Western Australia and South Australia and, to a lesser extent, of Tasmania as well, only to find that having thus frittered those profits away, they are no longer available for debt reduction, that our creditors are looking suspiciously at us, and that Sir Otto Niemeyer, courteous but calculating, is walking in the back door, as it were, with a notebook. At long last we are apparently seeing ourselves as others see us, and I reckon it is just as well for the ultimate good of Australia that it is so. It is quite possible that secession may never be granted to Western Australia, but in my opinion, the agitation will be worth

while if it teaches our nominal partners in the Eastern States that Western Australia must be treated as an actual partner, not as a mere customer. Federation has always appealed to me as a co-operative concern in which Western Australia never neglects to pay in her share regularly and as constantly is denied a share in the dividend. Even if we secure secession, the results may prove disappointing to us. It may prove to be an example of distant fields that are not nearly so green as illusive distances suggest, and history does not seem to supply any parallel case to guide us, which, I think, is rather unfortunate. Every now and again I imagine we are likely to be aroused by our enthusiasm to an extent that may disturb our judgment. Despite that, I say that we should secure essential data showing our liabilities under the present system and under the proposed new status, and that thereafter the agitation should be continued until we have been admitted to full partnership rights, embracing fiscal independence, or be allowed to withdraw from the Federal pact. I now desire to come down to more familiar ground by drawing the attention of the House to certain questions specifically affecting my own district. I am as well aware as anyone else that it is futile to advance projects that entail the expenditure of public money at the present juncture. I shall respect that restriction. My predecessor in this Chamber won renown by the assiduity and success with which he pursued questions likely to add to the welfare of the town and district he represented. I must needs pursue the same policy, not because of my predecessor's example, but because Narrogin is—

Mr. Withers: The hub of the universe.

Mr. DONEY: I have heard it described as such before, and I do not dispute the description. The fact remains that I shall have to pursue that policy as well, because the importance of Narrogin, in the country scheme of things, demands it.

Member: You are not going to desert us.

Mr. DONEY: No. I think it is incumbent upon the present Government to show just as great a keenness for the advancement of country towns as for the metropolis.

Mr. H. W. Mann: The city does not reap any advantage over the country.

Mr. DONEY: That point is arguable, and I would not mind, on some other occasion when there is ample time, discussing it

with the hon. member. At the present moment a hospital is Narrogin's principal need, its vital and all-absorbing need. Never before has Narrogin wanted anything so keenly as it wants a hospital now. It is not required in a selfish spirit. We do not want the hospital for the sake of the building, but because of the service the institution will give to those residing in a large and important district. To emphasise the urgency of this particular work, I would point out that the ex-Minister for Health, Mr. Munsie, regarded the provision of a Narrogin district hospital as second in importance only to additions to the maternity hospital at Subiaco. Had it not been for the present financial stringency, I am sure the hospital would have been erected long ago. We now quite realise that we will require to amend the terms under which the building will be erected. I am glad that I have secured the promise of the present Minister for Health to visit Narrogin shortly and view the position. I imagine, though, it is nothing but fair to warn the Minister that he is due for a shock when he views the dismal old edifice we have been in the habit for some years past of calling the hospital. It is no exaggeration to declare that the Narrogin hospital is the sorriest and shabbiest old building of its kind that comes under the control of the health authorities. Yet it seldom houses anything less than double the number of patients it is officially expected to house. It is a very cramped building, ill-lit, ill-ventilated, ill-equipped and in all respects ill-favoured. The Minister, when he gets down there, will see an abundance of hessian, of rotten boards, of dampness, and ample other evidence of age and disrepute. Still there is one cheerful aspect of it, which is that it is controlled by an unusually fine medical and nursing staff. I have no intention of unduly worrying the Minister upon this matter. I know his difficulties and I have little desire to add to them. I know very well that, having seen the wretched structure to which I am referring, he will desire straightway to reconstruct it but will need to refer me to a sympathetic but poverty-stricken Treasurer. The only advice I would venture to give to the Minister is that he adopt the same order of urgency as was laid down by the ex-Minister for Health. I believe that considerations of decency and public health will then lead him to put the

