

reasonable course which will stand square with the constituencies.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The lines of the 1910 Act could be followed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the Bill is on the lines I have indicated, I do not think there will be any opposition to it in this Chamber.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: It means that two Council seats will be brought down to Perth.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Not at all.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Obviously you will not be able to retain what you have.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, so far as is reasonably possible. At present there are three provinces in the metropolitan districts, four in the country districts, including Central, which is partly pastoral, two in what is now called mining and pastoral, and one in the North. I submit that with every degree of justice those provinces could be adjusted on the quotas already applied in the case of the Assembly. Any Administration bringing down a Bill off its own bat will be only looking for trouble. If a Commission was necessary to readjust the Assembly electorates, it is equally necessary for the adjustment of the boundaries of provinces. The Bill of the Mitchell Government did the work in a manner with which no fault was found. In the province which you, Mr. President, and I represent, that measure left only three Assembly seats. I trust the Government will at an early date bring down a Bill delegating the work to a Commission. The Commission that redistributed the Assembly seats could redistribute Council seats on a similar basis. In that case I do not think the Bill will have any difficulty in passing this Chamber. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.31 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 15th August, 1929.

| | PAGE |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Question: Railway crossings ... | 270 |
| Address-in-reply, eighth day ... | 270 |

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

QUESTION—RAILWAY CROSSINGS, SIGNALS AND HEADLIGHTS.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, In view of the grave danger to road traffic which exists in connection with Albany Road-Maddington, and other crossings, will he give consideration in the forthcoming Estimates to the provision of efficient warning signals? 2, Is it proposed to extend the equipment of electric headlights to all locomotives?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The question of the best method of dealing with level crossings is now under consideration. 2, At present 150 engines have been fitted with electric headlights and another 60 lights are on order.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the 8th August.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [4.36]: It has been mentioned earlier in the debate that the Government are somewhat fortunate. I consider they are fortunate not because of the reasons which have been advanced from the opposite side of the House, but in the possession of a personnel capable of producing such splendid results for the State as a whole as have been produced during the past five years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Just repeat that!

MR. CORBOY: I am quite capable of repeating it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Government propose to flood my electorate with five hundred workers.

MR. CORBOY: The Leader of the Opposition is endeavouring to make capital, because no doubt to-morrow his interjection

will read quite seriously in the newspapers. Facetious remarks made in the House do not seem a bit facetious when published on the following morning. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to get in an interjection which he means to be facetious, but which to-morrow will read as an assertion that the Government are going to flood his electorate with workers.

Hon. G. Taylor: We have that on the word of the Minister for Mines.

Mr. CORBOY: The member for Mr. Margaret is attempting to bolster up his Leader in this matter, which is just a little joke among ourselves.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is serious.

Mr. Sampson: The Minister for Mines has not withdrawn it yet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORBOY: No, the Minister has not withdrawn it.

The Minister for Mines: I have nothing to withdraw.

Mr. CORBOY: I give the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) credit for sufficient sense not to desire a withdrawal.

Mr. Sampson: It will remain an utterance of the Minister.

Mr. CORBOY: I have no doubt that some hon. members opposite will endeavour to make use of that remark during the elections. Doubtless pamphlets will be issued next March asserting that the Minister for Mines had said the Government would stoop to the baseness of flooding the electorate of the member for Northam with five or six hundred workers.

Mr. Sampson: It has been stated in the House.

Mr. CORBOY: I fancy the hon. member interjecting would be a great deal more disturbed had he thought that the remark was really meant and that it applied to the Swan electorate. The tone of the whole debate so far has shown that the Opposition find it extremely difficult to discover anything on which they can base a case.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are supporting the Government. Tell us what they have done.

Mr. CORBOY: In due course I may possibly have something to say about what the Government have done, have not done, and should have done. After next March the Leader of the Opposition will not find either the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) or myself on his side of the House. One

of us will certainly continue to represent that district, and he will continue to support the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are as bad as the Minister for Mines.

Mr. Thomson: There is nothing like being an optimist.

Mr. CORBOY: Few people are as optimistic as my friend's candidate, who thinks he can come from the neighbourhood and make himself sufficiently popular against both the member for Coolgardie and myself, in the short time available, to win the seat for the Country Party. I rather wish to say something—

Mr. Thomson: What have you been doing so far?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORBOY: In reply to the member for Katanning, I would have said what I wanted to say but for his interjections and those of one or two other members who do not find my remarks palatable. The Opposition are in an extremely difficult position, being faced with the difficulty of dressing their windows for the elections in March. Bereft of new material to put in the windows themselves, they are left without the opportunity of saying that the other fellow's stuff is no good.

Mr. Sampson: It is synthetic.

Mr. Thomson: It is not pure wool.

Mr. CORBOY: Possibly not. If the member for Katanning wants to take me on, I shall have something to say about the iniquity of selection ballots in his district. He may be amused by it. While we give the rank and file of our movement the opportunity to decide who shall be leaders of the movement, who shall govern it, we look with the greatest abhorrence on a selection such as the hon. member's own, in which a small coterie of seven fellows from the bush, friends or otherwise of the hon. member, presumed to say on behalf of thirty branches that there shall be no opposition to him. Those fellows from the bush decided that it would be improper to oppose the Leader of the Country Party at this juncture, and that for the Katanning seat there shall be only one Country Party candidate. No one knows better than we do on this side of the Chamber the iniquities of the selection ballot system. We are looking for something better, but have not been able to find it yet. However, I can assure the hon. member that we would not

dream of stooping to the depth to which his Party have descended in deciding that he shall be the only candidate for Kataning.

Mr. Brown: That has nothing to do with your Party.

Mr. CORBOY: It is beginning to sting. The hon. member now interjecting does not like it either. Would he care for a dose of medicine also?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORBOY: I should not have been led away in this manner, Sir, but for the interjections from members of what has been termed the spring onion corner. When those hon. members set about lecturing the Labour Party on the morals of party government and on the morals of the Labour movement, they should bear in mind that at any rate we do give the rank and file of our party the right to say whether or not we shall represent them. That will be the position, too, after the general election. I for one shall, during the election, make use of the fact that the member for Kutanning must not be opposed, and that the decision not to oppose him was arrived at in a certain way. I shall not go behind his back to say that.

[Several interjections.]

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORBOY: The member for Kataning says the arrangement is perfectly fair and proper. I do not doubt that under the constitution of the Primary Producers' Association that is the case, as otherwise the decision could be upset.

Mr. Brown: Then why growl about it?

Mr. CORBOY: I am not growling about it. I am growling about the fact, not that that decision was arrived at, but that the people willing to accept a decision arrived at in those circumstances are the very people who say our movement is rotten because we give the rank and file power to say whether or not a candidate shall be the selected candidate.

Mr. Sampson interjected

Mr. SPEAKER: Order; There are altogether too many interjections. I will ask the hon. member who is speaking to address himself to the Chair. If he requires protection from interjectors, the Chair will grant it. I will ask other members to assist the Chair in the orderly conduct of the business of the House. I trust I need not

say any more. There are altogether too many interjections, members, possibly, relying on the indulgence of the Chair. It is a part of my duty to be indulgent, but I shall have to take steps to preserve order if there be a continuance of these interjections.

