

plications for 30 vacancies in the police force. Over 100 men were written to and asked if they wished to become applicants for the vacancies. For the third time a son of Inspector Johnson was chosen out of 105 candidates. Senator Lynch's son was another, and Dr. D. S. Mackenzie's son was another. The Minister might look into this matter and determine who shall be the selectors for the future. It seems rather queer that these three parents should have such a pull as to ensure 100 per cent. of efficiency for their sons.

Mr. Hegney: They may be efficient.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I say nothing to the contrary; I do not know. The member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) referred to the stacking of rolls. If he infers that some inquiry should be held and a cleaning up take place in the Electoral Department, I am with him. I do not know whether the attempt to disfranchise workers in the country was due to the dictation of the Minister in charge at that time, but I know that if strong pressure had not been brought to bear upon the department, thousands of workers would have been disfranchised so that the Government might retain office. If the hon. member likes to move for an investigation into that department, I will stand behind him. The Government should also inquire into the positions of various heads of departments. Many of these officers will retire on £50 a month. I hope the Government will see that, although these officers may have done excellent service, such huge pensions are not paid in future. We are being taxed to the utmost to relieve the unemployment problem. The Government are responsible for seeing that those who cannot get work in private capacities are afforded the opportunity to get it departmentally. Whilst we are paying out huge sums to provide work for the unemployed, we are also finding money for big pensions, and keeping dozens of other men out of work. I hope the Premier will see that something is done in this matter. Showers of congratulations would fall upon him if he were to sack Mr. Shapecott on the spot.

The Premier: Incidentally, I have no power to sack anyone.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I wish the Premier had, although I know it is a difficult matter. I wish to say a few words about the dental treatment of children. Dentists have been

given the protection of the law and a board. That board has the right to charge fees and collect moneys for registration. It receives two guineas a year from every registered dentist. That is a source of revenue which could be taxed by the Government. Instead of the fees being paid to the board, they should go into Consolidated Revenue. I hope the Minister for Health will increase the number of dentists now attending school children. In thousands of cases parents cannot afford to provide the necessary dental treatment for their children, and the Dental Hospital cannot or will not cope with the work. Less money ought to be paid to the Dental Hospital in subsidies, and more should be paid in the salaries of dentists who would be under the control of the Minister, so that the mouths of the children may be kept in a healthy condition. I wish the Government every success during their term of office, and you, Sir, a happy time as Speaker.

On motion by Mr. Wilson. debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 2nd August, 1933.*

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

**RESOLUTION—CONDOLENCE.***Letter in reply.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the widow of the late Mr. H. J. Brown the following acknowledgment in respect of the resolution of condolence forwarded by me on behalf of hon. members:—

I wish to express my sincere thanks for the kindly remarks made in the House in reference to my late husband. My daughters and I appreciate them, and we are pleased to think he was so respected by his fellow-members. I remain, Yours sincerely, (signed) S. E. Brown.

**QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.***Perth and Subiaco.*

Mr. MOLONEY asked the Premier: 1, Will he agree to a review of the agreement existing between the Government and the City of Perth for supply of electric current, so that the Government may enjoy the considerable revenue derived from such supply? 2, If not prepared to review the agreement wholly, would he be prepared to review it in part, so that the municipality of Subiaco may enjoy the same terms of supply as obtain in the City of Perth?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The agreement is between two parties, and it would be necessary for both parties to agree to a review, unless legislation were passed to deal with the whole matter.

**QUESTION—COLLIE COAL.***Royal Commission's Final Report.*

Mr. LATHAM asked the Premier: Will he make available to the House Dr. Herman's final report on the Collie coal industry?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

**QUESTION—CAUSEWAY RECLAMATION.**

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Works: 1, How many men are employed on the suction dredge at the Causeway? 2, How many men are on the basic wage? 3, How many men are above the basic wage, and what are their daily rates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Four men. 2, Nil. 3, Four men—two at 20s. 4d., and 2 at 17s.

**QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE.***North Cottesloe and Claremont.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Water Supply: 1, Is any action possible to rectify the scarcity and discolouration of water in portions of North Cottesloe? 2, Is it his intention to provide deep sewerage in the Claremont electorate?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: 1, Yes; action is being taken. 2, Arrangements have been made for the local authority to discuss proposals with the Minister.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE.**

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for one month granted to Mr. J. MacCallum Smith (North Perth) on the ground of ill-health.

**ADDRESS-IN REPLY***Eighth Day, Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [4.38]: It was not my intention to take part in this debate, as I consider it a waste of time; and in view of the great necessity for the Government to place their policy before the country, I desired to interpose no obstacle. However, since the debate began, various indications of the Government's policy have been given; and consequently I take the opportunity of bringing one or two matters under the notice of Ministers. I wish also to record my hope that this will be the last occasion when a debate on the Address-in-reply will take place. Alternatively, if such a debate is necessary, then I respectfully suggest that in future it should be confined to the Leaders of the various parties, so that the country's business may be proceeded with as soon as possible. Before offering what few remarks I have to make, I wish to join with other members in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on the high position in which the House has placed you. I have particular pleasure in offering my congratulations, by reason of the fact that you, Sir, are a returned soldier. If during the course of my Parliamentary career, be it long or short, I should infringe the rules of debate, then I sincerely hope

that you will look with a lenient eye upon my transgression. It appears from previous speeches that on an occasion of this kind members air the grievances of their particular electorates. The point I specially desire to refer to is the parlous condition of the primary industries. I hope that in the near future the Government will take some action to alleviate the great troubles which weigh upon those industries. Mention has been made of the unemployment difficulty, and the urgent need for relieving that situation. While not wishing to minimise in any way the greatness of that trouble, I yet hold that the speediest remedy is to remove the difficulties of the primary producers. Unemployment, I submit, will disappear if the primary industries can be placed upon a paying basis. In drawing attention to the state of the primary industries, and in urging measures for their relief, I do not wish to reflect in any way upon the administration of the late Government. They came into office three years ago, and had to face a situation such as had not had to be faced in the past history of the country. In fact, they had to make legislative history; and I think they did make it. During this period of depression, however, it is from time to time necessary to supplement the legislation originally passed by the late Government, in order to carry the country on a little further. I believe there is need for the passing of legislation of that nature by the present Government, in order to supplement legislation of the kind introduced by their predecessors with a view to enabling our industries to continue. While I owe allegiance to the Country Party, the present Government, if they introduce such legislation, will have my hearty support—always assuming that such legislation will, in my judgment, be for the benefit of the primary industries. I am not hinting that I shall refrain from exercising to the full whatever little abilities I may possess in criticising the measures brought down; but my criticism will, I hope, never be of a carping nature, but constructive criticism, and such as may assist the Government to carry out their duties. In passing, may I congratulate the Government on their accession to office, and may I assure Ministers that if I can render any such assistance as I have indicated I shall place the good of the State before any mere party advantage.

In fact, I do not hold with party government. I think that is one of those things which might well be relegated, with the Address-in-reply debate, to the limbo of Parliamentary practice. However, while we have party government we must, I suppose, put up with it. At the present juncture I do not propose to set about the abolition of party government; I merely express the hope that the time is not far distant when it will be done away with and when measures will be considered solely from the aspect of the country's well-being. When learning of the intention of the Minister for Employment to inaugurate an Economic Council, I was hopeful that the hon. gentleman had in mind something of the nature of what was in my mind—the calling of a conference to evolve a plan for the rehabilitation of the primary industries. Hon. members will recollect that, as mentioned by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), when Australia encountered the depression, the first thing that happened was that the various State Premiers and a Commonwealth representative met and agreed upon a plan which became known as the Premiers' Plan. Whether that was a good plan or a bad plan I am not concerned with at the moment: but the fact is that when the State Premiers and the Commonwealth Government found themselves in this difficulty, they considered that in order to get out of it a plan was necessary. I consider, similarly, that a set plan is necessary in order to get the primary industries out of their difficulty; and in my opinion the only method by which such a plan can be achieved is to call together all the interests directly connected with those industries—public and private financiers, manufacturers, merchants and so forth, and also representatives of the primary producers—and to let that conference evolve some plan: the putting of such plan into effect to be the duty of the Government.

The Minister for Employment: The primary industries have full representation on the Economic Council.

Mr. SEWARD: That is so; but I understand that the work of the Economic Council is more related to unemployment.

The Minister for Employment: It relates to industry generally.

Mr. SEWARD: Yes; but I cannot possibly see the Economic Council, as at present constituted, successfully evolving a plan for the carrying-on of the primary industries, the representatives of those industries on that body being so hopelessly outnumbered. The primary industries are confronted with grave difficulties that should be surmounted. In my opinion, if the wheatgrowers should not have a majority on a body to investigate the question of the rehabilitation of the industry, they should at least have a very large proportion of the representation.