proposed new building under construction at the earliest possible date. On reference to "Hansard" I find it has been the custom for many years past to draw the attention of the House in general, and of the Minister for Works in particular, to the need in Narrogin for new public buildings, the intention being to take the Agricultural Bank, the Lands Department, the Courthouse, the Savings Bank and another institution the name of which I cannot recall for the moment, and let them exercise their functions under the one roof, leasing or selling the existing buildings for whatever purpose their size and situation best fits them for. On account of our straitened financial position I shall attempt on this occasion to do no more than put my request on record, nor shall I refer to it again unless I find buildings of less consequence being erected in some other part of the State—a rather unlikely contingency, I think. Several years ago the then Minister for Railways perpetrated what I have frequently heard described as a grave injustice to the inhabitants of Narrogin. He is alleged to have arrested the progress of the town, to have earned the disfavour for all time of tired mothers and little children, and to have materially depreciated values on the eastern side of the town. I am pleased to see that the present Minister for Railways has just entered the Chamber, for I am anxious to make it clear that the previous Minister for Railways to whom I have just been referring and the present Minister for Railways are identical. I understand it was the present Minister for Railways who some years ago removed the railway crossing in Narrogin.

The Minister for Railways: I have never heard of it before.

Mr. DONEY: I believe I am not wrong, and that there is a reference in a certain file—I think I know where to find it—which will set the matter at rest. I am inclined to think the Minister's memory is at fault.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think so, not in this instance.

Mr. DONEY: At all events, I believe I am right in saying that you had no legal authority for the act you are alleged to have committed down there. Anyhow, it is the popular belief in Narrogin that the Minister did close the railway crossing which previously connected the eastern and western por-

tions of the town. The old crossing was held to be very dangerous, although I believe no accidents ever occurred there. The new crossing, which the Minister is alleged to have constructed, was held to be free from danger, but to my knowledge numbers of accidents have occurred there. At present, intercourse between the two portions of the town is very cumbersome and a continual source of complaint, both private and municipal. I have no doubt the present Minister is just as keen as anyone else to seize an opportunity to remedy errors of the past, in his case, I am happy to say, an otherwise happy and quite serviceable past. I am anxious to assure the Minister there is no better way to retrieve the position than by the construction of an overhead bridge to carry all forms of traffic between the eastern and western portions of the town. I will say no more, other than to express the hope that the Minister, as soon as the matter is formally brought under his notice, will give it the most favourable consideration that the unfortunate state of the finances will permit.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Your overhead bridge will follow that at Bassendean.

Mr. DONEY: On a basis of urgency the two cases are not comparable. I think I could show that the scheme which, at a later date, I may be prepared to lay before the Minister will create new wealth in the district. I now purpose giving a few minutes to a topic which most members here will be only too keen to dodge—unemployment. Only just now I was told I had no right to talk of unemployment because I myself had never been unemployed. As a matter of fact I do not think I ever have been unemployed. But I do say that whilst I am not an expert in the matter, I am no stranger to the gentle art of jumping the rattler, nor am I any stranger to that other art, more frequently practised, of tightening the belt. My desire is to indicate to members that I have grounds for a little practical sympathy with the unemployed. The question of unemployment is likely to receive ample discussion this session. It can quite truthfully be described as the world's biggest problem. It baffles everybody. I do not think the man is yet born who is capable of properly tackling this problem. Of course there are times when we find our-

selves able to remedy it partially or temporarily, but never yet have we found a man capable of putting up a scheme for eluding it wholly and for all time.

The Minister for Railways: Have you never heard of Robinson Crusoe?

Mr. DONEY: I have, yes, but the only problem of the sort confronting Robinson Crusoe was the employment of Friday, and I can only think that Friday was more easily satisfied with his hours and working conditions than is the employee of to-day. I should say that modern machinery, overproduction and the consequent sharp variation of costs were the joint root cause of the present trouble—although for that matter I always feel like saying there is never really any overproduction. The trouble is we have never yet discovered how evenly and fairly to distribute our products. People without work, of course, have no money with which to buy. There is a consequent accumulation of those huge surpluses which make it necessary to ease off in production, and create in its turn yet more unemployment. I imagine a number of us find ourselves wishing that the time, the money, and the brains that have gone into movies and talkies, speed-boats, speed-cars and other modern pleasure developments of questionable utility, had been given to the twin questions of world transport and distribution and their consequent beneficial bearing upon unemployment and upon the maintenance of the purchasing power of the people. We have some 8,000 or 10,000 unemployed in Western Australia. They have been the creation, not so much of local party delinquencies, but rather of world causes that are hard to determine and harder still to dissipate.

Hon. P. Collier: Only yesterday I was reading your policy speech. It did not quite square with what you are saying now.

Mr. DONEY: I will swear, if the Speaker will permit me, that the sense of it was no great way removed from what I am saying now.