Mr. CORBOY: I regret if perhaps unconsciously I have been neglectful of the observance of the rules of the House and in particular those rules applying to the proper conduct of debate. My excuse, of course, must be that I was led away by interjections. I do think that in the best interests of the State as a whole, a continuance of the present Administration is desirable. I say that because at present we are involved in development schemes of a magnitude previously unknown in this State, with the possible exception of the group settlement scheme initiated by the Mitchell Government. We all know that, unfortunately, the scheme initiated by that Government for group settlement in the South-West has involved the State in a liability which I think has staggered most of us. All of us who think seriously of what this State has to contend with in the future must realise that the burden imposed by the development of the South-West is one which it will be extremely difficult for the State to carry. I do not want the House to think that in saying that I am crying stinking fish. I am not. I am delighted to think the State has done something that will give it a little more economic freedom from those people overseas, or in the Eastern States, who export products to us. But I do think the cost of freeing us from the importation of dairy products from the Eastern States has been so large that we might well have postponed the development of the South-West to a time when we could have had fully developed the wheat and sheep portions of Western Australia, so that we would have been more easily able to carry the burden we shall have to carry as the result of the activities in the South-West. Let me put it this way: I think the south-eastern portion of the State, the portion involved in the 3,500 farms scheme of the present Government, should have been proceeded with first. Take the whole of the south-eastern portion of the State stretching, say, from Geraldton to Esperance, a rough line marking out the portion of the State I refer to. Had we first developed the whole of the wheat and

sheep lands enclosed within that area, and so had the utility of that development and the taxation we would have been receiving and the benefits we would have reaped from all the settlers involved in the development of that portion of the country for sheep and wheat—had we had the whole of those resources available first, we would have been so much better able to tackle the problem of developing the South-West and freeing ourselves from the disabilities of importing dairy produce. So to speak, we have got the cart before the horse, and have developed the wrong end first. However, we have done it and we now have to accept that fact. The South-West, with its group settlement scheme, is an accomplished fact, and we are just entering on the other portion of the scheme—the development of 3,500 farms. So I believe the Administration should be such that the development of our wheat and sheep lands will be completed in the shortest possible time, that the utmost benefit may be made available to the State from those areas. I believe also that it is a case of more haste less speed. During my travels I have come to the conclusion that we have rushed ahead with settlement in that area before there is any possibility of adequately providing the necessary facilities for the settlers whom we have put out there. I believe that with the very best will in the world this or any other Government would be quite incapable of providing, with the means at their disposal, necessary facilities for the settlers and the settlements already put out in those areas. Let me just run out a list of eight settlements I know of where the settlers have been actively engaged for various periods, ranging from a minimum of some 18 months up to, in the case of Karlgarin, I think, six years. The member for Pingelly will correct me if I am wrong.

Mr. Brown: More than that.

Mr. CORBOY: But I mean in active production. I should like just to mention those eight settlements and the distances they are from the railway, in order to show how slight their prospects are of getting the necessary facilities in the immediate future. We have the miners' settlement south of Southern Cross. The average distance from rail of those settlers is close on 30 miles. I refer here to the special settlement under the Miners' Phthisis Act. Then we have the Dulyalbin settlers south-west of Southern

Cross, some 25 miles at least from the nearest rail. Then we have the settlers at Holleton, a district that used to be known in the mining industry as the Glenelg Hills. Those settlers are an average of 37 miles from the rail. At Karlgarin the average distance from rails is 52 miles. The people there have been actively producing for the past six years. Of course their railway has been authorised, but there is still no sign of any active attempt to build it. At Lake Carnody the settlers are at an average distance of 60 miles from the rails. At Lake Barlee the average distance is again 60 miles; at Lake Camm it is 45 miles, and at Lake King it is 52 miles. There are eight settlements, and the average distance from rail for all of them is in excess of 50 miles. We all know that while the Karlgarin railway has been authorised, the others have not. However, after all, that involves only the putting of the necessary Bills through Parliament. It is well known that the Government have only the equipment, engineering staff and so on, to build three railway lines at a time. In every one of the settlements I have mentioned, with the exception of the miners' settlement, which is going in exclusively for fallowing this year, the settlers are already cropping. This, while no provision has been made to authorise a railway for any of them. And even if the necessary railways were authorised, the Government could not build them within the next year or two, for they have only sufficient equipment and plant to build three concurrently—and it takes many months to build them.

Mr. Stubbs: What is wrong with calling for tenders?

Mr. CORBOY: I am not prepared to discuss that at the moment, for it is purely a question of policy. The point is that the settlers have been put out there before the necessary facilities are provided. Take Lake King. It may be said that I am personally interested in that district. I am, because I happen to be one of the settlers at Lake King. Some 90 per cent. of the settlers at Lake King have cropped this season. Many of them have put in as much as 400 acres each and one man, a neighbour of mine, has put in 500 acres. And their average distance from the rail is 52 miles. They have not even a railway authorised.

Mr. Thomson: It is a pretty hopeless proposition.

Mr. CORBOY: This is not a personal grievance with me, for I have not put in a crop this year, and I do not intend to crop until I can see a reasonable chance to get rid of my harvest. I do not intend to attempt to grow a crop at a profit while I am 52 miles from a railway. But unfortunately 90 per cent. of the other settlers have cropped, one putting in 500 acres, a number putting in 400 acres, and quite a considerable number putting in 200 acres or thereabouts this year. I have talked with my neighbours and asked them what is the good of it to them. They say, "What are we to do? We cannot continue to live unless we produce something."

Hon. G. Taylor: Are they all 50 miles from a railway?

Mr. CORBOY: The average distance is 52 miles. The nearest one to the railway is 41 miles distant, and the farthest is, I think, about 68 miles. Of course that is travelling by the roads we must use. I do not think they are so far from the railway by airline or as the crow flies. While I am delighted to know that the Government have realised that the State can only be developed effectively by opening up all the wheat and sheep lands that we have available, nevertheless I think the settlers have been put out in those areas without the provision of proper transport facilities. For the benefit of the Minister for Works, I want to say that for something like 18 months, or at all events for a considerable time, his department had gangs of men out at Lake King cutting and forming 200 miles of roads. They could have cut off 32 miles of their transport distance for stores on two trips a week, or 64 miles per week, by first building a road across Lake King. Instead of that, they carted the full 64 miles per week throughout the period occupied in the cutting of 200 miles of road. The very last job they started upon was the road across the lake. However, by that time winter was upon them, the rains set in, and so that road cannot be completed until next summer. It cannot be completed, although it is a five mile road and they have done all except 18 chains, but because of that 18 chains the whole of the settlers have still to cover an extra 32 miles every trip they make. Had the lake road been done first, it would not only have cut off that distance for the settlers, but would have saved the department an enormous amount of money in the carting

for the gangs on the 200 miles of road on the other side of the lake. I am not putting this forward as a complaint against the Minister, because he could not be expected to keep his finger on every little job, but I put it to the Minister as a hint that he might have inquiries made and if he does, I think he will find someone should be given a rap over the knuckles for the way that job was handled. We have also the development that has been undertaken by the Government in the Forrestania area. I understand there are about 600 blocks in that area, and allowing a very lenient margin, one would say the average distance is at least 70 miles from rail. That area has been developed to the extent of cutting roads to every block. I do not know whether that work has been completed, but it was intended to complete 200 acres of clearing and fallowing on each block in anticipation of settlers going on to the blocks.

The Minister for Lands: Nothing so stupid was ever intended.

Mr. CORBOY: A considerable amount of such work was done.

The Minister for Lands: No, it was merely emergency work.