The Minister for Employment: And they have it. On the Economic Council there are representatives of the pastoralists, of the mining companies, who are concerned with primary industry too, and there is representation for the Primary Producers' Association as well. Already there is adequate representation.

Mr. SEWARD: That is true, but it does not appeal to me, because it does not follow that the interests of a pastoralist are the same as those of a farmer.

The Minister for Employment: They are both concerned with primary industries.

Mr. SEWARD: And so are the mining companies, but they are not vitally concerned with the rehabilitation of the wheat farming industry, which is the one of which I am speaking. Most members are conversant with the conditions of that industry at present. Should there be some who have not that close acquaintance with the difficulties of the farmers, I would emphasise the fact that at present they are merely carrying on. It may be asked whether, seeing that the farmers are carrying on, there is need for any further action. For the past three years the farmers have been carried on, but the question arises as to how long that position will be continued. Their ambition and energy is being sapped that they will find it difficult to continue much longer. A farmer works from before daylight until after dark, and the only prospect he can see is one of hopeless ruin. The farmers to-day are so submerged by their load of debt that they know they are carried only by the grace of the banks and their creditors. If the price of wheat were to rise to 5s. a bushel and to remain at that figure for as long as most of the farmers

will, in all probability, live, the great majority of them would even then have no possible hope of paying off their liabilities. That will emphasise the necessity for some plan being evolved to make it possible for those farmers to have before them the prospect of conducting their activities to a successful issue. Many of the farmers are carried on by the banks and I pay a tribute to those institutions for the work they have carried out during the years of crisis. I have noticed, particularly during the course of the present debate, that the practice seems to be to blame the banks adversely and to hope for a restriction of their powers in the near future. I disagree with that attitude altogether. If any member doubts the effectiveness of the work of the banks, he has merely to inspect the returns covering the last three years and to pay particular attention to the ratio the advances bear to deposits, to appreciate how the banks have assisted the agricultural industry during the crisis. That clearly indicates that those in charge of our banks have profited from the lesson learnt in 1893, and have built up the resources of their institutions, with the result that, in years of adversity, there has not been the number of crashes that we have read of regarding the banks in foreign countries during the depression period. All through that time, the banks of Australia have been able to carry on efficiently. Consequently, we have much to be thankful for regarding the banking system as we know it in the Commonwealth. I trust that the Government will take action along the lines I suggest and that a plan will be evolved that will enable those engaged in the farming industry to entertain a reasonable hope of making good. During the past few months I have noted that a large proportion of the farmers are in a most despondent mood. Most of them do not know how long they will be able to continue on their holdings, and they are not able to contemplate further improvements or additional activities with equanimity. This great uncertainty that is hanging over their heads is sapping their energy. There are many elements that enter into the position but let me mention one only—obsolescent machinery. The farmers have been able to carry on with their old plant, but the time is rapidly approaching when the machinery will have to be replaced. If

that has to be done at current prices, many of the farmers will be put out of action because they will not be able to shoulder the financial burden. There are two other adverse factors to which I shall refer. I know the Minister for Agriculture views sympathetically the difficulties of the farmers and will administer his department accordingly. One of the matters refers to the rabbit invasion and the other relates to the ravages of the red mite and the lucerne flea. We cannot over-estimate the depredations of these pests. In my district there is practically no feed at all, and some farmers are contemplating putting their ewes and lambs on to the crops in order to save the stock. The reason for that is that there is no feed available for them. The rabbits, the lucerne flea and the red mite prefer the best of whatever feed is available. In many districts to-day are to be seen only native grasses and sour feed that the pests will not eat, and that is what is left for the sheep to live on. As soon as one mentions the rabbit invasion, the remedy is advanced by the suggestion that the farmers will have to erect wire-netting fences. That work can be undertaken easily in some parts of the State, but in other parts, and particularly in the Great Southern areas, the position is not so simple, because of the creeks and rocky outcrops that abound. Certainly the creeks are small, but in winter they average from 15 to 20 yards in width. They pursue a circuitous route and in many instances cross and re-cross a boundary fence many times in comparatively short distances. Where the fences cross the creeks, the farmers would be required to effect repairs practically each year because of the effect of storm water. That in itself would cost a lot of money. Many of the rocky outcrops are from 10 to 50 yards in length and it is difficult to erect a wire fence in such places so as to keep out the rabbits effectively. It is well known that the rabbits progress along the banks of creeks. They advance from the east and the further they progress to the westward, the more apparent is the trouble along the banks of the creeks. There is one aspect regarding the erection of wire netting fences that is seldom mentioned and I am afraid many farmers will make a big mistake unless a definite stand is taken in the matter I have in mind. The erection of the fences is a costly work. When the rabbits first made

their appearance in Gippsland, wire netting fences could be erected at from £30 to £35 a mile. At present the cost would be from £70 to £80 a mile, and I know of one man who is erecting a fence to-day at the cost of £90 per mile. The point I want to make is that many farmers are erecting their fences with wire of a mesh of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Such a fence will not be rabbit-proof. The mesh should be not greater than  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Mr. Ferguson: Can a rabbit that can get through  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh wire, live away from its mother?

Mr. SEWARD: Yes. When I was in charge of a branch bank in Victoria some years ago, the farmers consulted me about this question. Some of them erected fences with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh wire, while others chose the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch mesh. In the part of Victoria I refer to, the maximum area of a holding was 100 acres, while most of them were of 40 acres. The men who fenced with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh wire quickly discovered rabbits in their property and had great difficulty in dealing with the pest. It will be seen that I know what I am talking about when I say that rabbits can get through a wire fence if  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh is used. In this State, where we have holdings of 1,000 acres or more, it will not be an easy matter to deal with the pest once the fence is erected and the rabbits are found inside. In fact, the farmer who erects a fence with the larger mesh will be no better off. This matter should be investigated and the farming community should be advised as to the result. With reference to the red mite and the lucerne flea, obviously it is impossible to combat the pest by means of fencing. They can be dealt with only by the aid of science. Fortunately, there is in existence the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, with money and officers at their disposal. The council are willing to co-operate with the State Agricultural Department and I hope advantage will be taken of that fact. One of the council's officers should be invited to conduct an investigation in this State, and, if possible, he should devote his full time to the work, so that his inquiries may be carried out thoroughly. By that means some parasite might be discovered, or some other means evolved of dealing with the two pests. During a visit to the south-eastern portions of the Wagin and Pingelly electorates, I was informed that many farmers could not carry more than 75 per cent. of the stock that had been depastured a few years previously. From my own

experience, I know that to be the position. In many instances the difficulty is not due to the depredations of rabbits but to the ravages of the lucerne flea and the red mite. The position is serious, and I hope the Agricultural Department will co-operate with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in an effort to eradicate the pests. I have already indicated that I would welcome the elimination of the Address-in-reply, and I do not desire to speak at any great length on this occasion, more particularly as I understand there will be another opportunity to bring forward any matters we desire when the Estimates are before us. There is another question I will deal with; it was mentioned by the member for Northam (Mr. Hawke). I refer to the overlapping of the Commonwealth and State Electoral Departments. I trust that before the next election is held, the Government will take steps to prevent the duplication of elections, particularly where the Legislative Council is concerned. I believe that if steps were taken in that direction, it would mean that the Constitution would have to be amended. Even so, that would be a measure of reform if it would mean that when next two elections are to be held in one year, they could be held on the one day. Recently the Legislative Council elections were held in May and the Legislative Assembly elections in April. The cost of the two elections was £13,000. The cost of the election this year was £8,000, of which £2,000 was attributable to the secession referendum. So it may safely be said that having the two elections on different days, doubles the cost. At a time like this, when economy is so necessary, I commend this very valuable reform to the Government. Another matter relating to the Electoral Department which I will touch upon is the duplication of rolls. In the redistribution of seats a few years ago the boundaries of the various electorates were altered, that of Pingelly amongst others. So when, during the recent election campaign, I came anywhere near the boundaries of my electorate, I found that the names of electors who had been transferred from the Beverley electorate to that of Pingelly had been in some instances taken off the Federal roll, not through any fault of the electors themselves, but because in the opinion of the Federal Electoral Department they had changed their addresses, and so had to be struck off the roll. On the

other hand, I found that some names had been removed from the State roll. Since then we have had a flood of blue papers from the Electoral Department addressed to the unfortunate settlers, notifying them that they were to sign the papers and be fined 10s., or alternatively neglect to sign and be fined £2. So I say it is necessary that we should have the two Electoral Departments amalgamated, and the two rolls amalgamated also. In my opinion there should be but one card for the elector to fill in, and when he has filled it in, the Electoral Department should enter his name on both rolls. That would save an enormous amount of trouble to the unfortunate elector, who to-day has to go to two different officials to get his cards. Moreover, the person from whom the elector gets his first card does not always tell him that he must go to another official for the second card. As a consequence it quite frequently happens that he receives a notification from the Commonwealth authorities to the effect that he is fined for not being on their roll. In the other States I believe the two rolls are amalgamated, Western Australia being the only State having separate rolls. I urge the Government to see if this amalgamation cannot be effected here, and so avoid the existing duplication.