Hon. P. Collier: Only as far apart as the poles. There is the same old explanation.

Mr. DONEY: Anyhow, the point I was going to make was that since the unemployed are the result of world causes they certainly should not be made the football of party fighting in this House. We are attempting to solve the sustenance problem

by means of the Blackboy Camp and intermittent employment. I shall not exaggerate. I say the Government are to be heartily congratulated on the courage, energy and partial success with which they have been tackling the problem.

Hon. P. Collier: You are a humourist.

Mr. DONEY: I sometimes take my cue from the Leader of the Opposition. The Government are to be congratulated, particularly when we give due regard to the fact that the task is most difficult, because the shortage of cash has forced them into certain expedients in place of their desire to put the men on reproductive work. The idea of camps close to food supplies is manifestly a good one. I think it may be necessary yet to broaden the idea and have a camp somewhere near the Mandurah fishing grounds and yet another, perhaps, in that good vegetable area just outside Perth somewhere down at Wanneroo, the idea being an interchange of goods between the three camps. That would lead to their being more honestly self-supporting. It plainly is always better to produce than merely to collect. I always feel that carefully systematised, no man should go without a meal in a State like this with our abundance of fertile land, and the comparative sparseness of the population. A variation of the old idea of Jesse Collings, the friend of Joseph Chamberlain, of three acres and a cow, should be more easily applicable in this State than perhaps in any other part of the world. We ought never again to be caught as we have been caught on this occasion. When better times return I hope we shall have sense enough to charge our prosperity with the responsibility for a fund to provide reproductive work, the proceeds from which would make the scheme permanent. Meanwhile, our Federal friends can think of nothing better than an unemployment tax. I shall not trouble so long as they include a heavy tax on luxuries, especially imported luxuries, and it happens that most, if not the whole, of our luxuries are imported.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Do you want any more taxing than they have imposed under the tariff?

Mr. DONEY: I am not suggesting the tax, but it seems to be a settled fact, and I shall not grumble provided they tax luxuries. The country that has most battered

on our misfortunes is the United States of America. That country happens to be superabundantly provided for by its own resources and does not need and will not take our goods in return for its goods, with the natural consequence that our huge adverse trade balance with it has to be paid with by shipments of good Australian gold. Governments, and the people too for that matter, have a habit of buying American cars. The people revel in American luxuries, films in particular. I say that the gently persuasive power of heavy taxation is necessary to cure that particular brand of foolishness. It is obvious to all that money thus exported is drawn largely from the handling, as distinct from the actual acquirement of our primary products. That being so normal decency of outlook should have assured such money being re-lent to this country for the furtherance of reproductive developmental work, instead of being thoughtlessly sent to boost the industries of foreign countries to the manifest disadvantage of ours.

Mr. Marshall: Do not forget that the farmer patronises the motor industry fairly well.

Mr. DONEY: I am not overlooking that fact.

Mr. Marshall: He is equally guilty as any other section of the community.

Mr. DONEY: I have not denied it; in fact he is. The patronage of Australian or British goods is no longer a matter of commonsense or patriotic duty; rather should it be regarded as plain self-defence. There is no doubt that we are right up against it. It is a case of all hands to the pumps and I may add, for the benefit of members opposite, a truce to party politics. It seems nowadays rather necessary to revise our estimate of the wheatgrower. He must no longer be looked upon as just a business man. He is something more than that. He is engaged in a big national undertaking. He has been called upon by the Prime Minister to save the country. The wheat-grower's importance in the scheme of things in Australia is at last being recognised. That is quite good provided he is given the legislative consideration that his importance warrants. It is possible to wipe out many of the obstacles that lie in his path, and I hope that during the session upon which we have now entered, we shall exert our best efforts to that end. It is plain that

we cannot remove the biggest obstacle in his path—the tariff—but we can do our level best in this Chamber and outside of it to cultivate what one might call a tariff sense, which ultimately might have—and this is no vain hope—some Federal effect. We have to agree that our future lies in the soil, the friendly responsive soil. We are just growers, diggers, graziers, tillers of the soil, harvesters of its production. Speaking generally, it may be claimed that no activity is worth while unless it directly or indirectly concerns itself with primary production. I hope this will not be taken as implying any disregard of our town industrialists. I do not subscribe to the narrow view that regards the city as a costly redundancy. The driver of the tramcar plays his part in production no less than does the driver of the plough. I agree that we all, solely except the wasters—and there are plenty of them around the city—play some part in some department or other of agricultural activity. At the same time I maintain that there should be a more even apportionment of agricultural profits. The immediate producer gets all too little: the distributor gets relatively far too much. It seems to me that the system under which we now work ensures that whatever risk there is shall be borne by the producer.

