

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The assistance so far granted for prospecting purposes is ridiculously inadequate. Single men unemployed on the goldfields who are prepared to edge a ticket to Perth and to hang around here for a few days become eligible for sustenance. Do the Government wish to impose on the goldfields community the additional burden of maintaining the unemployed there? The Premier's policy amounts to "Work for all, money for no one." There is also the matter of reconstructing the railways. Are the railways to be allowed to fall into such a state of disrepair as to be beyond redemption? When loans are floated, the Government guarantee in the prospectus to carry out certain works with the proceeds, and to maintain those works in a proper state of repair. We know that some works are not being kept in a proper state of repair. There is the railway to Northam, for instance; and there is the Eastern Goldfields railway.

The Premier: We have lots of men on those lines ballasting.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Only about 120 men. The sleepers turn up and look at the passengers. Those sleepers are at least 18 years old. There is no cohesion between the dogspikes and the sleepers. It is not my place to say that the lines are unsafe to travel over, but the Government should investigate the position, especially on the Bowgada-Mullewa section of the Wongan Hills railway. I specially request the Minister for Labour to give consideration to the numerous men who are unemployed on the goldfields, and who need sustenance because they cannot obtain work.

Progress reported.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform hon. members that I have nominated the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), the member for Leederville (Mr. Pantou), and the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) to be temporary Chairmen of Committees.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 17th August, 1932.

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

QUESTION—DOG OWNERS, PROTECTION.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Chief Secretary: As the notice, "Beware of the Dog," does not protect from prosecution owners whose dogs attack trespassers, will the Government introduce amending legislation to give the required protection to householders who display such notices.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The Dog Act is administered by the local authorities. If these authorities submit a request for an amendment of the Act on the lines indicated, the matter will receive full consideration.

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT, WORKS SCHEDULE.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, As no provision was made in the schedule of works recently published in the daily Press for relief works in the areas covered by the North Fremantle Municipality, Buckland Hill, Fremantle, and Melville Road Boards, is it the intention of the Government to draw up a further schedule covering those areas? 2, If not, will a quota of unemployed from each of those districts be picked up for work in the metropolitan area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1. No. 2, Yes.

QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASES. RENT ADJUSTMENT.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: 1, As the Land Act Amendment Act, 1931, provides for an adjustment of rents of pastoral leases in certain districts,

on the basis of the average price of greasy wool produced in the State, and declared by the Government Statistician, what percentage decrease has been adopted for the financial year 1931-32? 2, Does the adjustment apply to road board valuations for rating purposes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, 25.98 per cent. for 6 months ended 30th June, 1932. 21.642 per cent. for the current financial year, commencing 1st July, 1932. 2, No.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders Committee.—The President, the Chief Secretary, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. J. M. Drew, and Hon. J. Nicholson.

Library Committee.—The President, Hon. J. Ewing, and Hon. J. M. Drew.

Printing Committee.—The President, Hon. W. H. Kitson, and Hon. W. J. Mann.

Joint House Committee.—The President, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. E. H. Gray, Hon. V. Hamersley, and Hon. Sir Edward Witteboom.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. F. W. Allsop (North-East) on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [4.36]: On my return to this Chamber as a representative of the Central Province, I desire to thank Mr. Holmes for the kind things he declared he was prepared to say of me, but for the fact that I am influenced by Trades Hall dictation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I had nothing to say against you personally.

Hon. T. MOORE: That subject is rather a bugbear with Mr. Holmes. I believe he

has said the same things so often that he believes most of them are correct. Before I sit down, I shall show that he is painted with another colour. I regret very much that I have returned to this House at a time when the country is in such a parlous state. When I was formerly a member some years ago, there were pessimists who considered the position was bad at that time, and we had to counter their opinions. It is true that even then we were able to growl a bit, but things were not as bad as they were made out to be. Unfortunately there are good grounds for complaint now. It would be quite easy for me to blame a particular Government, if I cared to do so, but it would certainly be ridiculous to single out any particular Government as being responsible for the present state of affairs. It is true that when the last Labour Government went out of power, the retiring Premier, Mr. Collier, who had been in office for six years, stated that, owing to the economic position of the world and because of the great unemployment difficulty that had developed within the State in consequence, for which he was not responsible, he could not be expected to do more than he had achieved up to that time. He gave the people clearly to understand that he could do no better than he had done. The leaders of the parties that came into power at that time said that they could do much better. We know how signally the present Government have failed. The trouble, of course, is world-wide and not of this State's making at all. As to the Governor's Speech, I have read many in days gone by, and I cannot see that the latest Speech holds out much hope of a brighter future. No solution of our difficulties has been presented by the Government in the course of the Speech. Mr. Holmes has travelled round the country recently, as I have, and he has seen the parlous condition of the people in the rural districts. It has always been recognised in Western Australia that it is upon the people in the country districts that the prosperity of the State generally depends. No doubt Mr. Holmes has observed the parlous condition of the primary industries of Western Australia. He made some suggestions as to what might be done to unload some of the troubles of the primary producers, but he seems to have missed the greatest difficulty that confronts them. He endeavoured to show that the farmer's position was quite all

right until he got his wheat to the sidings. I differ from him, because I contend the farmers have been harassed in every way by the men who are lending them money.

Hon. J. Cornell: You mean by the men who lent them the money.