Mr. CORBOY: It may have been a matter of emergency to provide work, but nevertheless a considerable amount was done in that direction. The Forrestania area has to be settled. It is not intended to cut roads and do all the other work without putting people on the land, and yet we have all the other areas at present settled to be served by rail first of all. This area, 70 miles from rail, whichever way one may go, has also to be settled, and some more definite provision should have been made so that the people would know what they were going to get in the way of transport facilities.

Mr. Mann: We understood the matter was only just being investigated.

Mr. CORBOY: I hope that the question of railway facilities for those areas is not just being investigated. In fact I am sure that is not so.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is not finalised.

Mr. CORBOY: No. We are aware that the Government are developing those areas in conjunction with the Commonwealth and British Governments under the migration agreement, and naturally it is necessary to arrive at a decision agreeable to the three

parties before anything definite can be done. We know it is sometimes very difficult to frame proposals that will be approved by all the parties to an agreement of that kind. Nevertheless, I believe it is high time that the settlers who have been put into those areas were informed exactly where they stand in regard to transport and other facilities, so that they could judge their prospects for the future.

Mr. Mann: Are the settlers already there?

Mr. CORBOY: Of course they are. Had the hon. member been in his place a little earlier, he would have heard me say that one settler has cropped 500 acres, several settlers have cropped 400 acres and a considerable number have cropped 200 acres and more. Perhaps the hon. member was referring to the Forrestania area. If so, I might inform him that that land has not yet been thrown open for selection.

Hon. G. Taylor: Some of it has been cleared, has it not?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: Not cleared, only cut down.

Mr. CORBOY: Might I say, without going into detail, that I hope the experience of the settlers with regard to the cutting down that has been done at Forrestania will not be similar to that of the Newdegate settlers of the cutting down there. I am afraid that they will have the same experience. I met men in Perth who had been engaged in the work of cutting down, and they told me that they had deliberately hoodwinked the bank inspector about the manner in which the cutting down had been done. Stumps were not sapped and so on. I told them they were not men at all if they had been guilty of that sort of thing.

The Minister for Lands: Was that at Forrestania?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. I am merely repeating what they told me, and let me repeat what I said to them. I said, "You are not men at all and you are not giving the country a fair deal. You have no right to consideration from the present or any other Government in the matter of work if you do that sort of thing, because you are not playing the game by the Government, the country or the settlers who will take up that land." I sincerely hope it did

not happen, but I feel sure it did happen, because men who had been working down there told me of it and I told them plainly what I thought of them.

Hon. G. Taylor: They were not foreigners, were they?

Mr. CORBOY: No, unfortunately. The hon. member asked about foreigners. I do not doubt for a moment that at the next election the question of foreigners will be used as a red herring across the trail, but let me say that some 300 acres of my block have been cleared and not one tree has been chopped down by a foreigner.

Hon. G. Taylor: You did not chop them down.

Mr. CORBOY: I chopped some, but not too many of them. When I undertook that work it was done to amuse myself. The question of foreigners is one that will be dragged up at the next election. I say it is possible and easy to get competent British labour to do the work. I have not had any difficulty to get such labour and I am a new chum at the game. Yet I hear members of this House who have been on the land for many years saying that they cannot get British labour. It makes me wonder whether they really mean it or whether they are trying to bolster up a case in favour of lower wages.

Member: Perhaps they cannot get British labour at their own price.

Mr. CORBOY: That may be so. In confirmation of my statement, let me mention that I know a member of the legislature in this State who had a block granted to him one afternoon. The fact was published in the "West Australian" of the following day, and at 20 past five the next morning he was at the Jugo-Slav home in William-street to get labour. If anyone told me that he had made any genuine attempt to get British workers, well, I would not believe him.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will not say on which side of the House he sits?

Mr. CORBOY: I did not intend to do so, but as the hon. member has asked for it, he may have it. That legislator sits on the hon. member's side. I am convinced that some of the settlers do not make any genuine effort to get British labour. I do not say that that sort of thing is general, but it was certainly what was done by the legislator I have indicated. There are other difficulties one must consider in re-

gard to land settlement, particularly in that part of the State. Might I suggest to the Minister for Lands that a careful study by an officer competent to judge of the conditions in the Yilgarn area around Southern Cross might be of the utmost value in deciding what should be done in the south eastern areas. I seriously suggest that it would be worth while to detail one or two officers who really know their business—whether from the Agricultural Bank or the Lands Department is immaterial—to go into those areas and spend a week or two amongst the settlers, studying their difficulties and finding out how the country should be farmed. It is all very well for the Minister to say he knows how it should be farmed. I maintain that the only man whose advice is really worth having is the Agricultural Bank inspector. In new areas where all the settlers are clearing, building and fencing, the inspector does not get sufficient time to consider the problems of proper farming methods and so on.

The Minister for Lands: What about the experimental farm?

Mr. CORBOY: The Ghooli farm constitutes one of the finest experiments the State has undertaken, and it is of the utmost value to the area. I am not deerying the work of the department in that direction, but there are many lessons to be learnt by competent officers mingling with farmers in order to find out how men with a small amount of capital can best be put on their feet. The individual settler has not an unlimited treasury on which to draw for buildings, stock and other needs. I do not suggest that this has been done at Ghooli because, except in regard to buildings, the conditions have been confined to those that would operate with the ordinary settler. Even so, there are many problems on which advice would be welcome. The bank inspectors do not have the time to study those problems, but are pushed from pillar to post. They are supposed to visit each settler once every four weeks. They are unable to do that, but they make an effort to see each settler once every six weeks. When they call, they have to check up the man's clearing, fencing or building, assess the value of it, write out his credit authority, and get on to the next place. They have no time to stop and discuss how the settler might best proceed in order to get on his feet.

Mr. Stubbs: What is their method of transport?

Mr. CORBOY: Most of them travel by motor car, though some have had difficulty with their cars. One young fellow abandoned his car and bought a horse and saddle. It was the only means by which he could get through the country owing to the exceptionally good winter. He is not the only one who has changed his method of transport. However, the inspectors manage to get around and generally the settlers do their utmost to assist the inspectors. Nevertheless, the inspectors who possess the knowledge have not the time to give the advice essential to the Minister to enable him to decide the policy for that country. I would like the Minister to get some one, such as Mr. McLarty or Mr. Cook, to spend some weeks in that country.

Mr. Mann: Do you think Mr. Cook has anything to learn up there?

Mr. CORBOY: There is very little that one could teach Mr. Cook about farming, but if he went and lived amongst those settlers for a couple of weeks, I think he would get a different conception of the methods that might best be adopted for the development of that country. I do not suggest that those men on the land can teach Mr. Cook anything about farming.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is there anything peculiar about that country which requires that it shall be exceptionally treated?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. There is only one way to develop that country. It cannot be developed as the rest of the wheat belt has been developed, namely on wheat alone. The rest of the wheat belt was first established on wheat alone. After the farmer has got on to his feet he has gone in for sheep and other stock. It is essential in the country I speak of that the settlers should go in for sheep from the beginning to assist them in getting established.

Mr. Mann: How do you suggest they should get fodder for their sheep before they have done any cropping?