Mr. Marshall: The consumer does not get anything out of it. He has to pay the maximum.

Mr. DONEY: For what?

Mr. Marshall: For the produce.

Mr. DONEY: How does that affect the position?

Mr. Marshall: The landlord gets the greatest chop. Look at the rents paid in Perth.

Mr. DONEY: For the moment the landlord is outside my comparison. I am not contenting myself with asserting that the distributor gets a larger share of the profits than does the consumer. It should be possible by legislation to secure a more even spread of the profit and loss over all concerned, and I suggest that this period of retrenchment and adjustment to new standards, particularly of values, is the best time to set to work. It is the plain duty of the House, if it is to show itself a practical and courageous House, to cultivate the agricultural sense, that is, to act, talk, educate and legislate agriculturally, to draw ourselves away from the parks and picture palaces of Perth, and think in terms of bags and

bushels and bales. For a body of men carrying our responsibilities this is plainly imperative. I desire to make friendly reference to the remarks of the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) two nights ago at the conclusion of what most of us regarded as a very able speech. I had hoped he would have shown a more practical appreciation of the difficulties confronting the Government, difficulties the like of which have confronted no Government within the memory, I imagine, of any sitting member. The substance of his comments was that the Government were using the existing highly calamitous conditions merely as a cover from which to attack the wage-earner. I was amazed that a member of his experience and knowledge should draw a conclusion of that kind. He implied that the Government were little other than a pack of wolves, hungry to launch an attack upon the workers. This was just empty extravagance and nothing more, and in the circumstances utterly futile. It was a suggestion calculated to create a dangerous social cleavage at a time when unity is essential to our safety. It must be admitted that the Government may not be able to carry out all the hopes, aspirations, and intentions expressed during the general elections. In similar circumstances the same admission would need to be made by the Opposition. An entirely new set of circumstances has recently arisen.

Hon. P. Collier: They altered on the 12th April.

Mr. DONEY: They altered immediately following the Premiers' Conference.

Hon. P. Collier: The economic position altered in one night, in a few hours.

Mr. DONEY: The idea of waiting for a mandate to do this or that is beside the point when the necessity is urgent. The Government have power and discretion, neither of which will they hesitate to exercise should the need arise. I am glad the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johanson) is in his place, because I wish to make a brief though friendly reference to some remarks he made the other night. I must admit he has courage. He always fights in the open, and makes his intentions plain. He realises that a co-operative outlook on the part of the Government and the Opposition is a vital State need. What was his contribution? A threat. He threatened that unless the Government allied themselves with the Opposition viewpoint in respect of industrial matters, nothing but spear points

or pinpricks could be expected from him. He would not play the game unless he could have his own way. I have confidence in the hon. member, and I think he will perhaps change his outlook as soon as the heat of this first clash of battle has passed away. The member for East Perth (Mr. Kennelly) said we on this side of the House spoke glibly enough in attacking the standard of the workers, but that as soon as he and his friends attacked the other standards, our attitudes entirely changed. Members opposite should get it out of their heads that we are attacking anything. The Government are doing their best in difficult times to see that every section of the community shoulders its fair share of sacrifice. He says our attitude was different as soon as the other standards were attacked. He is entirely mistaken. Let him try to attack those other standards, tariffs, rents, interest, rates, the cost of living, etc. Straightway he will find that he is fighting no lone hand, provided always that he has regard for every section of the community, with a special emphasis on the word "every." A great deal has been said about the 44-hour week. Members may have the 44-hour week for my part or the 40-hour week, or any number of hours they like, provided industry can stand the strain, but I never can see any sense in persistently reducing hours and raising wages only to cast industry into a condition of poverty and throw people out of work. It is claimed that an increase in the hours of work from 44 to 48 will not cure unemployment. I know that, but it will have a beneficial effect upon it. Unemployment is not the only consideration. Equally as big a consideration is to secure continuity in industry, to promote industry so that it will show a profit, be able to carry on, and, in due course, absorb still more labour. The hon. member made a rather lengthy reference to interest rates. His remarks were interesting enough, but he was not particularly illuminating. It is an intricate question, but not a single ray of light did he shed upon it. We on this side are just as keen as he to get cheaper money. We like 5 per cent. and dislike 8 per cent. as keenly as he does. He says the Government should attack interest. I asked how he proposed to set about it, but he had no idea. Of course not! He knows as well as we do that the system has its roots pretty well sunken in London and New York, and that we in Western Australia have no grub hoe long enough and

strong enough to tackle the job of uprooting it. It is of course always conceivable that the Commissioner of Taxation may be able to reach Australian investments, but it is plain that the investments of people in other countries are wholly beyond our control. I have exhausted my time, and will resume my seat. I thank members for a patient hearing.