The Minister for Justice: If you can get the Country Party in another place to agree to that, we will put it through this year.

Mr. SEWARD: I should think they would readily agree to it. I hope the Government will try, for I think they will find the Country Party will be only too pleased to have it done.

The Minister for Justice: It has been tried three times during the past five or six years.

Mr. SEWARD: I am afraid that when those attempts were made there was something more than merely the amalgamation of the rolls attempted.

The Minister for Justice: No, not a single word.

Mr. SEWARD: Well, if I have any influence with those in another place, I can assure the Minister of my support for that reform. I thank members for the attentive hearing they have given me.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.4]: I wish to associate myself with the congratulatory remarks made by previous speakers concerning new members

of this House. We have quite a considerable number of men who have come here for the first time, and I am glad also to note that they are young men. From my years of observation, I can honestly say, judging from the speeches that have already been delivered by those new members, that they rank very high, and I am quite certain there is a future in the public life of the State for many of the younger members of this House. Whilst I would go just as far as anybody else in my desire to congratulate youth, members not only young as members, but young also in years, I do not altogether subscribe to the idea, which seems to be prevalent at present, that all the wisdom lies with youth, that the future salvation of the race and the nation lies with youth, and that all or most old men are fools. I do not agree with any slapdash kind of criticism that would point to the position of our boys and girls just leaving school and not wanted, as it were, with no opening or opportunity, and draw from that fact the deduction that the position as we find it is due to old men who have been in control of government. There has not, so far as my reading of history goes, been any period when it could safely be said that any country or Government was ruled by old men. When we look around to-day in Australia it may be we shall find that old men are in positions of power in the various Governments; but they could not be there were it not for the fact that they were elected by young men, young people. Any attempt to draw a line that would give to the people of the country the idea that the present troubles are due to government by men of old age, as against younger men, would be entirely wrong. The position we are faced with in this State to-day, as in every other part of the world, is not the result of government either by young men or by old men, but is the result of government on entirely wrong lines, and in that respect men and women of all ages have participated. As an Australian, I may be permitted to offer a few remarks with regard to ourselves. Whilst I would yield to no one in my admiration of the splendid qualities possessed by the Australian, qualities which I scarcely need indicate, for they are well known to all of us,—initiative, enterprise, daring, courage, dash, imagination—all these fortunately belong to our people as Australians. Let us not close our eyes to the fact that there is another side to the page. We are not 100 per cent. perfect. We have defects, perhaps

the defects of our qualities. If we turn around and consider what are the defects of the Australian character, I should say the outstanding defect is an excessive love of sport, not for the sake of sport, but for the gambling opportunities it provides. In no other country in the world, so far as I know, is there such a degree or desire or love of gambling as there is in the Australian character. I mention this because I think it is well that we should see the other side of the picture. Love of sport, yes; as one who took part in a certain sport in my youth, that of cricket, I welcome the fact that our boys and girls are taking part in large measure in outdoor sport, which our climate encourages them to do; but I am not a lover of a so-called sport at which 40,000 or 50,000 people gather together on a Saturday afternoon and roar themselves hoarse in barracking for Tom This, or Bill That on a football field, where there are only 36 men taking part: rather would I prefer to see a much smaller crowd of a few thousands looking on and 30,000 or 40,000 people taking part in some kind of outdoor exercise for themselves and for their own benefit. My travels, not only in Australia but in other parts of the world, have led me to the conclusion that people nowhere, no race I have any knowledge of, is so given to an excessive love of gambling as is the Australian race. Men who for 20 or 30 years have been employed in good positions on full-time wages, and reasonably good wages and salaries—this applies also to men in commerce and business—at the end of the first week they find themselves out of occupation they are looking for some kind of assistance from somebody or other. So, expressing my own opinion and only my own, I say there is that weak spot in the Australian character—an excessive love of sport. If the older men have been governing the Australian States, why is it? It is because the younger men of the present generation have come into a life that afforded them opportunities for leisure and enjoyment which they themselves did not earn and which they themselves played no part in securing. While the serious matters of life, particularly the government of the country, have been left to the older men, the explanation is that the younger men have been absorbed in or obsessed with a desire for pleasure, luxury and ease. If we go to our libraries or to meeting halls where thoughtful addresses may be delivered, we

find them comparatively empty while, at the same time, all the roads that lead to jazz halls and picture shows are crowded and congested with the youth of the country. My statement seems to be pretty hard, but it is true.

Mr. Stubbs: Perfectly true.

Mr. Wansbrough: Only too true.

The PREMIER: I do not blame the youth. They are simply the victims of the environment of the age and generation in which they were born and are living. Just as in older times the youth have done extraordinary or unwise things, so are the youth of to-day doing things according to the environment in which they find themselves. Let us once and for all get rid of the idea that old men have brought about the state of affairs that exist in the world to-day. I could, if I cared, have recourse to history to show that most of the great things in the way of reform done in the world have been initiated and carried through by old men. To mention only one, I would take Gladstone, who entered Parliament at the age of 22 as a most pronounced Conservative. In his youth and during the earlier years of his membership of the British Parliament he was a pronounced Tory. I think the first vote he ever gave, if not the first speech he ever made, was in opposition to the abolition of slavery. His father and his relatives were interested in slavery in the West Indies, and Gladstone entered Parliament as a pronounced supporter of slavery: It was not until he reached the age of 68, notwithstanding his outstanding ability, that he became Prime Minister of Great Britain. From that time until he retired or resigned the Prime Ministership at the age of 84 were the fruitful years of that great man's life. What did he do in those years? His youthful thoughts were entirely abandoned and the mellowing influence of years taught him to see things in a different light. So it is quite a wrong deduction to draw that, with advancing years, men become Conservative and Tory and that all the radical brightness belongs to youth. History shows that the very opposite has been the fact. I desire to reciprocate the spirit of the offer made by the Leader of the Opposition to assist and co-operate with the Government wherever possible. From my experience of him as a member of this House for some years, I am quite

sure that his words were sincere and that anything he can reasonably do, consistent with his party and policy, to assist and co-operate with the Government will be done. I do not agree with the hon. member when he criticised the appointment of the council appointed by my colleague, the Minister for Employment, and contended that it was merely duplicating something already in existence and might perhaps have the object of side-stepping responsibility. What objection can there be to the appointment of such a council? All that has been done is to call into consultation members of all kinds of organisations, not with any power to decide what shall be done, but with the desire that they should, by advice and by the special knowledge that they possess, be of assistance to the State. The object is to utilise their advice and knowledge in the interests of the State. There can be no side-stepping of responsibility there. It is merely harnessing an influence that exists in the State—an influence that I think can be harnessed for the benefit of the people. I am quite certain that in the hands of the Minister for Employment the advice thought and assistance of the members of the council will be of very great value to the State.

Mr. Latham: They might make plenty of recommendations for the spending of money which you will not be able to find.

The PREMIER: We shall not be compelled to find the money. They will also be able to make recommendations as to how money might be spent without increasing the volume of expenditure. Will the hon. member suggest that the prominent men and women who have decided to give their time to this work are concerned only about making proposals for the expenditure of money? Most of them, especially those who are taking a very active part in the work, are patriotic citizens of the State. They will give of their very best, not only in thought, but also in time and energy, to help, not the present Government particularly, but the State in so far as it may lie in their power to help to overcome the difficulties with which we are confronted. I would not suggest that there was a thought in the mind of any one of those men or women other than for the welfare of the State. The Leader of all that was left of them—I shall not say the ragged remnant—

Hon. N. Keenan: Say what you like.



The PREMIER: I certainly shall, and before I sit down, I shall say something that will not be altogether likeable to the hon. member—

Hon. N. Keenan: I have no doubt.

The PREMIER: —knowing me as the hon. member does, and knowing the hon. member as I do. The hon. member offered his co-operation. He said that if I would take him into my confidence with regard to the business before the House, he would be willing to co-operate with the Government. The hon. member will be taken into my confidence just to the same extent as, and no more than, any other member of the House.

Hon. N. Keenan: I ask no more.