Hon. T. MOORE: That is so. As to the position of the average farmer, it costs him almost as much in interest on his overdraft as it does to meet all the other charges, of which Mr. Holmes knows so much. So it will be seen that the trouble does not start when the wheat reaches the siding; the trouble is for ever with the farmer whose position today is most unenviable. It has been contended by some city folk who do not understand the position, that the present difficulty is largely of the farmer's own making. I do not accept that view.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Hear, hear!

Hon. T. MOORE: In our endeavour to promote land settlement in Western Australia we commenced a policy under which the Agricultural Bank advanced money to people who went on the land. It was considered in the interests of the State that such a policy should be adopted, and it has been pursued for many years now. While prices were satisfactory, the policy seemed to be sound insofar as it secured the opening up and settlement of large areas. True, the opening up and settlement of the country areas advanced much more quickly in Western Australia than in any other State, and while the prices of wheat and wool remained satisfactory, we progressed under apparently sound conditions. It will be remembered that when I was formerly in this Chamber, I assumed the role of prophet and said that with bank interest charges at 7 per cent., the farmer, who was expected to develop his holding, was being given an impossible task. Even at that time I realised that although the average farmer was doing fairly well, he was building up a deficit and that, as the years progressed, he would not be able to get ahead of his financial responsibilities. It takes much money to develop a farm, and even in the days I speak of, it was quite impossible for a farmer, unless he happened to be particularly fortunately situated, to pay his way with interest rates at 7 per cent. The idea behind the policy adopted at that time was to secure money for the Agricultural Bank and pass it on to the farmers. It should be understood by some people in

the city that that money was handed out lavishly to the farmers. We have heard talk about the men on the land being spoonfed. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that every shilling advanced to the farmers had to be accounted for, and interest paid on it, by the agriculturists. Money was invested in the industry to open up the land and develop it and to build up a big export trade, particularly in wheat and wool. Every shilling advanced by the Agricultural Bank was spent with the object of profit all round. The other banks followed suit, and I claim that those institutions have done very well out of the farmers. In years gone by fabulous sums have been gained by them out of the industry. If we could get at the exact figures we would find that men who took shares in the various banks did very well as a result of their investments. They reaped big dividends each year, but there had to be an end to that. That end came when prices fell. Up to that time the individual farmer who was in a decent position and was carrying out his operations on a successful basis, could go to any bank and secure the loan of any amount he may have required. The farmer went to the banker, who was a servant of the shareholders, and put up his proposition. The banker would say, "For what purpose do you want the money?" The farmer, putting his cards on the table, would answer that he required the money for clearing, fencing, water supply and other incidentals. The reply of the banker would be, "That is good business for us; we are prepared to lend the money." But the money was always lent at a high rate of interest, the highest rate that the industry could carry. As a servant of the shareholders, the banker entered into a contract with the farmer, and while the farmer was receiving good prices for his produce, he paid the interest charges to the best of his ability. When the crash came, the banker, who had entered into the contract just as willingly as had the farmer, declared that it was bad business and asked the farmer to reduce his overdraft. That was the first thing the banks did, and of course it was impossible for the farmer to comply. I contend that money is worth only what it will earn, and I defy any farmer in this State, unless he had a phenomenal crop, to make ends meet on the 1930-31 season figures and pay interest. Therefore I maintain that the Government should have freed the farmers

from the obligation of paying interest during that year. They should also have relieved the farmer of land tax. That has been done since, but in 1930-31 the Government piled the burdens on to the men who could not possibly pay, adding the interest to their capital debt and making the load so much the heavier. If the Government had granted relief in that year, the banks would have been compelled to follow suit and that would have been a good thing for the State. We know what happened regarding the conversion of Government loans. The Governments of Australia relieved themselves very nicely of the obligation of paying a high interest rate. They had the power to do it, but they failed to give relief to the producers who were carrying on the industries of the country. Consequently we find ourselves in a very unenviable position to-day. The farmer should be viewed in the same way as a horse attached to a wagon containing a heavy load. He has got off the road into the muddy country. A teamster, finding himself in that fix, would consider how much of the load he had to remove in order to extricate his horse and wagon. That is the view that should be taken of the farmer. He has too heavy a load to carry. He is becoming disheartened because he has no possible chance of carrying the load, but unfortunately nothing is being done to relieve him of his obligation. What has been done by the various Governments? We have had any amount of legislation, supported by Country Party members. We have had an emergency Act, debt adjustment Acts, a hire purchase agreement Act, a mortgagees' rights restriction Act, and yet no relief has been given. The load is still on the farmers. Why is it so? Because the banks are considered to be sacred institutions. We must not touch the banks. Mr. Holmes has suggested that I have some political taint, but I wonder whether, during his wanderings in the country, he ever met men who spoke of the awful interest bill they had to meet. He must have met such men.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I do not need to search for such a man. I have only to look in the glass.

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member did not mention the outstanding trouble confronting the farmer and the pastoralist. Unfortunately, some members are interested in banking and as shareholders have made money out of it. Some men have that taint. The banks, however, must not be touched.

I maintain that if the shareholders do not afford relief, such as has been afforded in other directions, their asset will deteriorate. There is no doubt that it is deteriorating at present. I understand that the Agricultural Bank has about 800 abandoned farms. The people's money has been expended on those farms, and anyone who lives in the country knows that such farms quickly revert to nature and that ultimately they will be more difficult to handle than if they had never been worked at all. I for one refuse to regard the banks as sacred institutions. There is not much hope of this House doing anything—

Hon. J. Cornell: You do not know; there has been a change since you were last here.