MR. WELLS (Canning) [9.8]: Permit me, Sir, as a new member, to offer you my hearty congratulations upon your accession to the high office of Speaker. I feel from my knowledge of you as a citizen of Western Australia and a member of long standing in this House that you will fill the position with credit to yourself and distinction to the House. I am delighted to be in this Chamber to-night as the representative of a party which stands for all sections of the people of this State. It is from that pedestal I intend to make a few observations upon the political situation as it appeals to me. I wish to make reference to one or two things that have tickled my sense of humour when listening to the speeches that have been delivered on the Address-in-reply. Some members opposite have told us that the Government are in occupation of these benches by virtue of the promises they made at the general elections. I do not think that is so. I feel certain that the writings were on the wall several months before the elections, indicating that the Labour Government was to go out of office. It was not the promises made on the hustings that brought about the change. It was the summing up of the work done by those in office during the preceding years that affected the situation. The people weighed it up in their minds months before the elections and recorded their votes accordingly. As a rule, the electors do not believe the promises made at election time.

Mr. Wilson: They would be fools if they did.

Mr. WELLS: It is a reflection on the good sense of the electors to say that the Government were returned because of the promises made on the hustings.

Mr. Willcock: It is more a reflection on the people who broke their promises.

Mr. WELLS: I have a recollection of a very prominent member who spent thousands of pounds in telling the people of the State that the Collier Government was

the best, but the people did not believe it. They do not pay a great deal of attention to the promises that are made at such times, more particularly when the conditions that exist when such promises are made are afterwards altered in such a complete manner.

Mr. Marshall: The conditions were altered immediately.

Mr. WELLS: It should be the province of every new member, until he finds his feet, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest. If I were compelled to swallow all the vaporings I have heard in this House in the last few days I should have an attack of indigestion.

Hon. P. Collier: You are looking for trouble as a new member if you talk about the vaporings of older members.

Mr. WELLS: That which troubles me more than the speeches of members is the position of the State, the present depression and the financial outlook. One of the great causes of the position is that we are attached to the Federation. In itself Federation is a wonderful ideal and a dream. As Western Australians, however, we are suffering considerably because we are one of the States of the Commonwealth. We have to put up with the extravagance that is going on in the Federal arena where there is so much duplication in departments, high tariffs, bonuses and other things to which we as a small and distant State have to pay our quota. The present Federal system is one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of Western Australia. In our Federation we have attempted to run before we can walk. We were not sufficiently advanced to enter into that great scheme. It would be a good thing if some providential influence came along and put the whole scheme to sleep for 100 years. Probably at the end of that time Western Australia and the smaller States would be in a position to cope with the extravagant demands of the Federal Government. To a large extent, in my opinion, the present position has been brought about by the extravagance of the people of the Commonwealth, including Western Australia. During the last six or seven years we have had a royal spending time. I acknowledge that the Government and the people had one great idea in view, that of making this country one of the best in the world for those dwelling therein. Such an ambition

is laudable. In endeavouring to realise it, however, they have spent millions on extravagance and luxuries. Fine houses have been built, and fine motor cars have been bought. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been sent to America which it would have been far more advantageous to spend in developing our State. The Government have under consideration taxes on some of the things to which I am alluding. In my opinion that is wise. A man who can afford to pay 8s. or 10s. to take himself and his family to the talkies, can spare a shilling or two to meet the necessities of those out of work. The same remark applies to the man who can afford to go to the races or a football match. I am not deprecating sport, but am urging that those who are able to indulge in it should pay their quota towards the support of men out of work.

Mr. Wilson: What about the man who is too mean to spend anything?