Mr. CORBOY: I do not suggest that. After they have cropped for a year or two they would be in a position to keep sheep. By its policy, however, the bank does not provide them with the means to get the stock even after they have grown the feed. A different policy should be adopted for this particular area, by which the farmers may be enabled to secure a loan sufficient to purchase a small flock in addition to growing

wheat. I also believe there should be more liberal assistance so that they may make their holdings dog proof. In the older settled districts Mr. McLarty has always found that an allowance of £20 per mile for this class of fencing has been sufficient. Not one of those districts has ever growled about that sum. That assistance has been granted after the farmers have been well established on their holdings, and when they have decided it is worth their while to go in for sheep. This sum has been sufficient to enable them to fence their land for stock. In the other areas I speak of, where it is necessary to stock up almost immediately, the fencing allowances made by the banks are not sufficient to enable the settlers in the initial stages to keep out the dogs and rabbits, which must be kept out if the stock and crops are to be preserved. I agree that there have been no complaints from other districts, but in those other parts it is desirable that the policy should be altered so that fencing and stocking may be carried on very quickly after the settler has a decent acreage cleared. Provision of water has not received quite the attention it deserves. I am not blaming the Minister for Water Supplies. I have always found him sympathetic when he has been asked to consider the installation of new water facilities, but he has been handicapped by the sum allowed to him by the Treasurer. Just as railways are of importance in the opening up of a new area, so is it important that it should be supplied with water facilities. Some effort should be made to provide the Minister with the necessary funds to enable him to carry out various works, which he knows as well as I do should be put in hand in the district I speak of. I understand that for some five years or so the Minister has had on the Estimates certain extensions from the goldfields main. Each year it has been found impossible to provide the necessary funds for these extensions. In view of the report we have had of the recent meeting of the Loan Council, whereby the borrowing rights of the State have been cut down, I fear it is probable that this year the sum will be struck off the Estimates. If that does happen, the Minister will get the hottest time of his life when he next comes to Southern Cross. We have always been very friendly with him, but are now beginning to get a little impatient. There is an area in the district that has been settled for seven years. It has produced considerable quantities of wheat. Astonishing

as it may be to some of the "spring onion party," as the member for Irwin calls it, it holds the district record for the State with an average of 18 bushels to the acre from 66,000 acres. That area is still awaiting the decision of the Government as to whether they will provide the water extensions or not.

Mr. Mann: Over what period is that?

Mr. CORBOY: The record was for last year. It is the district average record, and is the highest ever put up in the State. The reason for it was that 3½ inches of rain fell in September.

Mr. Ferguson: I hope the district will do the same thing again this year.

Mr. CORBOY: I hope so. I was there some ten days ago. The crops had stood in such a way that if they get a decent September rain they will probably yield at least a 15-bushel average. The crops are looking well throughout the area. I do want to make a plea to the Government to do their utmost to provide for these areas both water supplies and railway facilities. I also suggest that, as a matter of policy, they should seriously consider providing the settlers with means whereby they can fence their holdings and carry stock in the early stages, instead of in the later stages. The Government should also take into consideration the question of providing further facilities to enable the settlers to carry out a programme of fallow. They have provided a fallowing programme enabling the farmer to fallow 150 acres. That was a very wise move. A man is allowed £300 to fallow and cultivate twice 150 acres. The settlers I speak of are, however, in such a position financially that, though they may take advantage of the facilities offered, in the following year they will be unable to repeat the experiment without further assistance. It would, therefore, be advisable to extend the fallowing provision so that a man will get at least two successive years of fallowing on his block to enable him to secure two decent crops in successive years. This would give him a chance, with proper farming methods, of carrying on by himself. We are all convinced that the greatest hope these men have of succeeding is when they start from the very inception to use proper farming methods, fallowing and properly cultivating their soil, and doing all those things requisite to enable them to reap the utmost harvest they can from the minimum of expense. The

best way to achieve that is to place them in the way of keeping stock, provide them with water facilities and the money for fencing, and enable them to carry out a two years fallowing programme. I hope for a continuance of the policy of the Mines Department so that prospecting may be carried on. I look forward to further sums being provided to assist the Minister in extending the work he is already doing. Outside of the goldfields, I do not think the work of the Mines Department is appreciated to its full value. Those of us who are in close touch with what is being done by the department know that, in every direction in which a reasonable case for assistance can be put up, it is not only giving monetary assistance, but offering advice from the best of experts, amongst whom are some of the finest men it is possible to get. I hope the Treasurer will be able to find further sums so that the Minister may be able to extend his operations to a greater extent than he can at present. Particularly may I suggest the need for more boring plant for testing fields which have been big producers in the past, but are lying dormant to-day. In the Coolgardie electorate, and in my own around South-east Cross, there are areas which would handsomely repay expenditure on deep boring to ascertain what values are there. I know the Minister has had the utmost difficulty in allotting the boring plants at his disposal to the districts requiring them. I trust the Treasurer will find it in his power to give the Minister for Mines greater facilities than has been possible in the past.

MR. FERGUSON (Moore) [5.27] Western Australia is to be congratulated on having such a splendid season, in this, its centenary year. As a Western Australian born and one who for the last 30 odd years has taken a keen interest in the seasons, I can truthfully say I never remember having seen a season that has opened so auspiciously as this one, and which promises to result in such a wonderful harvest from the extreme north to the extreme south of the State. With one or two exceptions, in small areas in the pastoral country where the season has not been as good as it might have been, the season has been absolutely ideal. Everywhere there is a promise of a bountiful harvest of wheat and other primary products. I realise that the most critical period for the wheat growing industry

comes during the ensuing four or five weeks but we have reason to expect that there will be a continuance of the wonderful rains we have had throughout the winter, and that we shall have a record harvest in this the hundredth year of our existence. It is a great pity that in our Centenary year, and with an otherwise auspicious outlook, we should have unemployment in our midst to the extent we have. That is a matter for great regret. There can be nothing so demoralising to a man as the fear of unemployment. The married man, with a wife and family, must find it particularly hard, when he realises it is difficult for him to secure employment and earn by honest toil the wherewithal to purchase the necessities of life for those dependent upon him. Some members have blamed the Government for the unemployment, but I am not prepared to ask them to shoulder all the blame. One is forced to the conclusion that in some respects the policy of the Government has not made for that degree of employment in the country we might have expected. It is not quite fair to blame the Government for the faults arising from inferior seasons in other parts of Australia. There is no doubt that factor has added largely to the number of unemployed men we have in Western Australia. In the speech with which His Excellency opened the fifth session of the thirteenth Parliament, we had an assurance that certain legislation would be placed before us for consideration. Mention was made of an amendment to the Main Roads Act and I am glad indeed that the Government intend to amend that legislation. It will be admitted, I think, that that Act is entirely unsatisfactory from the points of view of the local governing authorities, the Government, and the people generally. I understand that the Minister is willing to provide in the amending legislation for taking 25 per cent. of the motor traffic fees paid to local authorities, in lieu of the existing system of allocating the amounts to be paid by each local authority towards main road construction. If that is done, it will be beneficial although it may adversely affect certain country road boards for the time being. Such a provision will place the boards on a more satisfactory basis and in the long run will be more equitable than the absurd provisions contained in the existing Act. Under those provisions the Main Roads Board are called upon to assess the benefit derived by a specific road board dis-