Hon. T. MOORE: Any relief designed to aid the man on the land must be in the direction of lightening the interest charges. We must examine the load that the farmer is carrying and determine how much he is able to carry. Of course, there are private people who have lent money to the farmers, but unless relief is afforded, mortgagees are likely to suffer loss. There have been lots of ways of making money out of the farmers, and there is another aspect regarding the banks. They lent money to the farmers and also lent money to firms in the city, who in turn also exploited the farmers. Consequently the banks got the benefit both ways. Machinery firms unloaded tractors on to the farmers and those firms were backed by the banks. The firms did not have the money, but, with the assistance of the banks, they brought the machinery into the country. The companies, who were out to get something for themselves as well as to pay interest to the banks, employed the best go-getters obtainable. The country was filled with men in motor cars, the best go-getters to be found outside America. I have had the experience of one waiting at the gate while another was talking to me.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Did he catch you?

Hon. T. MOORE: The banks financed the companies, the companies employed the go-getters, and whatever little money the farmer had at that time over and above interest charges, the go-getters took. They talked all kinds of attractive terms to the unsuspecting farmer, and they talked so ardently and presented such a glowing case that the farmer, who had intended to say no, could not do so.

Hon. J. Cornell: The farmers' organisation was the worst of the lot.

Hon. T. MOORE: There is no doubt about that; it sold Case tractors that were an absolute failure. The banks were in the business all the way, and I want to know what they are going to do about it now. So far they have kept the interest rate as high as they could. In my opinion nothing has been done and the farmers themselves believe that nothing has been done by way of legislation to afford them relief. Whenever anything is attempted, the banks have a way of circumventing it. The country is in a very serious condition financially.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And you say it is useless to pass legislation.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, such legislation as has been passed. I regard it as the work, not of statesmen, but of politicians.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We amended the Lunacy Act last session.

Hon. T. MOORE: I find it very difficult to understand the hon. member; I hope he is not heading that way. Unfortunately many people believe that by reducing the wages of the Collie coalminers, as Mr. Holmes suggested, by cutting out the privileges enjoyed by railwaymen and the water-side workers, by having reports from experts, professors and bankers, and by holding conferences at Ottawa, Lausanne and Geneva, something might be accomplished. Anyone who advocates cutting down the wages of the workers is not a statesman. I cannot imagine what benefit such a man believes can be derived from it. The cause of the fall of prices was the cutting of costs in Europe. That is where the cutting started. Prices were cut to bedrock, and instead of the people in the Old Country, who were our best customers, being in a position to buy the things we have to sell and pay a reasonable price for them, they had to go without those things. Cutting has become the order of the day all over the world, but that will not get us out of our difficulties. Now we are told that the Ottawa Conference will help us.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You were not told that by me.

Hon. T. MOORE: No, I understood the hon. member was quite awake to what was happening at Ottawa. Nothing much will happen there. Preference was being talked when I was previously in Parliament six years ago. Mr. Holmes suggested that we should abolish arbitration. What a wonderful idea that is! I want him to understand

that the farmers and the pastoralists do not believe that wages should be further cut. Consider the pastoralist who has stock to sell. In time past much more meat was consumed in the metropolitan area than is consumed to-day. The country between Perth and Mullewa could supply the needs of the metropolitan meat market, and what is to become of the men who are raising stock further out? That is one of the troubles being experienced to-day. Numbers of people are going short of things that they ought to have.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How are the bankrupt industries going to pay their way?

Hon. T. MOORE: First of all by getting down the interest bill. That is the biggest load of all. Anyone who examines the situation fairly must realise where the burden lies. Farmers and pastoralists are not concerned to have wages further reduced, but they are concerned to secure a reduction of interest charges.

Hon. J. Cornell: And capital too.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes. Let me quote a case that I know of, without giving any names. A man who owns a well-improved pastoral proposition secured an overdraft on it of £17,000. Before the crash came that property was worth £60,000 on a cash basis; it was in a favoured locality. When the crash came the owner of the property was asked to reduce his overdraft to some extent. Of course that was an impossible proposition. What happened then was that the property was not run by the man himself, but by the bank which took charge of it. The owner was a man who never went the pace, and he considered that he was on a fair margin when he secured an overdraft of £17,000. Anyone would imagine that he felt he was fairly well off, but when the crash came the whole of his equity was gone, and it is gone to-day.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: That applies to the city as well as to the country.

Hon. T. MOORE: I admit that. Mr. Holmes will also know what happens when the banks take charge of a property. The hon. member knows that up to the time the depression began pastoralists were building up their flocks and doing everything they could to improve the quality of the wool. They were buying from the breeders of good rams sufficient stock to effect improvements each year. Those men knew their business, but the banks know nothing at all about

it, and so the improvements that were being carried on have practically stopped. Thus, instead of the wool being improved in quality, it will in all probability deteriorate and the pastoralists will get a lower price. That is certainly not for the good of the State, but the fact remains it is happening, as my friend who has been through the North-West knows.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Tell us what is the overdraft of the average farmer, the small farmer.

Hon. T. MOORE: That would be rather difficult to say.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would it be £2,000 or £3,000?

Hon. T. MOORE: Probably £2,000 would be the average.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then a one per cent. reduction will make a difference of £20 a year: will that save him?

Hon. T. MOORE: No, I have not suggested it. Money is worth only what it will earn. The man who is working the hardest and is farming the best, finds that his money is earning nothing. Why then should the banks be going after interest?

Hon. J. Nicholson: And suppose the banks collapse?

Hon. T. MOORE: Of course the banks must be left alone and everything else permitted to collapse, everything but the banks!