The PREMIER: Then the hon. member will not be disappointed. The co-operation of the hon. member! I have had the privilege, or shall I say the advantage, of having known the Leader of the Nationalist Party politically for the past 27 years, and for the hon. member to speak of co-operating with an opposition seems to me to be something in the nature of a joke. The hon. member has never in his life been able to co-operate with any human being. I remember well when he took office as Attorney General in the Moore Government in 1906. He remained a member of the Government for three years.

Hon. N. Keenan: Four.

The PREMIER: Three years. I shall give the hon. member the dates if he so desires. I have reason to remember them.

Hon. N. Keenan: The Moore Government began in 1905.

The PREMIER: The Moore Government came into office in 1906. My memory is better than that of the hon. member. I entered the House on the same day as the hon. member, the 27th October, 1905. It was in 1906 that the Rason Government resigned and the Moore Government took their place. In that Government the hon. member was Attorney General.

Mr. Latham: It was the 27th October, 1905.

The PREMIER: During those years it was evident to those who were sitting then in Opposition that the hon. member, after a year or two in office, was very displeased and dissatisfied with his colleagues. His dissatisfaction increased with the passing of

the months, until six months before his resignation it was transparent to every member of the House. Everyone who was in touch with the political affairs of that time knew that the hon. member was out of step with the Government, or, as he would prefer to put it, that his colleagues were out of step with him. His dissatisfaction was increasing week by week and month by month. His displeasure with the Government did, however, enable him to remain a member of Cabinet until a date exactly three years from the date when he took office. A man of the ordinary standard would have, in the circumstances, resigned from the Government six months before. This hon. member, however, carried on until a date exactly three years from the date when he was elected, and that entitled him to a gold pass over the railways of Australia for the rest of his life.

Hon. N. Keenan: Was that the reason?

The PREMIER: In my opinion it was the reason.

Hon. N. Keenan: That I resigned office for a gold pass?

The PREMIER: No, that the hon. member hung on to office for a gold pass. He hung on until he was entitled to get a gold pass for life on the railways of Australia.

Hon. N. Keenan: How much longer could I have retained office had I desired to do so? The Government lasted three more years.

The PREMIER: It did not.

Hon. N. Keenan: Something like that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member could have hung on if he had been content to submerge his dissatisfaction and displeasure with the Government.

Hon. N. Keenan: Yes.

The PREMIER: An honourable man would have resigned 12 months before the hon. member did.

Hon. N. Keenan: For what reason?

The PREMIER: For the reason I have given.

Hon. N. Keenan: For what reason you actually know of?

The PREMIER: I know of this reason. It is a strange coincidence that the date when the hon. member found he could no longer be associated with his colleagues was the actual day and date when he became entitled to this gold pass.

Hon. N. Keenan: How much longer could I have remained in office; three years longer?

The PREMIER: The hon. member could have done so.

Hon. N. Keenan: I was still in office, and the Government were re-elected.

The PREMIER: Why did the hon. member hold on up to this date? He has been mean enough to ascribe to me meanness of action in connection with the recent elections.

Hon. N. Keenan: I have ascribed to the Premier—

The PREMIER: I am going to deal fully with this later on. The hon. member for the first time in the history of this Chamber over the last 15 years gave voice to wretched party politics and partisanship, and to bitter unscrupulous partisan statements. I suppose he may be excused for trying to make up for the loss of prestige that his party is now suffering, by endeavouring to make a bitter political partisan speech during the opening days of this Parliament. He did what I have never known the Leader of any party in this House to do, in all my long experience. He began his speech by offering congratulations to the new member who had moved the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, and then with a rasping, venomous tongue, later on used his sarcasm upon that hon. member.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is not true.

The PREMIER: It is true.

Hon. N. Keenan: True in your opinion.

The PREMIER: Every man who has been a member of this House for a number of years knows it is the most difficult task a new member has to undertake in the opening of a new Parliament, when he moves the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. In all my experience I have never known a member to acquit himself better than did the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin). The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) was, however, mean enough first of all to offer words of congratulation, and then to put in his rasping sarcastic comments.

Hon. N. Keenan: Not half so rasping as your own.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member felt he could not offer congratulations to a new member, and leave things at that, he should not have mentioned him. At no time in my

experience as a private member or as Leader of a party, has the Leader of a so-called party—a wretched party—ever descended to the depths of using his clever sarcastic tongue upon a new member of the House. That is what the member for Nedlands did.

Mr. Hawke: He certainly hit him below the belt.

The PREMIER: Only such an one as the hon. member could do that. Whatever faults there may have been in the speech of a new member, it has been traditionally agreed that at least his first speech should be free from comment, more particularly free from wretched sarcastic comments such as were employed by the member for Nedlands.

Hon. N. Keenan: Will the Premier give one sentence from my speech to justify that absurd statement?

The PREMIER: I heard it, and listened to it.

Hon. N. Keenan: You are romancing.

The PREMIER: And I have read it, too.

Hon. N. Keenan: Read one sentence that would justify your statement.

The PREMIER: I listened to it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the Premier address the Chair.

The PREMIER: It is not so much what is contained in the words, but members who listened to this speech know what I mean. They are not so much concerned about the words which appear in "Hansard," but about the sarcastic manner in which they were uttered. The hon. member was also good enough to deal with promises I am supposed to have made. He declared that I had made specious promises and all kinds of promises. He was not able to quote definitely the exact words I used, but the charge he made against me was founded on the inference he drew from my words.

Hon. N. Keenan: Inferences that anyone would draw.

The PREMIER: Inferences that anyone, who has been paid all his life to plead all kinds of inferences, would draw, but not the inferences that any reasonable common-sense man would attempt to draw. They were inferences that it suited the purpose of the hon. member to draw. He made a personal attack upon me. He said the "very worst form of promise, the meanest form of promise." I remember how he laid

stress upon the words "meanest form of promise." He said the "meanest form of promise is the one that is not explicit, that is meant to be understood." The hon. member accused me of not only making political promises, but a mean form of promise. I was speaking for my party on that occasion, but nevertheless I was a mean man who made mean promises.

Hon. N. Keenan: The Premier knows that I was making a comparison of the expressions and showing they had two meanings.

The PREMIER: There was not a word of truth in the inference the hon. member drew. It was not a comparison with expenditure.

Hon. N. Keenan: I said a comparison of expressions that were capable of two meanings. I was not talking about expenditure.

The PREMIER: According to the hon. member I am the kind of man who would adopt a mean kind of expression, would make mean promises. My standing and political reputation will compare with his. I will leave it to the House and to the people who know me to say whether I would deliberately do a mean thing in connection with any election. The hon. member charges me with having made all kinds of promises. There is not a word of truth in or foundation for the allegation that I made reckless promises, that I promised any of the things the hon. member likes to infer from what I did say.

Hon. N. Keenan: Does the Premier say his remarks were not capable of carrying a double meaning?

The PREMIER: I said what I did say. I did not say one word that would justify the inference the hon. member has chosen to draw from what I did say.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is this newspaper report accurate?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is it?

The PREMIER: Yes. The hon. member charges me with having made all kinds of promises. In effect, he said that we are now on this side of the House, because of the promises we made to the electors, the absurd promises that we made! But from the paper from which he quoted he preferred to take only the headlines, not what I did say.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is the second speech.

The PREMIER: I am referring to the second speech. He accepts that as proof that I did make promises. But let me read to him what the same newspaper said with regard to my speech. I intend to quote from the leading article of the newspaper, not from any headline or sub-headline over the report—

The best feature of Mr. Collier's policy speech is that, with a becoming sense of responsibility, it makes few promises, and those few are of small importance.

That was the comment in the leading article of the "West Australian" following the policy speech that I delivered. It declared that I made few promises and that those I did make were of small importance. Compare that responsible opinion, expressed in a responsible journal, with the irresponsible party bitterness expressed by the hon. member in his speech. He accused me of throwing promises all around the country, and winning votes here, there and everywhere for having made those promises. Yet we find the newspaper remarking that a feature of my speech was that there were no promises of importance.

Hon. N. Keenan: Wholly inaccurate.

The PREMIER: I shall deal a little later with what the hon. member said about that; I have not nearly finished with him yet.

Hon. N. Keenan: It is inaccurate. Did you say—

The PREMIER: I did say what I did say.

Hon. N. Keenan: What was in the newspaper?

The PREMIER: What the hon. member said might well be worthy of a pettifogging lawyer trying to bamboozle some country justice of the peace.

Mr. Latham: Why country justices?

The PREMIER: Yokels, he calls them, "your country yokels." The "West Australian" newspaper further said, in a leading article after the election—

They (the Government) have not been unreasonably profuse with their promises. It is a healthy indication of political responsibility.