trict or municipal council because of the construction of a main road. They can call upon that authority to pay accordingly. In my opinion neither the Main Roads Board nor any individual could possibly assess accurately the value of any such road to a given district. I am sure that the State will derive benefit if the Main Roads Act is amended along those lines. During recent months we have had a change in the ministerial control of legislation affecting local governing bodies. The Minister for Works, who formerly controlled that legislation, has handed over the administration of those Acts of Parliament to another Minister. It has been suggested by many local governing bodies, a number of whom are in my electorate, that a tribute should be paid to the efforts of the Minister for Works while he was in control of the local governing authorities. Mr. McCallum has taken a keen interest in the work of those bodies and a thousand road board members and municipal councillors throughout Western Australia can testify to the sympathetic manner in which he has administered the legislation governing their operations. They may have disagreed with that Minister on questions of policy but they cannot fail to pay a tribute of appreciation to him upon the able manner in which he has controlled road boards and municipalities in the past. Now that he has handed over the administration of the Acts concerned to another Minister, I express the hope that the new Minister will this session introduce a Bill to amend the Road Districts Act. The present measure does not meet the requirements of the local governing authorities throughout the State. Conference after conference of road board delegates have requested amendments and for many years past nothing has been done. Of course, the Minister for Works endeavoured to have amending legislation passed on two occasions but the Bills contained amendments that did not meet with the approval of Parliament nor yet with that of the local governing authorities. Finally the Minister said that unless certain amendments he required were agreed to, no Bill embodying other amendments would be introduced. I hope the present Minister will not adopt the same attitude but will give Parliament an early opportunity to deal with that legislation. The same remarks can be applied

to the Cattle Trespass Act. I think that measure must have originated when Noah let the cattle out of the Ark. So far as I know there has been no amendment since its introduction, and it is a most obsolete piece of legislation that is not used and is not honoured except in the breach. I hope the Government will give the House an opportunity to deal with that Act. During recent months we have had information regarding the prices of many products that the farming community have to dispose of in the markets of the world. At one time the price of wheat was quoted at such a low figure that growers in Western Australia were much alarmed. They could not see how it would be possible to make ends meet with prices at such a figure. Owing to an unfortunate catastrophe in another part of the world, wheat prices improved recently and now the general tone noticeable in country districts and in commercial circles in the city is much improved. Nevertheless the actual prices at which primary products have to be offered to-day are so perilously close to the cost of production that it behoves Parliament and everyone interested in the welfare and prosperity of the State to do everything possible to reduce the cost of production, or find some means by which those engaged in our primary industries can increase production per acre. One way by which the Government can assist is by helping to relieve the farming community of some of the pests with which they have to contend. For instance, the emu pest in the northern areas of the wheat belt, particularly in and about the Northampton country, has assumed alarming proportions and has seriously depleted the returns of farmers in that locality. Not only have the yields decreased in consequence, but the farmers do not know how they can cope with the position unless they receive assistance from the Government.

Mr. Kennedy: It has been offered to them.

Mr. FERGUSON: And I hope that assistance will be accepted by them and that the Government will extend that assistance. The kangaroo is another pest. There are certain areas in my electorate where some of the farmers have been nearly ruined because of the depredations of the pest. I refer to settlers in the country west of Gin-gin and in the vicinity of Moore River. Some of the farmers have endeavoured to

secure the services of kangaroo shooters to destroy the animals, which not only take the feed, but seriously affect the stock carrying capacity of the holdings and destroy fences. I find there is a disposition on the part of the department administering the game laws not to give these people the assistance they desire in order to rid themselves of the pests. I know of one individual who has killed 1,500 kangaroos during the last few months. Despite that, his position is not relieved to any extent because the kangaroos go outside his property and breed on the neighbouring Crown lands. It is absurd to require permission to destroy such pests merely because they are outside a farmer's property. I understand that there is no provision in the game laws by which the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, who administers the Act, can give permission to a farmer to go outside his holding and destroy kangaroos that may have been causing him trouble. If that is the position, the Act should be amended so as to enable the Minister or the Chief Inspector to give permission to farmers to go on Crown lands and destroy vermin. The depredations of the kangaroos represent an economic loss to the State and almost ruin to many settlers. Farmers have endeavoured to establish subterranean clover and lucerne on their properties, which has entailed considerable expenditure upon irrigation, only to find that the kangaroos have had most of the benefit of their endeavours. Hon. members will realise the necessity for the existing legislation being amended so as to assist these settlers. Other pests that we have to contend with include the red-legged earth mite and the lucerne flea, which are doing a lot of damage to the pastures in different parts of the State. I do not blame the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) for these pests, as the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) did the other evening, but the fact remains that we have these pests and we should do everything in our power to rid the country districts of them. I want to refer to the losses that the State has sustained because of the ravages of the braxy-like disease, which first made its appearance in the eastern agricultural areas. I do not think it is generally realised what that loss really has amounted to. It is gratifying to know that an officer of the Agricultural Department has been inquiring into this matter and it is reported that he has discovered the origin

of the disease. There have been various theories as to how it originated and how the stock contracted the disease. I understand that Mr. Bennetts has definitely ascertained the origin of the disease. In answer to questions that I put to him, the Minister for Agriculture stated that Mr. Bennetts' report had appeared in the publication issued by the Council of Scientific Research. It is useless to publish a report of such wonderful value to the agricultural community in a journal like that! Why has it not been published broadcast throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia so that those interested can ascertain what has been done? I endeavoured to get a copy of the report, but we cannot get one even in Parliament House! I was informed that there is one at the Agricultural Department and that I could peruse it there. That is not the way to deal with such a wonderful discovery. I suggest to the Minister that he make known the result of the investigations by Mr. Bennetts so that the farmers may become acquainted with the details. There are between 20,000 and 30,000 primary producers in this State who want to know what has been done. I trust the necessary steps will be taken to advertise freely the work done by Mr. Bennetts and that the farmers will be informed as to whether any remedy has been found for checking the heavy losses of sheep due to this disease. At a meeting of sheep men held in the eastern districts recently it was suggested that considerably more assistance might be given to the officer who is conducting these investigations than has been given to him; and it was held that the Minister might well see fit to establish a laboratory on the Avondale estate in the Beverley district, where this disease first made its appearance and where its ravages have been so severe. I should like to urge on the Minister that something should be done in this direction; because a few pounds spent now in an endeavour to check the disease might have the effect of saving many hundreds of pounds to the people of the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: Has Mr. Bennetts discovered a remedy?

Mr. FERGUSON: I understand that no definite remedy has been discovered, and that Mr. Bennetts is anxious that further facilities should be afforded him for the prosecution of his research into the matter. He hopes to be able to place before the

people of the State some remedial measures in connection with the pest. So far, I understand, no definite remedies have been discovered. A little time ago an agitation was started by the sheep men of Western Australia, mainly through the Royal Agricultural Society, the Merino Stud Breeders' Association, the Pastoralists' Association, the Primary Producers' Association, and the Road Boards Association, in an endeavour to have Alsatian dogs prohibited from landing in Australia. After a good deal of negotiation the Prime Minister agreed to prohibit the landing of those dogs, and I understand that for a period of five years none of those dogs will be allowed to land in Australia. It would be absurd to leave the matter at that. Requests have been made to every State Government in Australia—who of course have control of the dogs already in the Commonwealth—that steps should be taken either to sterilise or to destroy every Alsatian dog at present in Australia. Some of the State Governments see the necessity for doing this, while others do not. But at a recent conference of Ministers of Agriculture from all the States a resolution was unanimously carried agreeing to ask the various State Governments to introduce legislation with a view to having this work carried out. In the interests of the sheep-growing industry of Australia I contend that the only commonsense way to carry out and extend the prohibition of the landing of Alsatian dogs from outside Australia is to render impotent the dogs already here. In this respect I want to pay a tribute to the work done by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay), who is the representative of the sheep men in the farming districts on the Vermin Advisory Board. In season and out of season the hon. member has urged that something should be done in this direction. I feel that a tribute should be paid to him in this regard, because no other man in the State has done so much in an endeavour to show the damage these dogs have wrought and the danger they represent to the sheep growers of Western Australia. We want to see that every Alsatian in Western Australia is either sterilised or destroyed. If a dog owner or dog fancier wishes to keep an Alsatian, I do not think he should be prevented from doing so, provided the dog is not a

danger to the public and so long as the owner is willing to have the animal sterilised.