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What frozen assets are there?

Hon. T. MOORE: There will be many frozen assets in the country if the banks are not careful; if they insist on their pound of flesh.

The PRESIDENT: I remind hon. members who are interjecting that Mr. Moore is addressing the House for the first time, and it is customary for a new member to be permitted to address his remarks to the House without interruption.

Hon. T. MOORE: A person who applied for an overdraft and who considered that his property was worth two-thirds more than the money that was being advanced, thought he was on safe ground, as also the farmer who improved his property out of all knowledge over the period of the existence of the overdraft, thus making the asset of greater value. What has happened to-day as far as finance is concerned, is that we almost have unification. This House and another place are supposed to be dealing with the affairs

of the State, but control has practically passed out of our hands. Before he can do anything the Premier is obliged to go East where the money is. Recently the Premier went over there and got more money. What happened in connection with the last transactions as far as the meeting of Premiers was concerned? Our Premier had nothing to offer: he had no securities to offer. What was done? They manufactured a bond. I do not know how it was manufactured.

Hon. G. W. Miles: With the aid of the printing press.

Hon. T. MOORE: A sum of six or seven millions was provided for the States. Some time ago, when the Labour Government were in power in the Commonwealth, it was suggested by Theodore that notes should be printed to the extent of about 18 millions. Let us see the difference. Instead of 18 millions that Theodore would have had afloat at this time, bearing no interest, we have now 18 millions worth of notes carrying interest. We are pledged to pay that interest, and that is the only difference between Theodore's proposal and the scheme now in existence.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And when Theodore went out everybody thought the country would go ahead.

Hon. T. MOORE: The position generally is unfortunate, because in the country districts to-day there is a feeling that things might be brighter. If one went out to-day and visited people whom he knew a few years ago, he would see by the lines of care on their faces what the depression and what the harassing by the banks had done. The people in the country do not know whether they are going to be left on the land or what is to happen to them after next season. They are being carried on year after year on a sustenance scale. I was at the Agricultural Bank the other day trying to get something for a man who is battling hard, and the first question I was asked was, "Is he getting sustenance?" We have sustenance now for those who are out of work and for men who are on the land, and it is the men on the land to whom the banks are looking to get the country out of its difficulties. These are the people out of whom the banks in the past have made fabulous sums. I could speak at great length on this subject, but I know that members are aware of the position, and that it is not their

desire that the farmers should sink any lower. Mr. Holmes talked about interfering with the privileges of men who have worked for ten years or more in the railways.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is a waste of money.

Hon. T. MOORE: Why did the hon. member single out the men who work with their coats off? Take, for instance, the men in the railway service who work the Mullewa to Meekatharra line in the summer and winter months. Has it ever been suggested that these men loaf on their job? They have to show results at the end of the week, and they do because they are for ever being driven along. Are not those men entitled to privileges just as are those who begin work at 9 o'clock?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Those men are paid overtime, and they should not be entitled to long service leave.

Hon. T. MOORE: That remark shows how little the hon. member knows about the position of those men. Let him ring up the Commissioner and find out for himself how much the men in question have received for overtime. Those men have never loafed on their job. There is only one other matter to which I wish to refer. I notice that in the Governor's Speech the question of unemployment is not dealt with under any heading, in spite of the fact that it is one of the most serious problems with which we are faced to-day. We notice the headlines Railways, Lands, Pastoral and the legislation to be introduced, and then stuck away at the end of the Speech we get this paragraph—

As a consequence of the depression many of our population have suffered loss of employment. With the loan money arranged at the last Premiers' Conference, it is anticipated that part-time work will be found for the majority if not all of those now in receipt of sustenance. This should result in considerable business activity, and a revival of trade generally.

That is a wonderful thing for a Government to put up. Neither the granting of sustenance nor the provision of part-time work will get us back to prosperity. How can it possibly be that the things that are manufactured locally, the meat we are producing and other commodities that are consumed here, will get us back to prosperity while sustenance has to be provided. I may delay members a little by referring to the fact that because in the past a man proved thrifty and

followed the right path in the way of rearing his family and saving his odd shillings to put into a home, he is unable to get sustenance to-day. On the other hand, the man who made it a habit to frequent hotels, and perhaps went to the races now and again and lost his money, has no difficulty in getting sustenance. I should like members to know the position of some of those men who for years have been living on the little money they had saved in better times. Do members stand for the ideas the present Government are promulgating, to bring every man with a few shillings down to a lower level, allowing him to live on what little he has, and see it get less and less month after month? One night when I was not a great distance from the front line in France, and there was a heavy job ahead of us, some doctors, including one or two from this State, were discussing the war. One intelligent young fellow said, "I am satisfied that Lloyd George and the rest of the statesmen, if they had to go over the top tomorrow morning, would just about fix up this job to-night." That man had brains. Likewise, if members had to go through what many men are suffering in this State to-day, the position would be fixed up at once. We talk about equality of sacrifice. There are tremendous sacrifices being made in this country, men seeing their little savings go out day by day, and having no chance of getting even sustenance. And of course they cannot get work until they have sustenance. And the Government, improving on the system they have introduced, are prepared to go farther, and so say that the private employer who is going to do a bit of trade through the Government works that are to be carried out shall take sustenance men into his service, shall not be permitted to employ the men he has had with him in the past. In other words, the Government lay it down that the private employer shall pick up only sustenance men. It suggests to me that there should be a change of Government without delay.

Hon. H. Seddon: Have you any practical suggestion to make about the employment of sustenance men?