Mr. WELLS: We have been proceeding on wrong lines. We have overlooked the fundamental principle that must enter into every undertaking, into the management of a country just as into the management of a blacksmith's shop—the necessity for proceeding on sound business lines. Otherwise such a condition as that in which Western Australia now finds itself becomes inevitable sooner or later. By tribunals we have regulated the hours which men shall work, and the amount of money they shall be paid in return for those hours; but we have forgotten the all-important matter of regulating the amount of work to be given during the hours specified. That is one reason why Western Australia is up against a financial and industrial depression. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) during his speech last night mentioned a promise which he said had been made by me on the hustings at, I think, Como, with regard to the conditions of the workers of this State. I remember being asked only one question in that connection, and that had reference to the 44-hour week. An elector asked me whether I was in favour of reverting to the 48-hour week, and I replied distinctly in the negative, but added that I thought we could reasonably expect to get a little more work done during the 44 hours. The question as quoted by the member for Hannans may have been put to me, and I may

have said that I would not be a party to interfering with the conditions of the workers. If the matter had been mentioned to me, I certainly would have replied that I was not in favour of interfering with those conditions. At the present juncture, however, we are all called upon to make sacrifices more or less. I hold that the sacrifices should be more in the case of the men earning big incomes, and that as the amount of income decreases, the sacrifices should be almost wiped out.

Mr. Marshall: But you have started at the wrong end.

Mr. WELLS: I consider that the man who earns the largest income is the man to be called upon to make the biggest sacrifice.

Hon. P. Collier: But last night you voted for starting on the man at the other end; you started at the bottom.

Mr. WELLS: It is not the policy of the Government to interfere with the conditions of the worker to any extent. When the Budget is brought down we shall learn what the Government intend to do as regards that particular question.

Mr. McCallum: We know already.

Mr. WELLS: Any member on either side of the House would be perfectly justified in making the declarations attributed to me. However, it cannot be denied that since then conditions have altered entirely, that altogether a new set of conditions has arisen, and that those new conditions have to be met in a new way. I am pleased to learn from to-day's newspaper that the reasonable and rational workers of Western Australia are realising that fact. Having listened to one or two speakers last night, I am convinced that the leaders of the workers are out of step with the bulk of the workers in this State. The men themselves realise the extraordinary circumstances, the financial and industrial depression, and are quite prepared to make some sacrifices in order to help in retrieving the State from that situation.

Mr. McCallum: With the sack hanging over every one of them.

Mr. WELLS: No.

Mr. McCallum: Yes. Every one of them is threatened with the sack.

Mr. WELLS: I say they are willing to accept those sacrifices, and I believe the sacrifices are not such as will absolutely im-

poverish. It has been stated that members on this side said the financial depression had largely resulted from the maladministration of the previous Government. I desire to refer to the administration of the previous Government as regards only one department, the railways. The figures published this morning show that during the past year passenger earnings have decreased by £52,000, and goods earnings by £93,000. When motor transport came into being, a few years ago, very little action was taken to prevent it from establishing itself. There was some harassing of the motor people in an endeavour to force them off the road, but no definite steps were taken to counter their competition. If there is opposition to an established business, the first thing its proprietor does is to paint up his windows, brush up his stock, and if necessary reduce prices somewhat, so as to popularise his business in the eyes of customers. The Railway Department should have adopted that course, thereby making the railways more popular. They did almost the opposite. Where four trains were running, one was cut out; and business was simply thrown into the hands of the motor competitors. The same thing applies to motor transport on main roads. Competition has gradually crept in there, and I think the previous Government were lax in not nipping it in the bud.

Mr. McCallum: Do you know how many regulations on that subject your friends in the Upper House disallowed when we tried to control that competition? The Government made the attempt, but the Upper House disallowed the regulations, and some of your friends sitting beside you praised that Chamber for doing so.

Mr. WELLS: Motor traffic on the roads has taken all the plums, leaving the railways to carry huge, cumbersome freights on which there is very little profit. A revision of railway freights and charges is therefore desirable. The service should be popularised with the people of the country districts, so that they would use the railways rather than motor lorries. Take the case of a man at Merredin or Bruce Rock. Suppose he wants a 5-ton truck to convey goods from Fremantle or Perth. He puts in a ton or half a ton of potatoes, half a ton of onions, so much jam, and so much sugar; and each commodity is taken at a different rate. The

potato rate may be 5s. or 10s. per ton. If the consignment includes 14 lbs. of pepper, that will be charged at about 25s. per ton. Country residents would be attracted to the railways if they were allowed to load a five or six-ton truck at a flat rate. If a motor takes a load of goods from the metropolitan area to, say, Merredin, the goods are conveyed at a flat rate. I believe that if the Railway Department would adopt the same system, they would regain a great deal of the business they have lost during the last few years.

Mr. Willecock: Bring everything down and put nothing up!

Mr. WELLS: At present the Railway Department are losing traffic, and consequently have to put men off. It is simply a matter of business; conditions have to be improved in order that trade may be brought back to the Railway Department. Then things will improve all round.