So I leave it to the judgment of the people to say whether the wretched statement of the hon. member is more reliable than the matured opinion expressed in the leading article of the "West Australian." A great point the hon. member made with regard to my policy speech was in respect of wage reduction as embodied in what is known as

the Premiers' Plan, and he accused me of absolutely misleading the people in connection with the policy of the previous Government in that direction. I said in my platform speeches, as I said in this House, and as every member of this party then sitting in Opposition said, not once but a hundred times, that the previous Government was the only Government in Australia that submitted, under the Premiers' Plan, legislation to reduce the wages of those engaged in private employment. That was not new. The statement was made in this House and from the front Opposition benches a score of times, and never denied by the Premier of the day or by the Minister who was then in charge of the Bill, nor was it denied by the hon. member himself, because it could not be denied.

Hon. N. Keenan: There was the statement made in Boulder.

The PREMIER: It was the statement made on the floor of the House, a statement made a hundred times by members now on this side of the House, that the previous Government was the only Government in Australia that had introduced legislation for the purpose of reducing the wages of those in private employment, and were thus over-riding the arbitration laws of the State. Of course we knew that every Government had introduced legislation dealing with those who were engaged in the public service. That was well known to everyone. The point I made at my meeting, and every one of our candidates made it, was that the then Government was the only Government that had attempted to interfere with the wages of those in private employment.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is that the meaning of it?

The PREMIER: The hon. member had ample opportunity of denying it on the floor of the House, but characteristically he sat silent during those days and months of discussion.

Hon. N. Keenan: Discussing what?

The PREMIER: No doubt he held a gloved hand towards his Leader with a dagger behind his back. He talked about emergency clauses and said I condemned the late Government for reducing salaries. Then he went on to draw his own inference. "Surely," he said, "it was a promise that if his party were returned to power, the financial emergency clauses would be re-

stored." That is an inference again. I made no such promise. What I did say and what every member of the party said was that the policy of the previous Government with regard to wages cuts was not justified. We gave our reasons for saying so, and of course we would not be a party to re-enacting anything of that kind. Then with regard to taxation relief the hon. member criticised my policy speech for having drawn attention to the fact that the previous Government had increased many items of taxation. He quoted the income tax dividend duties, hospital tax, the duty on cheques, the increased tax on entertainments and the totalisator tax, and because I drew attention to the manner in which taxation had been increased, that becomes a ground of complaint. Would he have the Opposition go to the people and tell them lies, tell them that there was no increase in this, or that or the other tax? Whatever I said with regard to increased taxation was founded on fact.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is correct.

The PREMIER: Well, what objection has the hon. member to it?

Hon. N. Keenan: The Premier said—

The PREMIER: I said no such thing.

Hon. N. Keenan: Let me read the sentence.

The PREMIER: You may not read it.

Hon. N. Keenan: It can be explained.

The PREMIER: The hon. member cannot explain his attitude after having complained in this House that I told the people that certain taxes had been increased. Of course I told the people that. I did so because I was speaking the truth and I was justified in saying what I did.

Hon. N. Keenan: I concede that.

The PREMIER: Of course, but the hon. member draws his own deductions and says that because I spoke of the increase of taxation, the inference was that I would reduce the taxation. The peculiar mind of a peculiar man! He draws this deduction.

Hon. N. Keenan: Read the sentence.

The PREMIER: I have read it; I know it. I told the people the truth. The hon. member was not game to do that prior to the elections; he shirked his job when he slunk around the suburbs of the city making his policy speech, or the speech that was published as being a record of his policy, and in which there was not one word mentioned of the matters he now complains

about. It was a speech of generalities without any reference to those questions he now says are of so much importance to the State—not a word. He has the temerity to say that he never mentioned secession in his electorate.

Mr. Hawke: He never mentioned anything else.

The PREMIER: Not inside the boundaries of his electorate. Does the hon. member imagine that that kind of sophistry will go down with members of this House, that because within the boundaries of his electorate he never dealt with secession, but that outside of the boundaries—and only a few hundred yards outside—he was the great know-all and be-all of the whole movement. Of course what he said in the Perth Town Hall on the secession question was said just outside the boundaries of his electorate! Naturally, what he said would not find its way into his electorate!

Hon. N. Keenan: Do you object?

The PREMIER: Not to anything the hon. member says that may be right, but I do object to the hon. member being so confidently critical and claiming credit in this House for not having mentioned the question of secession within the boundaries of his electorate, when he knew that all the time, just outside the boundaries, he was the leading figure in the movement, and that whatever he said could not be kept from those who were within the boundary of his electorate.

Hon. N. Keenan: No. What I meant to say—

The PREMIER: That is the kind of subterfuge employed by the hon. member. It will not go down in this Chamber.

Hon. N. Keenan: I do not want it to.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has been absent from this House for many years. He must learn that such balderdash will not go down with members of the present House, not even with new members. No member here can be bamboozled into the belief that in the election of the member for Nedlands secession played no part. He says he did not mention secession within the boundaries of his electorate. Outside those boundaries, however, he was the Great I Am, foremost at the specially staged big meeting in the Town Hall a day or two before the date of the election. That is not the kind of thing that will go down here. Then the hon. member said that the reference to the 44-hour week in my policy speech was sarcasm on

my part. He said that my mentioning the 44-hour week as part of my party's programme was perpetrating a cheap and nasty sarcasm. In the same passage the hon. member said—

What worker throughout the length and breadth of the land—

And this is where the cloven hoof shows itself; this gets right down to the fundamental bottom of the hon. member's mind—would not willingly work 48 hours a week if only he had permanency of employment?

Of course he would work longer hours to secure permanency of employment in times of depression. Was it sarcasm on my part to announce a feature of my party's policy which has been a feature of that policy for generations past? There was no vote-catching about it, and there was no sarcasm about it. It was simply an announcement of the policy of the party with which I am associated, a policy for which we have stood, which we are responsible for having introduced, so far as it was possible to do so, while we were in office. Sarcasm! Of course, what would suit the hon. member and those who think with him is a policy of longer hours and lower wages, cheaper work, the cost of production coming down through increased working hours. That would be the hon. member's policy, joined with other disabilities. I did not think the hon. member would descend to the level of commenting upon the fact that the Minister for Employment recently visited Sydney. The Minister did so in what I think I may justly claim was at least a semi-public capacity. The member for Nedlands criticises that action. It ought not to have been done, he considers. But I venture to assert that if the hours which the Minister for Industries gives to his office and to the service of this country, even allowing for his absence of three weeks, with those three weeks taken out, were compared with the hours given to the service of the State by any ex-Minister of the party to which the member for Nedlands belongs, it would be found that my colleague had been working overtime. But since when, let me ask, has it become an improper thing for a Minister to go East on business other than such as might be described as strictly public business? We know perfectly well that in the past Ministers belonging to the destroyed party have visited the Eastern States, not on public business or semi-public business, but purely on holiday.

Hon. N. Keenan: Perhaps so.

The PREMIER: Perhaps so! The hon. member knows that it is so. On many occasions those Ministers have gone East in the interests of the private business or profession in which they happened to be interested, and on other occasions they have gone East purely on holiday. I can tell the member for Nedlands that a Minister of the party which he now leads went to the Eastern States, not as did the Minister for Employment, on business of a semi-public character, but to be present at a test cricket match, and that before leaving Western Australia that Minister drew by way of travelling allowance a sum of £50, that, when he returned, the period of his absence entitled him to an allowance of only £29, that repeated requests made to that ex-Minister for the refund of the £20 which belong to the taxpayers of this State have proved resultless, and that the ex-Minister has refused to answer any correspondence with regard to the matter. And it is not the first occasion this has happened with Ministers in a Nationalist Government. It ill-becomes the leader of such a party to make comments upon the absence of my colleague for a few weeks from the State.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do you suggest that I approved of that case which you have mentioned?

The PREMIER: No; I do not suggest it.

Hon. N. Keenan: Or that I ever heard of it?

The PREMIER: No; I know the hon. member has not. Neither do I suggest that he approves of it. But the hon. member, during the past few years, when he sat for a time on the Treasury bench and for the rest of the time behind the late Government, by his silence approved of a great many things as to which he is to-day most indignant.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do you suggest I knew anything about that?

The PREMIER: I do not know what the hon. member knew, or what he did not know.

Hon. N. Keenan: Then do not impute—

The PREMIER: I do not impute anything. I did not start imputations. It was the hon. member who started imputations in this Chamber. It was left to the hon. member to begin a line of attack and criticism which, fortunately, has been unknown in this House for the last 15 years. That has been left to him, and so far as we are concerned he may continue upon those lines. Much of the speech he made might well have been

delivered during the time he was sitting on the Ministerial side of the Chamber. Much of that speech was applicable to the Government of which he was a member, and which he supported, to even a greater extent than it is applicable to the circumstances of the present Parliament. The hon. member made some remarks about borrowing, and about the spending of money to no purpose. He said—

What is the outstanding feature of the Government's proposals? It is to borrow £3,500,000 during the present financial year, and with that money to find work, or part-time work, for the unemployed here, there and everywhere on all kinds of spasmodic enterprises.