Mr. Latham. What about the bitches?

Mr. FERGUSON: I would have the bitches sterilised, just as I would the dogs. It will be quite an easy matter to have the females spayed, or in some other way prevent them from perpetuating their species. There has been in Western Australia ample proof that the Alsatis are not only a menace to the sheep industry, but are also a source of danger to human beings.

Member: That in itself is a risk.

Mr. FERGUSON: So great a risk that it is not worth while our taking it. Moreover there is no compensating advantage for the farmer when we allow these dogs to come in here. Even in the Old Country, where the Alsatian is a popular breed of dog, these animals are not allowed out, except on a leash or under the control of some competent person. Otherwise they are liable to be destroyed. The danger they represent to human beings is due no doubt to the strain of wolf introduced into them from time to time. There is ample proof of the danger they are to human beings, apart altogether from the menace they are to the sheep industry. As showing how necessary it is that some steps should be taken to protect us from these dogs, the Ministers for Agriculture in several of the States, certainly in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales, are preparing to introduce legislation under which Alsatis will be sterilised or destroyed. I have just received a letter from the secretary of the Tasmanian Farmers and Orchardists' Association, intimating that the Minister for Agriculture in Tasmania has already issued instructions to the Parliamentary Draftsman of that State to prepare a Bill on the lines agreed to at the recent interstate conference of Ministers for Agriculture. So I hope the Minister for Agriculture in Western Australia will follow suit and agree to the course suggested by the Ministers for Agriculture in the Eastern States, and have legislation introduced this session for the sterilisation or destruction of Alsatian dogs. As showing what a danger they might be, I want to point out that we have in Western Australia an association of dog fanciers, a good many of whom were

very keen on the Alsations. But at a meeting of this association after the agitation for the prohibition from the landing in Australia of these dogs, and for the sterilisation or destruction of those already here, those dog fanciers decided that in the interests of the Alsations it would be advisable to make special inquiries, with a view to determining whether they were a useful addition to our dogs, or whether, on the other hand, they were likely to become a menace. The association appointed a special committee to go into the matter. The idea behind the appointment of that committee was to prove that the Alsatian was a jolly fine dog, one that would be a very useful addition to the breeds of dogs that we have in Western Australia. The irony of it is that the special committee arrived at a quite different conclusion. I have here their report, signed by the secretary of their association. This is what they say—

1. The long list of convictions registered against the Alsatian wolf dog throughout Great Britain, as ruthless sheep killers, constitutes them a menace to pastoral pursuits in Australia, or any other country. 2. (a) Their (i.e. Alsatian) intelligence does not exceed the cunning of the average cross-bred dog, and is undoubtedly inferior to such pure-bred shepherd dogs as the bearded Scotch collie, the smooth-coated collie, and the rough-coated collie, as well as the Australian production, the kelpie; (b) the pronounced habit of the Alsatian dog is collusion; singly they wander, in pairs they reach agreements, and in greater numbers, if given the opportunity, they form packs; (c) there is no useful canine function for the Alsatian wolf dog in Australia that is not better performed by breeds of dogs already established here. 3. The Alsatian wolf dog should be prohibited from entering Australia for the reasons given above, and the very grave danger that would accrue from the inevitable promiscuous matings and the resultant mongrel type of dog such matings would let loose in our vast unprotected areas.

Those are the findings of the special committee appointed by the dog fanciers' association of Western Australia to inquire into this matter. The report is signed by John Robertson, honorary secretary. So it will be seen that in the interest of the sheep breeders of Western Australia it is time something was done to carry out the ideas of the conference of the Ministers for Agriculture and have this matter attended to. I urge upon the Government

that something should be done this session. If it is not done quickly, it will mean that the dogs that are already here will be bred from, and instead of our having just a few to be sterilised or destroyed, we shall have a largely increased number. During my first session of Parliament I had occasion to bring under the notice of the Government the necessity for making additions to the State hotel at Wongan Hills. It is the only State hotel in my electorate, and it is the only hotel in my electorate that is not fulfilling the proper functions of an hotel. The reason for that is that the accommodation provided is totally inadequate for the requirements of the district. If you, Sir, or I or any other private individual were the licensee of that hotel the Licensing Bench would insist upon considerable additions being made to the hotel, and increased facilities for the convenience of the people. But because it is a State hotel, the Government have taken no steps whatever to increase the accommodation to comply with the demands of a district such as that of Wongan Hills, the township of which is the centre of an extensive and flourishing agricultural area. As I say, during my first session of Parliament I brought up this matter. Subsequently the Premier took an interest in it, and the Minister in charge of State hotels also took an interest in it, and in consequence a sum of money was placed on the Estimates to provide for the necessary additions to the State hotel at Wongan Hills. But later on the matter was allowed to drop, and so far as I am aware nothing whatever has been done. In last December, when the Minister for Works was good enough to accompany me to Wongan Hills to open the new roads board office and the new town hall, the matter was referred to him and, at our request, he was good enough to send a telegram to his department in Perth, asking what had become of the project. The Minister will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe the reply he received from his department was that there was a sum of money on the Estimates, that plans had been prepared and submitted to the Chief Secretary's department for approval, and that the construction of the additions would be proceeded with immediately. That was last December, but nothing whatever has been done yet. I urge upon the Premier that he

should reinstate that sum on this year's Estimates and that these additions should be built without further delay. They are absolutely necessary, as was seen by the Minister for Works when visiting Wongan Hills. He knows that the conveniences at the hotel are totally inadequate. There is not in the hotel a room more than big enough to swing a cat in. Recently the manager of that hotel was prosecuted for a breach of the Licensing Act. Let me read what the magistrate on the bench said when dealing with the case. It was as follows:—

By the act the manager of the hotel committed an offence, but under the circumstances over which he had no control, we are of the opinion that the passage should be considered a parlour, as the State Hotels Department has failed to provide suitable accommodation for serving bona fide travellers under the Licensing Act. Taking these facts into consideration, and the manner in which the hotel has been previously conducted, the case will be dismissed. We recommend the Police Department to take action with the Licensing Bench to have the matter put in order.

I can only describe it as red hot that the court should refer in terms like those to a hotel conducted by the State. If the hotel were privately owned, the conditions that prevail there would not be allowed to continue for a moment. During the last few days the Press has reported that the Midland Railway Company had approached the Government with a view to securing permission to construct certain spur lines from their railway, and we have learnt that the Government have not seen fit to grant the approval, believing as they do, I presume, that the settled policy of Australia is that all public utilities should be State-owned. I do not think many people will quarrel with that point of view, because in a country like Australia it is not possible to have utilities such as railways owned by private companies as they are in the old country, where there is such keen competition between the different railways. However, something should be done in an endeavour to develop the country that lies adjacent to the Midland railway. We have been agitating for many years to get that country opened up to a greater extent than it is at present, but ours has been as a very small voice crying in the wilderness, for nothing much was done to back us up. We had hoped that our country would be developed under conditions similar to those applying to the rest of the wheat and sheep

land in Western Australia, but we have been let slide by the various Governments during the last 20 years. Then we had hoped that attention would be given to our country prior to the development of the South-West, but again we were left behind; the South-West was taken in hand and group settlement was inaugurated there. Then we had hoped that we would be due for attention after that, but now the Government are devoting the whole of their land settlement energies to the development of the 3,500 farms scheme in the country lying between Southern Cross and the Southern Ocean. We have no quarrel with the Government on that account. We know that the country south of Southern Cross has to be developed, but we do say that our territory, which is equally as fertile as the country south of Southern Cross and has a more generous and more reliable rainfall than almost any other wheat and stock-producing district in the State, is entitled to some of the attention that the Government bestow on land settlement.