The Minister for Railways: Of course one cannot take a railway truck into a shop.

Mr. WELLS: I agree.

Mr. McCallum: When farmers want super carried, they go to the Railway Department.

Mr. WELLS: Super, unfortunately, appears to be about the only thing the railways are carrying just now. Another matter I desire to mention is the State trading concerns. It is time the Government of Western Australia got rid of those cumbersome undertakings. Two have been mentioned to-night—the Wyndham Meat Works and the State Shipping Service. I suggest that if the Government are hard up for a few thousand pounds to carry on development work, they might well sell the State hotels, for which they would probably get £80,000 or £100,000 in cash. The State hotels are the only trading concern, perhaps, for which cash could be obtained.

Mr. Coverley: What should the Government do with the meat works?

Mr. Marshall: What about the railways? Why not sell them? They are a failing concern in competition with private enterprise.

Mr. WELLS: There are dozens of people who would put money into private enterprise here, but quite naturally they will not invest their capital in competition with concerns run by the State. Such concerns always have the revenue of the State be-

hind them, the poor taxpayer being called upon to make up any deficiency.

Mr. Marshall: That is quite untrue as regards the aggregate.

Mr. WELLS: If we can get rid of the State trading concerns and abolish this unfair competition, we will get enterprising men to open up industries here that will benefit the State far more than the trading concerns possibly could do. The Minister for Railways perhaps knows more about the State trading concerns than anyone else in this Chamber, and he would probably tell us, as we understand it ourselves, that those concerns were principally started for the purpose of reducing the prices of commodities. To a large extent they have not done that at all.

Mr. Marshall: I suggest that you cannot prove that statement.

Mr. WELLS: What about the State Sawmills?

Mr. Marshall: You make rambling statements, without giving any facts!

Mr. WELLS: There are a lot of ramblers in this House. The State Sawmills joined the combine, and up went the price of timber.

Mr. McCallum: How long have the sawmills been in the combine? You are talking of something about which you do not know the facts.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, try some auctioneering down there!

Mr. WELLS: A man would not make much commission out of it if he put you up!

The Minister for Railways: I suppose that is a rambling statement.

Mr. WELLS: I am a new member, and I am not accustomed to these interjections. I am merely giving my views.

Mr. McCallum: Why do you not get the facts before you speak?

Mr. Marshall: One would think you were selling a lot of little toys in a shop.

Mr. WELLS: I have listened to a number of speakers, and not all of them have confined themselves to facts.

Mr. Wilson: Well, why don't you do so?

Mr. WELLS: If the State trading concerns were done away with, it would give private enterprise a chance to step in and carry on more successfully. As a help out of our present difficulties, I appeal to the people to support, in every possible way, the con-

sumption of local products. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) made reference to the Albany Woollen Mills. The difficulty is not so much on account of the price, but arises from the fact that the Albany lines are not stocked. A couple of months ago I visited some shops in the city for the purpose of having a suit made from Albany cloth. One retailer I spoke to did not have a roll in his shop.

Mr. Wansbrough: You give me your order, and I will have it attended to.

Mr. WELLS: I went to another large shop for the same purpose.

The Minister for Mines: Anyhow you would not be able to get it in Albany.

Mr. Wansbrough: Yes, you would.

The Minister for Railways: No fear.

Mr. WELLS: I went to a warehouse and made the same inquiry. The Albany cloth was stocked, but it was hidden away in an obscure corner. In both the retail shops and the warehouse those I spoke to depreciated the local cloth.

Mr. Wansbrough: And 90 per cent. of the people in Perth are wearing it, but do not know it.

Mr. WELLS: I insisted upon getting it and eventually had a suit made from Albany cloth. I am wearing it now, and it will compare favourably with cloth procured in any other part of the world. As citizens of Western Australia, we should insist upon procuring local commodities, and should see to it that the local retail shops and others have supplies available.

Mr. Munsie: We should not have to pay 17s. 6d. a yard for what is sold at 7s. 3d. per yard at the Albany mill.

Mr. WELLS: I am quite aware of that.

The Minister for Railways: At any rate, the money is kept here.