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes. I say there are 800 abandoned farms on the hands of the Agricultural Bank. I understand that some of those farms are being carried on by people in their vicinity, but I do know that on those farms the weeds are growing up,

which is the greatest menace a farmer has to face. It is ridiculous to think that we have 800 farms, many of them with houses, and far more than 800 men out of work. I do not for a moment believe that we have finished all the work there is to be done in this State. If I did so I would sell up and get out. Rather do I believe that this is only a passing phase in our history. It would be ridiculous to take up a pessimistic stand and cry "Stinking fish!" As Mark Tapley would say, this is a time to come out strong.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And borrow more money.

Hon. T. MOORE: I have not suggested borrowing money. As a matter of fact the present Premier has no other policy. Every time he goes to Kalgoorlie he cannot help preaching that policy. It seems to be an obsession with him—"If only we could get a loan in London." But I do agree that this is a time when we should do things. There are still in this country people who have a few pounds left. Those people have not taken up a pessimistic stand, that stand so often evidenced by the Government and by the banks. We shall have to get rid of our pessimistic Government.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Anyone would think we have no securities at all in the country.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, one would think it was fit only for blacks. I certainly would not suggest the sand-shifting job the Government are doing down at Harvey, nor do I think Mr. Holmes believes that any good will come to this country by reason of the sustenance work those men are doing. He himself would not go on with that great useless job down at Harvey. The idea underlying it seems to be merely to set men at work. In every road board area in this country there is useful work waiting to be done. Sooner or later Western Australia is going to develop a great fat-lamb exporting industry. If the farmers and graziers do not turn their attention to the fact that the people of the State can not consume the wheat we are producing, it will be a calamity when good times return. I understand that a start has been made with the export of lambs through Fremantle, and I say that at Geraldton the same thing should be in evidence. The building up of a lamb export trade cannot be done quickly, because

first of all the proper type of lamb has to be bred up. We could be doing that work now. I am sure things will come right again. I remember being in a crisis when I was a young man, and I believed the conditions then existing would always remain. Instead of that they passed away, just as the existing phase will pass away. We had a war, and the crowd who remained at home declared we should do everything possible to win the war. They got the idea of sending more and more men out of the country, all at great cost to the country. The interest on our war debt is largely responsible for our existing difficulties. Nothing was said about that while the war was on; nobody reminded us that we would have to pay for it. At all events our political leaders did not, although a few of us declared that after the war we would have to pay for it. I am not moaning about it now, but I say it should have been more generally pointed out and realised. However, the popular cry then was to send more men, while our leaders were silent about the cost. Some of us took up the stand that this country was doing too much, having regard to our geographical position and the relatively few numbers that we had in this young country. We were ridiculed, but now the chickens have come home to roost. And the statesmen of those days, who were applauded for all the speeches they made and the flags they waved, told us we would never trade with Germany again. I heard that mighty statesman, Mr. Hughes, make that assertion, believing that we could do without a country like Germany. Certainly those who held that view were not statesmen. So, too, in regard to Ottawa, it seems the British Commonwealth of Nations would have us believe that we could do everything for ourselves within our own borders. Unfortunately, we all have something to sell, and there are no buyers. If we want to get prices right, we cannot be satisfied with Ottawa, but must have a world-wide conference. We are never going to get satisfactory results until we realise that we have to trade with the whole of the world. There is no other way. I certainly do not approve of the Speech, for it holds out no hope to the people who are right down; no hope whatever. When I get back among my own constituents, what hope can I hold out to them as the result of the sitting of this Parliament? I can offer them no hope at all.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You can tell them we have nationalised the agricultural industry in this State.

Hon. T. MOORE: My friend has nothing to say about the private banks, but I regard them as the worst menace of all. I am hopeful that this depression is not going to last, although I admit that so far there is not any sign of a silver lining to speak about. Until such time as we can persuade the political leaders of Australia, the six Premiers and the Prime Minister, to take up the idea that this country is not down and out, and see about getting money for its development, there is not going to be any real advance. The only idea they seem to have is to load us up with little sums of money that we are spending with no results. It is the puniest attempt ever made by a Government, and I cannot understand Australians getting down to being so puny in their efforts. I cannot support the motion.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.28]: I should like to take the opportunity, Sir, to extend to you hearty congratulations on your re-appointment as President of this Chamber. I think the unanimous decision arrived at on the first sitting of the House was not only a fitting compliment to you, but a testimony of the high regard and esteem in which you are held by every member. It is my sincere wish, and I believe that of every member, that you will long continue to hold the position which you adorn with such ability. I should like also to unite with the Leader of the House and other members in the expressions of sympathy in the loss which both Houses of Parliament have suffered by the deaths of so many of their members since last session, and join in the eloquent tribute which was paid by the Leader of the House to their memory. There was another former member of another place to whom reference was made by Mr. Holmes, namely, the late Mrs. Cowan. Having regard to the public position she held, and the distinctive place she attained in the life of the community here, her loss is deserving of some notice. She was the first woman to enter Parliament. She held many offices in many activities in this State. She was ever ready and willing to give of her best in the interests of the State and of its people. There was no object which stood for the good of the State, and especially of