The Minister for Railways: Was not a new railway opened there recently?

Mr. FERGUSON: The Minister is referring to the Amery-Northwards railway.

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

Mr. FERGUSON: I admit that that railway was built, and I think the Government are entitled to considerable credit for having constructed it. It shows that that particular locality offered bright prospects in every way for profitable settlement. It is not to that country that I am referring particularly; I am referring to the country between Perth and Geraldton adjacent to the Midland line.

The Minister for Lands: Well, we built the Piawaning-Northwards line some years ago.

Mr. FERGUSON: Built! Just added a few miles to it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They drove the last spike; we built it.

The Minister for Railways: But you said we had given you no attention.

Mr. FERGUSON: There is no necessity to quarrel about that; the line was justified no matter who built it. But there is equal justification for building other lines, and we want to do something to secure attention from the Government. In the territory adjacent to the Midland railway is an area known as Dandarragan. During the recent tour from Perth to Northampton organised

by the General Manager of the Midland Railway Company, the visitors were conducted over a small portion of the Dandarragan country and they were amazed at what they saw. They did not think there was anything quite like it in the State. I am inclined to believe there are very few spots like it in the whole of Australia. I read a report that was published in England and it stated that there was nothing better than the Dandarragan country in the whole of Australia. We desire that that country should be opened up and developed. There are a good many thousand acres—I might almost say hundreds of thousands of acres—in that locality, the development of which as dairying country would be amply repaid. It would be far more profitable than any development in the South-West would be. The land is eminently suitable for dairying and it is also suitable for viticulture, but as that industry is more or less under a cloud, the Government would not be wise to undertake its extension at this juncture. What we in the Midland country desire is that the Midland Railway Company should be allowed to construct spur lines to develop the land or that the Government should undertake to build spur lines. A railway that would run from the Midland line westward to tap the fertile Dandarragan country and then continue in a north-westerly direction to the vicinity of Hill River is amply justified. Such a line would serve hundreds of thousands of acres of Crown lands that are still available for selection, and I know many men who would like to settle in that country, but the Minister for Lands in his wisdom has seen fit to withdraw it from selection, possibly pending classification.

The Minister for Lands: No. Any application made for that country is always admitted.

Mr. FERGUSON: I know that several applications have been submitted and have been refused on the ground that the settlers would be more than 12½ miles distant from a railway.

The Minister for Lands: Not there.

Mr. FERGUSON: That will be good news to a number of prospective settlers who are prepared to take up that land now, notwithstanding that it is as far distant from a railway as are some of the areas mentioned by the member for Yilgarn. Nevertheless, with the present high cost of production and

at present values for our products overseas, those blocks are too far distant from a railway to permit of their being profitably farmed. If railway communication were only provided, every acre of that land would be taken up. The fillip that has been given to the cultivation of lupins by the magnificent offer of the "West Australian" Newspaper Company would alone warrant the opening up of that country. Much of it is ideal for the growing of lupins, and in course of time it will make wonderful stock country. It is well watered and has a generous rainfall. In my opinion it would be well worth while the Government devoting considerable attention to it with a view to opening it up. While the Government might be justified in refusing the Midland Railway Company permission to construct spur lines to the eastward of the Midland railway on the ground that they might take some of the traffic from the Wongan-Hills-Mullewa and Toodyay-Miling lines, which in my opinion they should not be allowed to do, I cannot see any legitimate reason for refusing the company permission to construct spur lines west of their railway if they are willing to do so. I urge the Government to give this matter serious consideration. The people of that province are anxious to see constructed a line to connect the Midland railway with the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. We would not be particular about the point from which it started, but Moora to Pithara are suggested as the most suitable points. The advantages that would accrue to the Working Railways by the construction of such a line are numerous. The Minister for Railways will appreciate the fact that it is not an economic proposition to have a railway terminus situated as the Miling terminus is at present. He will appreciate also the fact that the great bulk of the stock traffic from the Murchison could be brought through Pithara, Miling and Moora and down the Midland line to the centre of distribution—Midland Junction—much more economically than it can be hauled through Goomalling, Northam and the Parkerville tunnel to Midland Junction. The distance via the Midland line is considerably shorter, a good deal of time would be saved, the cost of transport would be less and the mortality loss to the owners of the stock would be minimised. The stock on arriving at the

Midland market would be in a much better condition for slaughtering and, with the savings in costs and mortality, cheaper meat supplies would be available to the consumers. I do not think it is a suggestion of the Midland Railway Company that they should be allowed to construct that line, but the Government should give serious consideration to the question of building it. It is the hope of the people in that province that eventually a port will be opened at Jurien Bay. That bay has a considerable depth of water, a much greater depth than has Fremantle. While the greatest depth at Fremantle is about 6 fathoms, the average depth in Jurien Bay is $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 fathoms. If there is nothing that would make Jurien Bay a dangerous port, it should be opened up in the interests of the whole of the community in the hinterland, and we should be allowed to ship our exportable products from that port instead of having to rail it hundreds of miles parallel with the coast and ship it from the congested port of Fremantle or from Geraldton. Though the Government may have their hands pretty full with land settlement schemes, the conviction has been forced home to us that the time is fast approaching when the Government will not be able to satisfy the demand for land in safe rainfall districts. If a railway were built to Jurien Bay and the port were opened up, it would permit of hundreds of thousands of acres of land being settled. Then there is an area of something like 13 million acres which lies closer to Jurien Bay than to either Fremantle or Geraldton, and the produce from that country could be shipped much more economically from Jurien Bay than from either Fremantle or Geraldton. In the interests of the people who are producing the wheat, it should be shipped from the natural port instead of being hauled hundreds of miles over the railway to other ports.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. FERGUSON: Before tea I was referring to some of the disabilities from which settlers in the Midland area suffer in comparison with their fellows in other parts of the State. The only real solution of the difficulties and problems confronting those people is for the Government to purchase the railway and assets of the Midland

company, lock, stock and barrel. If that were done, the biggest bar to the progress and development of that part of the State would be removed. It seems there has always been a certain amount of fear on the part of the Government that if they spend money in the development of that portion of the State, the Midland Company may reap some benefit from it. The company came to Western Australia at a time when the Government of the day had no money, and very little possibility of getting it for the construction of a railway from Midland Junction to Geraldton. The company, however, invested their money in good faith, and are entitled to some of the benefits accruing from the investment. There should be no fear on the part of the Government that some benefit may accrue to the company from any expenditure that may be incurred. In 1925 the Government, in a laudable effort to assist bona fide farmers, that is, men who were developing their holdings and endeavouring to produce wealth in the interests of the State, reduced railway freights by £45,000 or £50,000, and in order to recoup the Treasury for the loss sustained they imposed a land tax of a similar amount. The unfortunate part of it is that whilst users of the Midland railway and owners of land adjacent to it are compelled to pay the additional land tax, they are not able to reap any benefit from reduced railway freights, which did not apply to the Midland line. That is an additional reason why the Government should purchase the line, and place the users of it on the same basis as their fellow producers, who are fortunate enough to be situated close to a Government railway. I believe the additional land tax the Midland settlers pay amounts to about £10,000. Some time ago I suggested to the Treasurer that a solution of the difficulty might be found if he paid to the Midland Company the amount the Midland settlers paid in additional land tax, on the understanding that the company reduced freights to the same level as the charges on the Government lines. Something might be done in that direction to alleviate the position of the Midland settlers, which makes for unfair competition between them and their fellows in other parts of the State. Here is another instance of the way in which the Midland settlers are affected: the freight on a truck of power kerosene from Fremantle to Moora, about 130 miles, is £3 12s. 2d. more than it is for a similar distance over

the Government line from Fremantle to Wongan Hills. These figures are of considerable importance.