Well, what was the policy of the Government that he supported?

Hon. N. Keenan: Did not I criticise them?

The PREMIER: No. What was the policy of the Government of which he was a member? Did he criticise it?

Hon. N. Keenan: Of course I did.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was the dumbest man that ever sat behind a Government, after he retired from the Ministry.

The Minister for Agriculture: And never voted against them once.

The PREMIER: And never gave an expression of opinion against them. Never once did the hon. member express a hostile sentiment with regard to the Government he sat behind.

Hon. N. Keenan: Did not you quote from my speeches?

The PREMIER: Quote from the hon. member's speeches?

Hon. N. Keenan: Yes.

The PREMIER: Oh! The situation must have been desperate if I quoted from the hon. member's speeches.

Hon. N. Keenan: Perhaps it was desperate for you.

The PREMIER: The hon. member further said—

It is clear that the budget deficit of £750,000 is a loan of the worst character, because it is a debt incurred in anticipation.

"It is clear that the budget deficit of £750,000 is a loan of the worst character." It is true, of course, that deficits must be met by loan payments. It is also true that the expenditure of loan money in that direction is highly undesirable. But if the application of £750,000 in this direction repre-

sents a debt of the worst character, what is to be said of the £1,500,000 of deficit or loan indebtedness which occurred during the year the hon. member was a Minister? That is double the amount he now complains about. During the year that he was in office the loan expenditure really totalled £3,180,000; and that amount of course included the £1,500,000 of deficit.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The PREMIER: At the tea adjournment, I had just about concluded what I desired to say. I wish to make only one other reference to the doleful tale told by the Leader of the Nationalist Party on the occasion of the funeral oration he delivered. During the course of his remarks, he said that unless all things could come to pass that he believed ought to take place, then there was no possible future whatsoever for Western Australia. He spoke in rather glowing terms, using generalisations about resuscitation and so on. As to how that end was to be achieved, it was by the lowering, or perhaps the total abolition of the tariff, failing which there was to be separation for Western Australia from the rest of the Commonwealth. As the hon. member expressed no confidence whatever in the idea that the tariff might be lowered to the extent that he believed was necessary to enable the primary producing State of Western Australia to survive, then the alternative was to be separation from the rest of the Commonwealth. But if, on the one hand, there were no hope of success, as the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) believed, and if it should so happen that we were not successful in our effort to secede from the rest of Australia, then, to use the hon. member's own words, Western Australia would be in the hands of the undertakers.

Hon. N. Keenan: I said that the hopes of Western Australia would be in the hands of the undertakers.

The PREMIER: That was a doleful tale to tell!

Hon. N. Keenan: Admittedly.

The PREMIER: I do not think that is the kind of tale to be told by any member of this House, more particularly by a man who has the responsibility of being the leader of a political party. It may happen that we shall not succeed in whatever efforts may be made to break away from the rest

of the Commonwealth. In that event, the hon. member will have proclaimed to the rest of Australia and the world in general that we, as a State, are ready for the undertakers. That is not a statement that ought to be made by a man who has any real feeling and understanding or a sense of responsibility, because such an utterance may do incalculable harm to the future of Western Australia. If we are told next year that we must remain an integral part of the Commonwealth, what may be the effect of such words upon anyone likely to be interested in Western Australia and its future, its possibilities and its industries. Who then would be interested? Only the undertaker, says the member for Nedlands. I regret very much that he should have told such a doleful tale. Such stories of distress, of death and despair have been told all down the centuries, but somehow the doleful events predicted have never come to pass. As one great thinker once remarked, and his assertion applies to States and nations as well as to individuals, "Most of our troubles never happen." Therefore, even if we are compelled to carry on as we are doing, the troubles predicted by the hon. member may not come to pass, nor do I think they will come to pass. I have only this to say in conclusion: The position of Western Australia to-day is no different from what it has been during the past few years. There is certainly a brighter outlook in that the price of wool has arisen, and that the tone of the wheat market is also better.

Mr. Latham: And the people have settled down a little more to the new order of things.

The PREMIER: That is also true, but the position is still acute. It demands the best efforts of every man and woman in this State, and for my part, as a member of the Government, I ask for nothing more than the same measure of fair play and of considered thought and regard for the difficulties of the Government that I extended to the late Government during the past three years. I ask for nothing more than that. The present is a time when we can co-operate, so far as it is possible to do so consistent with giving effect to our own policies and principles. It is still a time of stress that requires that we shall continue to pursue the hard road of economy by a

reduction in expenditure and refraining from indulging in expenditure of any kind that can possibly be avoided. We are not masters of our own destiny, so to speak, with regard to revenue. With a declining revenue on all sides, that revenue is likely to continue to decrease, and it must be made up by a reduced expenditure. I agree with the Leader of the Nationalist Party that it is undesirable in the extreme that Governments should borrow money in order to make up deficits and to pay their way. At the same time, that has been the position of every Government in Australia during recent years and, with regard to most States, for many years past. It is most undesirable, because the money is being expended in a direction that cannot possibly give any return and in a way that is unlikely to be productive in any sense of the word. On the other hand, that expenditure must involve an added burden by way of interest and sinking fund payments on the amounts concerned. In that respect, although the recent conversion loan announced in the "West Australian" this morning, as a result of which £17,000,000 has been converted from 6 per cent. to 4 per cent.—

Hon. J. Cunningham: It was not really 4 per cent., but  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

The PREMIER: Yes, I know. That conversion loan is satisfactory so far as it goes. I was one of those at the recent meeting of the Loan Council who urged the conversion of a much larger amount, but we were advised that the money market in the Old Country was not favourable at the time. I have no hesitation in saying, and I do not think I will be accused in any way of being disloyal in saying it, that the time for the conversion of all loans that carry a high rate of interest is long overdue.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I think Australia is the only part of the British Empire that did not secure release from expenditure of that description long ago. Although it may be said that to force a conversion loan upon bondholders of the Old Country against their will, seeing they had a contract, so to speak, for the interest rates of 5 or 6 per cent. to continue for many years to come, there is another side to the question. I am not too sure that Australia has not been made to pay for her reputed great loyalty. It has been understood that Aus-

tralia, under any and every circumstance, would continue to pay, and the Commonwealth has been allowed to pay. The time has arrived, owing to the state of Australian trade to-day, when our national income and expenditure, together with our obligations, are such that we should say straight out to all those affected, that no matter how willing we may be, we can no longer continue to pay the high rates of interest on the money we owe overseas. We shall have to say that, as many honest traders have to say it at times to their creditors. While a reduction from 6 per cent. to 4 per cent. may appear to be a large one, it has to be remembered that 4 per cent. is a high rate of interest in view of the rate at which money is available in England.

Mr. Sampson: So it is.

The PREMIER: The bank rate of interest to-day is about 7s. 6d. per cent.—not even 1 per cent. According to the advices I have received, and the fact can be ascertained by a perusal of any of the authoritative financial journals, there is plenty of money in the Old Country awaiting investment. I do not think we are called upon to take off our hats in gratitude for a reduction of interest from 6 per cent. to 4 per cent., nor do I think the amount is anything like it ought to be. I know that negotiations are pending for the conversion of another and somewhat smaller amount than the last one; but that is not sufficient, for there are still scores of millions of pounds on which we are paying a high rate of interest.

Mr. Stubbs: Not Western Australia?

The PREMIER: No, Australia; an amount in respect of which a reduction of interest ought to have been made years ago.

Mr. Latham: For what period was that recent conversion?

The PREMIER: I think 10 years.

Mr. Latham: With the right of redemption?

The PREMIER: Yes, with an option. We come into it to a great extent, of course, but although it will relieve the taxpayers in this State of the payment of that extra rate of interest, yet the Government will not benefit at all; because it was agreed at the Loan Council meeting that any reduction in the rate of interest following conversion loans would be deducted from the amount of the deficit agreed upon by the Loan



Council. So it will not help the Government as a Government, but it will relieve the State of the payment of £50,000 or £60,000 per annum; it will not affect the Government's finances, although the taxpayers will get the benefit to that extent. But the amount ought to have been more, and the conversion ought to have taken place long ago. I hope that whatever may be said about the possibility of conversion on the London financial market the Commonwealth Government will insist upon conversion and let it be pretty well understood—and this was the opinion expressed by nearly all of those present at the Loan Council—by those concerned in the Old Country that if they will not voluntarily agree to a considerable reduction in all our interest payments, then necessarily, whether we like it or not, a reduction will have to be made because this country cannot afford, in view of the prices of our exports to-day, to pay the same rate of interest as we were prepared to pay when those prices were higher. But I believe the good sense of all concerned will enable conversion to take place within a very short time, and so the taxpayers will be relieved of the considerable payments they are called upon to make to-day. In the meantime I can assure the House and the State that this Government will pursue a policy of sane common-sense in regard both to legislation and administration, keeping steadily in view the goal we are aiming at.