Mr. WELLS: Western Australians should do their utmost to encourage local industry and wherever possible we should insist on procuring local goods. If we could stem the flow of £10,000,000 that goes out of Western Australia to the Eastern States for the purchase of goods manufactured there, it would do a lot to help the unemployed in our midst. I wish to refer to one or two matters of importance to my electorate. On the borders of the Canning electorate there is the Causeway, and something should be done to effect an improvement there at an early date. I realise that the

construction of a new causeway dovetails in with the large reclamation scheme for the river, and perhaps the time is not opportune to ask for the construction of a new causeway. On the other hand, if the present narrow 3ft. pathway used by pedestrians were to be linked up with the roadway by the removal of the railing, and a small footpath built outrigger-fashion at the side for pedestrians, the Causeway would then be much safer for vehicles and for pedestrians as well. Then there is the Canning Weir upon which some hundreds of pounds were spent in order to prevent the tidal waters spreading over the low-lying land. Under existing conditions the salt water percolates through the weir, and the money spent to date has practically been lost. With the expenditure of a few hundred pounds, I believe the weir could be made watertight and then people who own swamp land for summer cultivation could carry on. Last year a number of people had to vacate their blocks because of the inroads of salt water.

Mr. Sampson: That has spoiled a lot of good land.

Mr. WELLS: Yes, and a few hundred pounds would prevent that. Another matter of importance to the people of the Canning electorate is the provision of a ferry boat on the South Perth service. I understand that new engines were landed just recently and if possible the Government should construct an additional ferry boat necessary for the service.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What, continue State trading!

Mr. WELLS: I would prefer to have the boat built by private enterprise and if the ferries were run privately, I think it would be beneficial to the people, and a better service would be provided. Regarding the position confronting the State in general, there is a silver lining to the cloud. Western Australia is in the happy position of being one of the finest States in the Commonwealth. Her mineral wealth is probably as great to-day as it was 25 or 30 years ago, and if a little money were spent on prospecting in the goldfields areas, new fields might be opened up. Then we have hundreds of thousands of acres of fertile land that has merely to be scratched to burst forth into productivity.

Mr. Wilson: Don't you believe it!

Mr. WELLS: If every section of the community were, for the time being at any rate, to sink all party differences and pull together, we would soon be out of our trouble. The old car of State is resting in the rut, and it behoves each one of us to pull together and lift her on to the road again. If we do that, in a few years we shall be on the high road to prosperity, with work for all and a happy, prosperous people.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 9th September, 1930.

		PAGE
Questions: State Saw Mills	unsold timber ...	304
2 Groceries for strikers	...	304
Address-in-reply, ninth day	...	304

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

QUESTIONS (2)—STATE SAWMILLS.

Unsold timber and charges paid.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, In connection with the State Sawmills, what is the quantity of (a) jarrah in loads; (b) karri in loads unsold and/or on consignment in the United Kingdom, India, Ceylon, New Zealand, South Africa and the Eastern States? 2, What amount has been paid on above in railage charges and freights (a) from mills, (b) harbour trust charges, (c) sea freight, (d) handling charges and duty, if any, at destination? 3, Is it a fact that some timber has been in New Zealand unsold for over two years?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied:

(i.) Total consignment stocks—Jarrah, 1,849 loads.
Karri, 1,809 loads.

as under—

	Jarrah.	Karri.
1. United Kingdom ...	40	84
2. India ...	...	...
3. Ceylon ...	979	1,177
4. New Zealand ...	...	...
5. South Africa ...	...	...
6. Eastern States ...	830	548
Total ...	1,849	1,809

	Railage Freight Mills.	Har- bour Trust Charges.	Sea Freight.	Hand- ling Charges.	Duty.
	£	£	£	£	£
1. United Kingdom	250	37	384	165	...
2. India ...	...	...	...	...	...
3. Ceylon ...	3,156	377	4,312	1,887	65
4. New Zealand ...	...	...	...	...	...
5. South Africa ...	...	...	...	...	...
6. Eastern States ...	1,860	241	3,100	1,206	...
	£5,275	655	7,796	3,248	65
Grand Total ...	...	...	£17,632	...	...

(iii.) No. Timber to New Zealand is sold f.o.b.

Groceries for Strikers.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, Did the State Sawmills' stores at Holyoake supply groceries to men on strike at Port's mill during 1929 and 1930? 2, Did the Minister for Works give instructions that these stores were to be supplied? 3, Has payment been received for these stores?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, No. Stores were supplied to Timber Workers' Union 2, No. 3, Yes, promptly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from 4th September.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.36]. In addressing myself to the motion before the Chair I should like to add my felicitations to you, Sir, on having been granted the high honour of being elected a knight of the Empire, an honour which I think all members of the House will agree with me in saying has fallen to one who well deserves the dignity. Since last session we have had elections, and I wish to extend a welcome to the new members and to congratulate