the women in it, that did not find her in some way or other identified with it. Death has left a heavy toll upon us. One of the late members referred to by the Leader of the House was Mr. Lovekin. I was a colleague of his in the Metropolitan Province, and I should like to be permitted to add a few words regarding him. My association with him served to enhance the high regard I always entertained of his acknowledged capacity and ability, not only in our Parliamentary life, but in other spheres. He had been a close student of Parliamentary procedure for many years, and the wide and varied knowledge gained by him in the field of journalism and in other activities, enabled him to place at the services of Parliament a ripened experience and judgment that was helpful on many occasions when problems of difficulty confronted us. He has left behind a record of many achievements and won for himself a leading place in the public life of Western Australia. He was a most valued citizen and enhanced his citizenship by many kind actions and gifts. For many years he presided over the King's Park Board. The work he did there on behalf of the community is never likely to be forgotten. It was work of which he never wearied. The present development of the Park would probably never have been accomplished, but for his many generous benefactions. His loss is generally and deeply regretted, not only by the electors of the Province, but, I feel sure, by the people of the State. Since the close of the last session the biennial elections have taken place, and certain changes have, in the ordinary course of events, occurred. It is acknowledged that members of this House come into close touch with one another. They form friendships during the occupancy of their seats by reason of their association with their colleagues, even if those colleagues represent some other party than the one to which they belong. Apparently mere membership of party does not interfere with that friendship. That I think is a very good thing; it is good for anyone who is engaged in carrying on the affairs of the country. Accordingly, if an adverse declaration be made by the electors at the poll, and an old member is not returned, a feeling of genuine regret generally exists. I say that with full regard for the fact that there are new members present. No offence to them is intended by

that expression of opinion. We can say, however, that, whilst we regret the loss of those members who have not been returned, we recognise that the electors must determine who shall represent them, and because of that we can, with an open hand, extend the most cordial congratulations to the new members. The first item of interest contained in the Speech is the reference to the fact that on the 7th February last we reached the centenary of the first meeting of the Legislative Council. That event was marked by a special message from His Majesty the King. We have all endorsed the acknowledgment to His Majesty. Whilst the event is of importance to us in connection with the preservation of the records of the House, it should prove of even greater value to those who follow on. No one has been more careful than you, Mr. President, about the preservation of those records, and their value has been added to by the message from His Majesty. At times such as these one is permitted to look back to the day of the first meeting of the Legislative Council in the endeavour to formulate some impressions as to the thoughts and habits of those earlier members. In view of the fact that it was less than two years prior to the first meeting when the first shipload of settlers arrived, and were deposited with their belongings on the then very barren and inhospitable shores of what is now known as Fremantle, one can realise there must have been but little opportunity to erect and provide a suitable building or place of meeting for such a body as the Legislative Council. At that time the people had no roads or bridges between Fremantle and Perth, but this does not seem to have dismayed them. They adjusted themselves to the conditions just as we should do in our time of difficulty. If they were alive to-day they would envy us even in this unfinished Parliament House. I wonder if those members of the first Legislative Council imagined, even in their wildest dreams, that the then colony, which they were helping to found, would grow and develop into the large and important State that it is to-day, capable of earning a revenue last year of over eight million pounds. Did they imagine that the State would ever have created a credit that would enable it to borrow the large sum of over £70,000,000? Would they have predicted that the State would produce over 50,000,-

000 bushels of wheat, over 70,000,000 lbs. of wool or 10¼ million pounds of butter, and export 25,000 boxes of butter and 812,000 cases of fruit? I quote these figures because they are of interest. Could those people have visualised the opening up of the vast hinterland, then a terra incognita to them, with gold and other mines, our railways, roads, towns and townships connected by telegraph and telephone, our handsome buildings, stores and emporiums equal to any found in other large centres of the world? I fear that such pictures or visions did not in those early days present themselves to our predecessors. Had they been alive and could their opinions have been obtained to-day, they might possibly have complained of our extravagance, and have urged us to reform our ways, and endeavour to see what could be done to get ourselves out of the difficulties in which we are plunged. Notwithstanding the advantageous position we are in today by reason of possessing a full knowledge of our territory and its resources and possibilities, I fear that most of us would hesitate to make a forecast of the conditions 100 years hence. One can well imagine the disadvantages of the early pioneers and try to visualise the conditions they lived under. They arrived here without anyone to receive them. They were left with their belongings on the beach to establish homes for themselves and carve out a future. No preparations were made for them in advance as was done for those who came later and as has been done in more recent years. Their lot must have been very hard. They had decided to establish the capital where it now is, in Perth, without even the ordinary means of access to the port. One can well imagine how great must have been their difficulties. These must have been enhanced and added to very considerably by reason of the fact that they were without those comforts which to-day are amply provided for the people. The difficulties then were marked; and those first members of our Legislative Council, and the early settlers, had undoubted difficulties to face—difficulties which we have not been required to encounter. Obviously, those first members and the early settlers recognised that they had a duty to perform: and from the foundations laid by them it is evident they

performed their task well, and in the midst of overwhelming difficulties displayed unsurpassed courage. It can, I consider, well be said of them that the difficulties which they encountered and overcame were such as might have discouraged the stoutest of hearts. I often think that if the same spirit and courage which marked the life of the early pioneers were carried into our present-day life, we would surmount, and indeed triumph over, the difficulties now confronting us. Self-help was a leading principle in the lives of the pioneers. What one reads of them shows that they were resourceful and thrifty. Such a history as that of our predecessors and of the early pioneers is one which should not be allowed to die. It should be kept alive, and it may be found to be a means of helping forward the future success of Western Australia. This year, being the centenary of the first meeting of the Legislative Council, which has been made the subject of a special message from His Majesty, serves to mark a signally great event—and I am sure it is our wish to acknowledge, and to place on record, the debt which the people of this State owe to their predecessors and the early pioneers, and our recognition of the great services rendered in securing and maintaining the great heritage we are now privileged to enjoy.