Mr. Stubbs: Increased taxation will not put us on the road to prosperity.

The PREMIER: Everyone knows that increased taxation increases unemployment and increases troubles and difficulties. But, of course, without increasing the total amount that might be raised by way of taxation, there is room for difference of opinion as to the methods by which it might be levied. That, however, will be for the consideration of the House in a day or two. In the meantime I can say the Government will pursue a policy of economy, realising that the State is still engulfed in the great difficulties which have surrounded us during the past two or three years.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [7.50]: I congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the Speakership: and not only that, but on your determination to take the Chair minus

the customary wig. I cannot see any necessity for the Speaker to sit there wearing a mop of horsehair. Certainly it would not add to your attractive appearance, the placing of a wig on your head. Previous Speakers, of course, had themselves to please in this detail, and were at liberty to wear the wig, but I congratulate you, Sir, on this reform you have introduced, and I trust that in the near future there will be other reforms in the House. I should also like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on attaining the position he holds to-day, and I hope he will continue to occupy it for many years to come. It certainly will be better for the great mass of the community if the Leader of the Opposition remains on that side instead of returning to this side, for we cannot hope to agree on what he thinks right for the community and what we think right. Regarding the appointment of the Lieut.-Governor, it will be remembered that the filling of the vacancy has been a bone of contention in the House during the last two or three sessions. Only last session the ex-Premier assured us that no such appointment would be made until the House had an opportunity to discuss it. I understand that although the Government of the day gave us that assurance, they were not in a position to fulfil it, because the Imperial Government have the power to appoint a Governor irrespective of the wishes of the Government. So I think we were a little misled on that occasion, and in consequence passed the item on the Estimates, whereas had that statement not been made the essential item might have been struck out from the Estimates, which would have precluded any future Governors or Lieut.-Governors from occupying Government House.

Mr. Stubbs: Are you going to block that item on the Estimates this session?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The trouble is I may be in the Chair when it comes up for discussion, but I trust that other members will do something to see if the position of Governor or Lieut.-Governor cannot be wiped out. I have every respect for Sir James Mitchell, and I believe that he and I are the best of friends, and that he would be the last to take personal offence at my criticism of the office of Governor or Lieut.-Governor. Still, as I say, I hope that when the Estimates are before us the House will cut out that

unnecessary expense. Surely the Chief Justice's position could be made part and parcel of that of Lieut.-Governor. Given the necessary legislation, the Chief Justice could sign all documents that a Governor is called upon to sign, while as for social functions at Government House, we can well do without them. So I hope that in the near future the position of Governor or Lieut.-Governor will be abolished. Of course if we must have a Governor or Lieut.-Governor, I would prefer to see an Australian in the position rather than have an imported Governor but, as I say, I hope it will all be rendered unnecessary. Some time ago the previous Government brought down and passed a Bill with the flourishing title of Financial Emergency Bill, which they claimed was going to restore financial stability and general prosperity. I am sorry to say it has not done what was claimed for it. But there have been accomplished under that measure things that even the previous Government did not desire. When that Bill was going through, it was agreed by both sides of the House that before any private employer should get the benefit of the measure he would have to go to the Arbitration Court and prove his case. But that has not worked out in practice. All will remember the case where one firm went to court and secured relief in respect of a number of tradesmen, among whom was a baker; and because one firm was able to get relief in respect of a baker, the whole of the master bakers applied the common rule and so were able to reduce wages.

Mr. Latham: You are wrong.

Mr. SLEEMAN: And because one firm went to court and got relief, the whole of the oil companies operating in the State, large influential companies with any amount of capital and who should never have got relief, simply said they were going to apply the common rule and did so. Will the Leader of the Opposition deny that?

Mr. Latham: I will not.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The oil companies took the reduction by applying the common rule.

Mr. Latham: I think that was reversed.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It was not reversed. The union secretary at that time was absent on holidays, and I was called upon to go into the matter and confer with the employers. Unfortunately we did not get a single step

ahead. The employers stuck to their ground and took the relief. The Leader of the Opposition will agree that even he did not expect they would be able to do anything of the sort under that Act.

Mr. Stubbs: Was not the matter challenged in the court?

Mr. SLEEMAN: It was challenged, but the Full Court threw out the appeal, declaring that the wording of the Act permitted the relief to be taken. I say that when that Bill went through neither the previous Government nor their supporters ever dreamed that such a thing could be done under the measure. I condemn the previous Government for that, knowing that such a thing was being done, they failed to take immediate action to right the wrong. They should have brought down amending legislation to prevent the oil companies taking advantage of the position despite the Arbitration Court. I hope that in the near future that Act will be amended in such a way as to fulfil the wishes of the House, for I am certain that at least 90 per cent. of the members of the House did not expect that those powerful oil companies would be able to come in and take advantage of the Act by applying the common rule. The Government scheme of relief has been annulled. While it is not everything that could be desired, I believe it is a step in the right direction—a first step towards getting people back to full-time work. I have heard one or two members of the Opposition practically condemn the Government for this move to get people back to full-time work.

Mr. Latham: No.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I say, yes. The Leader of the Opposition has evidently not been in his seat during the whole of the debate.

Mr. Latham: I have not left it during the debate.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Members behind him made a statement to that effect.

Mr. Raphael: And it is backed up by the "West Australian."

Mr. SLEEMAN: Members sitting behind the Leader of the Opposition practically condemned the Government for this scheme to get men back to full-time work. I hope sincerely that before the next financial year comes round, the Government will be able to lengthen the period of employment for the workers. There is one phase that has not been dealt with under the scheme and I hope attention will be given to it. I allude to relief for single girls. Single girls are entitled

to as much consideration as are single men. While single men are to be provided with work to the amount of 30s. per week—that is little enough—something should be done to provide a somewhat similar amount for single girls. If a girl is living at home with her parents, the amount of relief she can get, namely 7s., is of some help, though by no means sufficient to keep her. When there are single girls and women on the unemployed market with no chance of getting employment, something should be done without delay to help them. A girl should be able to live respectably and honestly, and she cannot do that on less than 25s. or 30s. a week if she has to pay for a room and buy food and clothes. I hope the question will be considered and that single girls will be given a reasonable chance to get on in the world. The single men are not enjoying a very flash existence. I do not think they will ever get back to full-time work while the present hours are worked. The United States of America, under President Roosevelt, I consider, is attempting something on the right lines. I believe the working week will have to be reduced below 44 hours before the unemployed are enabled to get back to their avocations in life. Labour-saving machinery has deprived many men of their work.

Mr. Latham: What about your own home and wife?

Mr. SLEEMAN: She has to work many more hours than 48 per week.

Mr. Raphael: Get two wives and then there would be no reason for them to work overtime.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If labour-saving machinery for the home were available and I could purchase it so that she could get through her work in 24 hours, I would gladly do it. The world will not get back to full-time employment until the working week is reduced considerably below 44 hours. President Roosevelt is not a Labour man and he is advocating a working week of 44 hours and 40 hours, in order to get men back to work.

Mr. Latham: Has he not raised the pay from 7½d. to 1s. 3d. an hour?

The Minister for Mines: According to this morning's newspaper, the people in his own country are sticking to him pretty well.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I thought the Leader of the Opposition would have seen the light

before now. I understand he has always been a follower of the economists and professors who once advocated that, if we reduced wages and lowered the standard of living, everything would be right. Those gentlemen have made a serious mistake. The more they lowered the standard of living and reduced prices, the worse things have become. Now they are tumbling over each other to convince the people that what they said before was wrong. They made a mistake, and they now advocate the raising of prices in order that the world may return to financial prosperity. I hope that the question of reducing the working week will be considered not only in this State but throughout Australia, in order that we may get men back to work and that the community may enjoy the prosperity that once prevailed. In my electorate labour-saving machinery is displacing men almost every day. Grabs used for handling superphosphate displaced hundreds of men. I understand that not even the farmer obtained any benefit through the displacement of those men, in that the price of super remained the same. The profit must have gone into somebody's pocket, and it did not go to the farmers, and certainly not to the men who were deprived of their means of livelihood. Grabs were also installed for handling coal, thus displacing men who previously were employed to shovel the coal out of the boats. In offices, adding machines have been installed and many men and women have been thrown out of work.