The mover of the motion, Mr. Bolton, expressed regret that the Speech did not contain some reference to economies to be effected by reducing the number of members in this and another place. He added a suggestion to suspend Parliament for some years and appoint, say, half a dozen men possessed of the best brains in the community—appoint them, I take it, in the capacity of commissioners. Proposals of a somewhat similar nature, I note by the Press, have been made by several road boards and other local governing bodies. Some measure of publicity has been given to these ideas. As I feel that the suggestions are the opposite of being complimentary to members of Parliament, and even perhaps a reflection on the electors, I think this opportunity should be availed of to consider whether or not the proposals are practical and useful, or whether they are impractical. I fully believe that they have been made with the best of intentions, and any remarks I have to offer with regard to them are intended to explain my own personal

views, in the hope that on reconsideration by Mr. Bolton and also by others the matter may appear to them in the same light. The suggestion is to reduce the membership of this House from 30 to 20, and the membership of the Legislative Assembly from 50 to 35. The object is a very worthy one, namely, to reduce the cost of Parliamentary government. I do not cavil at the object at all.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you in favour of that?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The reduction of the cost of Parliamentary representation is quite a worthy object, but the question whether the means proposed is the correct one or not is a totally different matter. I claim that the proposed economy is entirely a financial question, and I suggest that the method proposed is wrong, and that the end should be attained, not by reducing the strength of Parliamentary representation, but by reduction of the allowance received by members. Mr. Bolton omitted to call attention to the fact that a substantial reduction was made some time ago in the allowance to members. A saving equivalent to about £10,000 per annum was then effected. In addition, there is the reduction affecting Ministerial salaries. I am distinctly opposed to reduction of the number of members, and for two reasons. One is the danger to the State; the other is the disadvantage to the electors.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Why should not 20 members do as well as 30?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think I shall be able to show that. It is only a matter of simple proportion, after all. Here I may interpolate a reminder to Mr. Bolton that he suggested six men could do the work of 80, because under his commission proposal Parliament was to be suspended. Now as to the first point—the danger. The danger I see in the proposal is that the reduction of members would lead to the one thing that we as citizens of Western Australia should battle against to the last; and that is unification. If I were a unificationist I would support the proposal; but I am not a unificationist, and I believe Mr. Bolton is not. I believe the hon. member is a loyal Western Australian, and that is why I seek to point out to him my reasons for holding that his proposal is not a good one. I am doing this in a frank and friendly way, and not with the

object of criticising Mr. Bolton. I recognise that the hon. member, coming fresh from the hustings, is actuated solely by the desire to do his very best for the State. The point, however, is that the matter appears not to have been fully considered even by the hon. member or the various bodies which may have expressed themselves in favour of reduction of members. Indeed, I have sometimes thought that the proposal may have originated from supporters of unification, must have originated from them.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The suggestion has been made in this Chamber many times.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Possibly, but unificationists have a good deal to do with it sometimes. The proposal has been ventilated a good deal; and I think people have unwittingly given it their support in the belief that it would accomplish much in the way of economy, whereas, in fact, it would accomplish very little indeed. As I pointed out, there is a way of accomplishing economy without detriment to the electors, and that is by reducing the allowance paid to members. We are sometimes told that Australia is over-governed. Some force is lent to that contention by the smallness of our population; but I ask, should population be the real test? I think not. The real test is the responsibility devolving upon us, not only to develop this huge State, but to aid in the development of the Australian continent. Our first duty, however, is to develop this State. The continent of Australia was divided into separate areas, or colonies, long years before Federation. Why was that done? There must have been a reason behind. There was a very sound reason. It was recognised that no one Government or single authority could successfully develop so large an area. I claim that effective development can be accomplished only by divided control and the continued maintenance of the separate States. The expression of this view merely follows the expressed conviction of one of Australia's leading statesmen, Mr. Latham, the Federal Attorney-General. When passing through here recently on his way back from Geneva Mr. Latham stated clearly at a meeting, because of certain interjections which were made, that he was not a unificationist. He expressed views which showed clearly that he believed in the retention by the States of their separate identi-

ties. And a very good thing, too. Naturally the next question that arises is: Would unification effect any saving? In my opinion, no possible saving would be effected. On the contrary, I am inclined to believe that the cost of administering the affairs of the State would be considerably increased.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You do not wish to infer that Mr. Bolton was advocating unification.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, but I contend that his suggestion would serve to help forward the move for unification, and because of the danger likely to arise if his suggestion for a reduction in the number of members were given effect to, I think it wise to show what those dangers are.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I do not agree with your contention.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You are putting up something in order to knock it down.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is not so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is the solution not to be found in making electorates pay for their own members, or go without them?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That might be one way out of the difficulty.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: If that suggestion were adopted, Mr. Holmes would find that some of his constituents were hard up.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If unification were to become an accomplished fact, undoubtedly there would be a State Commissioner or some other high official placed in authority, commanding a large salary. Many new officers would be appointed and new departments created. There would be brought into existence something in the nature of county councils so that there should be some form of local government. For those reasons, I believe the cost of unification would exceed that of our present State Parliament. In considering the question of costs, we have need only to refer to our experiences under Federation. We can see what has happened in the operations of the various Federal Governments. Each succeeding Government seems to excel the Government that preceded it in the effort to spend money. Instances are numerous of the huge increases in Federal departmental costs. One instance was quoted recently in the Press to show that whereas in pre-Federal days the cost of the Patents Office was infinitesimal, under the Federal re-

time the cost is indeed huge. The same result would follow respecting the other matters I have alluded to. Another disadvantage from unification would be that everything of importance would have to be referred to the seat of Government at Canberra, and the old adage would apply effectively to Western Australia that being out of sight, we would be out of mind. One naturally asks, if we are to become an official-governed territory, what interest officials in control would have in our progress and development as compared with others who have staked their all in Western Australia? Under unification would such an undertaking as the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme have been carried out? I think not. Our position would be distinctly unenviable, and development would be retarded, with the result that the people themselves would be the sufferers. It can be claimed that our present members of Parliament are not backward in keeping our claims and rights before the Federal Government for their consideration. There is one other point to which I will allude in connection with the objections I take to Mr. Bolton's suggestions. The point is an important one and it is that unification would result in the loss of our legislative independence. The disadvantage to the electors themselves would be considerable. I refer particularly to the electors in each of the provinces outside the metropolitan area when I say that they would lose the services that are now rendered by their three representatives in the Council. Although we are well aware of the position, I repeat that the work of members is not confined to the mere sittings of the House. The duties of members of Parliament are constant, and I feel sure that if they were asked to consider the matter seriously, the electors would realise the advantages of having their own members in their local Houses of Parliament. Another matter dealt with by Mr. Bolton was the suspension of Parliament with a view to the appointment of six Commissioners. That suggestion could not be carried out; it is impracticable.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Let us forget it!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Perhaps it would be better. At any rate, it is impossible of realisation. The Constitution Act lays down certain requirements that make the proposal

impracticable. Had Mr. Bolton suggested the appointment of a board of experts—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What, more experts!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, financial experts. If the suggestion had been for a board of financial experts, to act as advisers to the Government or to regulate expenditure of money, probably it would have received some support.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You want business experts?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Financial experts would naturally be business experts.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would your board supersede the Government of the day?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, the members of the board would act in an advisory capacity, occupying the same position relatively as the committee or board appointed by the Commonwealth Government to act in relation to the expenditure of unemployment funds.

Hon. H. Seddon: Who would choose the members of the board?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Government or Parliament.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: Who would pay them, or would they give their services in an honorary capacity?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am merely suggesting that if Mr. Bolton had made some such alternative proposal, it might have received some consideration.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What guarantee would there be that the recommendations of the board would be carried out?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I recognise the difficulties in connection with the establishment of such an advisory board. The fact remains that such a board has been appointed by the Federal Government.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Your proposal is that the Government should appoint a board to tell them what to do?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have little further to add. As Mr. Moore stated, the outstanding problem of to-day is that of unemployment. We all deplore it most seriously. The magnificent address given by Mr. Lansbury, the Leader of the Labour Party in England, a report of which appeared in the Press, was a fine manifestation of the true Christian spirit which should animate us in all matters relating to public life. Probably the utterance will make for good, which we may not realise just at present. The difficul-

ties to-day are so great and serious that we should welcome help from whatever quarter it may come, so that relief may be afforded those in need. Undoubtedly the Government have been faced with a very difficult task during their term of office. I cannot share the views of Mr. Moore regarding the Premier. Sir James Mitchell has shown himself to be a loyal and patriotic man, and no one can refute or deny the fact. There is no more loyal citizen of Western Australia than the present Premier, and he has been ably supported by his colleagues in his efforts to rehabilitate and revive industry. In the face of conditions that exist now, can it be expected that we in Western Australia can suddenly rehabilitate and revive industry when the rest of the world is suffering, in common with us, from depression unheard of in history before?

Hon. T. Moore: Why should one-third of the population starve in a field of plenty?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I would like to know in what way Mr. Moore can prove that one-third of the population are starving.

Hon. T. Moore: Sustenance is next door to it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It shows that the Government are seeking to meet the present position of adversity and are endeavouring to afford relief to those in need. The Government are making every effort to re-establish industry, for only by a revival of industry can the people prosper. The law of supply and demand is closely allied to that governing employment. If there is not the demand, there is a lack of employment.

Hon. T. Moore: But not of food.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Does Mr. Moore suggest that those in need should take what food they like.

Hon. T. Moore: If I were short, I would do so myself.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There are methods whereby such matters can be properly regulated. In conclusion, I hope that some good will emanate from the conferences that have been, or are taking place at present. We must not lose sight of the importance of the Lausanne Conference. The holding of that gathering for the settlement of reparations was a step taken in the right direction, with the one view of rehabilitating industry as the best means of securing relief for those out of employment. Then again the Ottawa Conference is of great im-

portance, and we await the determinations of the delegates with great interest. I believe there is a brighter light in the firmament now than has been apparent of late. I am hopeful that much good will arise from the conferences, and that there will be a re-awakening of activity in industrial life with a gradual absorption of the unemployed, thus destroying the nightmare through which we are passing. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. B. Williams, debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Supply Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [6.16]: As hon. members are aware, it is necessary each session to pass a Supply Bill to give the Government authorisation for the expenditure of money. Unfortunately the passage of the Bill this session has been delayed. I anticipate that the Bill will be before this House for consideration to-morrow and under the Standing Orders it is necessary that a statutory majority, which is 17 members, inclusive of the President, shall be present to pass the legislation. In the circumstances I trust hon. members will make it their business to be present to-morrow in anticipation of our receiving the Bill.

House adjourned at 6.19 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 17th August, 1932.

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