Mr. Stubbs: What about doing away with all those new appliances?

Mr. SLEEMAN: We had better go into conference and discuss what can be done. While those labour-saving devices are being operated and are being added to almost daily, the unemployed cannot hope to get back to work on a 48-hour week. A few weeks ago Mr. W. M. Hughes advocated the reduction of working hours and the raising of price levels. I hope that in the near future people in Australia will see the light and will resolve that the hours of labour must be reduced in order to get men and women, boys and girls, back to permanent work. I wish to refer to the Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagees' Relief Act, which was introduced by the previous Government. When the Bill was under discussion I said I considered it was a step in the right direc-

tion, but experience showed that it needed amendment. I attempted to get it amended on a couple of occasions but was unsuccessful against the brutal majority of the then Government. Seeing that things in that respect have now changed, I hope the Act will be liberalised a little.

Mr. Latham: Do not forget that you have the brutal majority on your side now.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope it will be used to amend the Act. I cannot see any harm in using it to the full when the cause is worthy.

Mr. Latham: We will use it when we are in a position to do so.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the Leader of the Opposition is ever in a position to do so again—

Mr. Latham: I suppose it will be wrong then.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope he will use it in a reasonable way—

Mr. Latham: To suit you?

Mr. SLEEMAN: —and that it will be used only in a good cause and in a common-sense way. If he uses it as it was used in the past to lower the standard of living, I hope he never again will have a brutal majority. On several occasions the member for East Perth, now the Minister for Employment, and I tried to get the Act amended. One serious drawback was that of people contracting outside the Act. I do not believe anyone should be allowed to contract outside an Act. Some of the people who are being ejected from their homes for non-payment of rent are informed that they cannot get another place unless they sign an agreement not to take advantage of the Act. Before a man can get possession of a house, that provision is being applied, irrespective of whether he is employed or unemployed. I know quite a number of people who thought they were fairly certain to enjoy permanent work and who saw no harm in signing a document contracting themselves outside the Act. Unfortunately for them, they lost their work and before long were unable to pay their rent. When they approached the court they were told by the Commissioner that the wording of the Act tied his hands, and that, though they had his sympathy, he could not give them relief. I hope that provision will be made to overcome that practice and that the measure will extend relief to people who

at present cannot get it. There is talk of rebuilding the Perth-Fremantle-road. I have no objection to good roads being provided in the country by the people who are using them, namely the motorists. They are entitled to good roads so long as they pay for them. It would not be of much use rebuilding the Perth-Fremantle-road if the old tumble-down bridge is left at the Fremantle end. If we are going to have a new road, we must have a new bridge. The time has long since passed for the rebuilding of the Fremantle traffic bridge. I do not believe the bridge is safe, notwithstanding what other people might say. When I made a similar remark a few years ago about the railway bridge, members were inclined to ridicule the statement, but when the flood waters came down the river, portion of the bridge practically disappeared in a night. A few years ago the Minister for Works said there was a possibility of getting a new bridge built by a British firm under a system of payment by bonds. Should that offer be still open, I trust that the Minister will further investigate the proposal. If anything happens to the Fremantle bridge, Perth will be practically cut off. The road on the south side of the river has a bottle-neck at the bridge crossing the Canning River, which could not carry one-quarter of the traffic necessary if anything happened to the Fremantle bridge. Steps should be taken to widen the Canning Bridge and divert to the south side of the river some of the traffic now using the Perth-Fremantle-road. The question of providing a dock for Fremantle is receiving attention. Members will have read the newspaper reports of a public meeting held at Fremantle recently to urge the Government to build a dock. I am satisfied that the Government would be unable to find the money for the work. It is a national work and the Commonwealth Government should come to our assistance and help to provide a dock on this side of the continent. The chief seaport of the State cannot be considered up to date until a dock is provided. I hope the Commonwealth Government will be approached to ascertain whether they are prepared to assist in the construction of a dock at Fremantle where such facilities are urgently needed. We had a Lloyd's surveyor at the meeting. He knows his business well. He stated that during the last

two years he had made 400 surveys of ships at Fremantle, and that, if there had been a dock at the port, 19 per cent. of the ships would have been ordered into it. Owing to the fact that no dock was there, he could not follow this course. He paid a tribute to the divers in Fremantle, and said they had done wonderful work in assisting him with some of the least disabled boats. This statement by the surveyor should give the Government some reason for making an effort to have a dock provided. If 19 per cent. of the 400 vessels which have been surveyed had been ordered into dock at Fremantle, it would have meant one about every fortnight, which would have led to the expenditure of a good deal of money and the employment of many men. I trust the Government will take the matter up with the Commonwealth authorities and see whether something can be done to provide a dock for disabled ships that may be travelling along our coast. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

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

## **BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [8.17] in moving the second reading said: I have caused a memorandum to be printed on the front of the Bill, explaining to the House what is contemplated by the measure. Last session we passed an amendment to the Road Districts Act. In that Bill, power was taken to consolidate the existing laws. The Crown Law Department now find that several corrections are necessary before the laws can be consolidated. Some of these are verbal, some are misprints, and one or two, as the memorandum sets out, merely go to make the Act read more explicitly. There are only two alterations to the existing law in the measure. Apart from these, there is no provision in the Bill for any alteration in the law, other than to make it read sound sense, to correct the grammar, and do away with verbal errors. I do not think the two alterations are contentious. I hope they will be agreed to. It would be a mistake to miss the opportunity of making these small amendments when this Bill has to go through for

the purposes mentioned. The first alteration is to overcome the position that now exists where a re-arrangement of a ward boundary within a road district becomes necessary. Such a re-arrangement may only be necessary in the case of two wards. The population of two wards may have grown to such an extent that it is thought desirable to make three wards of the two. Under the existing law, when the boundaries are altered under these provisions, all the members of the board must go up for re-election, although the boundaries of some of the wards are not being altered.

Mr. Stubbs: That seems ridiculous.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** We are now correcting that so that only the members, the boundaries of whose wards are being altered, will have their seats declared vacant and be called upon to face an election.

Mr. Stubbs: A very wise provision.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** When the representative of a ward has been elected and the boundaries of his ward have not been altered, it seems unnecessary to call upon him to face the expense of another election. That has occurred in one or two places in the last two or three years.

Mr. Mann: It happened only last April, in one instance.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** We are taking the opportunity to put that right. The other case in which the law is being amended deals with small alterations that are made in the boundaries of local governing authorities. Some of these boundaries have been extended, others have been corrected, and some have been more clearly defined. From time to time it has happened that boundaries have been altered to such an extent that it has become necessary to issue a new declaration clearly defining all the boundaries of a board. That has been done on two or three occasions. The declaration has been made, and published in the "Government Gazette" clearly defining the whole of the boundaries of the board. There has, however, been no authority to do this, although the fact that it has been done has been of great assistance to boards, as well as adjoining boards. Local authorities have approached the department for a clear declaration of their boundaries. To give effect to these requests, small alterations have been made and the necessary declaration has been

issued. This Bill merely gives the department legal authority to do this, and to publish the correct and clear definition of the boundaries in the Gazette. Outside these two alterations, the Bill consists of corrections which will make effective the consolidating measure. I think the Bill will require very little discussion or argument. The sooner it is passed, the sooner can the new print of the consolidated Act be brought out. Most of the local authorities are pressing for a new print of the whole measure.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are these amendments due to faulty drafting?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In some cases a misprint has occurred, and in other cases there has been faulty draftmanship. In one section reference may be made to another, the number of which has been wrongly quoted. The provision regarding the description of "chairman" is consequential upon what was done before. When we deprived the chairman of a casting vote and gave him only a deliberative vote at sittings of the board, we should have applied that also to meetings in committee. There is a more correct definition of "chairman" and "deputy chairman." There is nothing of a contentious nature in the Bill, which merely makes the law effective, so that the Crown Law Department may get on with reprinting the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

### BILLS (10)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
- 2, Financial Emergency Tax.
- 3, Workers' Homes Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Premier.
- 4, Land.
- 5, York Cemeteries.
- 6, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 7, Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia Incorporated, W.A. Branch, Headquarters Building.  
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

### 8, Yuna-Dartmoor Railway.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways.

### 9, Health Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Health.

### 10, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Further Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Sleeman.

*House adjourned at 8.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 3rd August, 1933.*

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAY DUPLICATION.

Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways: Is it proposed to duplicate the railway line from Spencer's Brook right through to the East Northam station?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: No, to Northam only at present.

### QUESTION—EASTERN STATES MANUFACTURES.

*To encourage local branches.*

Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Employment: 1, Will he take early steps personally to encourage Eastern States manu-