Mr. Kenneally: That is on account of the local rate imposed by the Midland Company.

Mr. FERGUSON: It is on account of the concessions given by the Government to users of power kerosene in the farming areas, which does not apply on the Midland line.

Mr. Sleeman: That is the worst of private industry.

Mr. FERGUSON: I should like the hon. member to assist me to cut out private ownership of this kind, so that we may be placed on the same level as he and other farmers who are settled alongside Government lines.

Mr. Sleeman: If you were more consistent we might help you.

Mr. FERGUSON: I have another instance showing that the lack of sympathy between the Government and the Midland Company is detrimental to the users of the Midland line. There is the difficulty of transferring passengers at Midland Junction from the Government service to the Midland service. This constitutes a great inconvenience particularly to women and children during the wet weather. I understand that the company are willing that their coaches should be brought to Perth so that passengers from the Midland line might not be obliged to change coaches at Midland Junction when they have come from Perth. For some reason the State railways are unable to come to any arrangement with the company whereby the company's coaches might be hauled from Perth to Midland Junction by Government locomotives. Passengers, therefore, have to tranship on certain trains at Midland Junction at very great inconvenience to themselves. Further, most of the trains arrive at Midland Junction from the Midland line about 10 o'clock at night. I travel once or twice a week on that line, and know the inconvenience that people suffer. There are usually about 100 passengers arriving from the Midland line at Midland Junction at 10 o'clock. They are repeatedly held up at Midland Junction for a quarter of an hour or half an hour while a suburban train from Bellevue, carrying perhaps six or ten passengers only, whizzes by on its way to Perth. It ought not to be

beyond the capacity of those controlling the two systems to make some arrangement whereby the larger number of passengers, some of whom may have travelled 300 or 400 miles, may avoid the inconvenience of waiting. The result of the arrangement is that the Midland passengers arrive late in Perth and find great difficulty in securing accommodation.

Mr. Kenneally: Does the hon. member say that trains whizz past Midland Junction whilst there are passengers on the platform waiting to go to Perth?

Mr. FERGUSON: Passengers by the Midland train have the mortification of seeing suburban passengers whizz by whilst they themselves are kept waiting on the platform.

Mr. Kenneally: They do not do that.

Mr. FERGUSON: I see it nearly every Monday evening all through the year. Last night I arrived in Perth after all the trams had stopped running. If the system were State-owned, many of these difficulties would be removed. There would be no necessity for the existence of the disadvantages I have mentioned, which place an unfair and unjust burden on the Midland settlers and the users of the Midland Company's line. In the course of my remarks, the Minister for Railways made an interjection regarding the Amery-northward line. I want to say how pleased the settlers are over the actual completion of that line by the present Government. They realise that the expenditure upon it was fully justified, and I am sure the future will prove that. It must be a record in the history of railway construction in Western Australia that this line should have handled a million bushels of wheat during the first year of its existence. The settlers anticipate increasing their production by 300 per cent. this season. When I visited the district last week it was pointed out to me that the railway sidings along that line were too short. They are about 200 yards in length, and the settlers anticipate difficulty in view of the probable increased production in handling the wheat. An instance was recently brought under my notice of lumpers who have been loading wheat for several days being unable to earn more than 5s. per day because of the distance they had to carry the wheat. This occurred in a year when we had a light rainfall. The farmers were hardly settled, and were growing their crops largely in a primitive man-

ner. They had no large stacks of wheat, but this year they anticipate very much larger stacks, and fear there will be some difficulty in handling them. To-day at some places, where there are four or five wheat-acquiring agents, there is not much room for the loading of trucks at a siding only 200 yards in length. Very often, too, trucks come in loaded with machinery, and the wheat stackers have considerable difficulty in putting the bags on to the wheat trucks. The suggestion has been made that these sidings should be lengthened, and I hope the Minister will take steps at an early date to have this work done on the Amery-northwards railway. I believe it is the practice of the Public Works Department to construct sidings of that length on new lines. Although this may have the effect of keeping down the cost of construction of new railways, it is not in the best interests of a district that is increasing its production, and requires an additional length of siding and possibly a loop line in the near future. I suggest that in all new railways sidings of greater length should be erected. I wish now to refer to the court-house at Moora. Some three years ago I suggested that additions to this building were necessary. The small courtroom had to do duty for practically everything in the town, and was totally inadequate for requirements. The original plan made provision for extensions at the back, and the walls had been left so that these could readily be made. The building is prettily constructed in a type of stone that is peculiar to and typical of the district. All the Government buildings in the town are erected with the same material. The Minister for Justice realised the necessity for increased accommodation at the court-house, and decided that the additions should be made. Instead of these being made in conformity with the main building, they comprised a paltry weatherboard structure, which has been erected at the side of the stone building. It was a very short-sighted policy on the part of the Government to do this, and it is a great pity it was ever allowed. The building was a beautiful one and an ornament to the town. I hope that as time goes on, stone additions will be placed on the building, and that the wooden structure will be either removed or applied to some other purpose. At present it is certainly an eyesore.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS
(Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton [7.46].)
During the debate there has been some criticism of railway finance, more especially by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) and the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay). Apparently those hon. members have not given the question the amount of research which would be effected by a careful perusal of the annual report of the Commissioner of Railways. The member for Subiaco drew various comparisons between the railway position as it was in the last year of office of the Mitchell Administration, and the position as it was in the financial year just expired. During the references of various members to railway finance, I interjected that the present position of the Railway Department and its finances is due to the fact that a considerable proportion of the increased railway tonnage has been in the low class of traffic, while the higher class of traffic has not increased proportionately. I have said before that there is a loss on the carriage of wheat and of fertiliser. My friend the member for Toodyay always combats that statement, on the ground that, as sometimes there is a profit made in January and February when wheat traffic is at its highest, there necessarily must be a profit on the transport of wheat. But the hon. member knows that January and February are not only the two busiest months for wheat traffic, but also for every other kind of traffic. If there are any months during which we seldom, if ever, hear of unemployment, it is the first three months of the year. Naturally, business people throughout the country are then doing business over the railways; and this fact brings in a considerable amount of money. During the period of heaviest turnover, naturally most profit is made. Overhead charges during January, February and March are almost identical with what they are in the slack months of June, July and August. In slack periods overhead charges persist at almost the same level as during busy times.

Mr. Mann: If you do not make a profit on wheat directly, you make one indirectly.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. If the Railway Department carried no wheat at all, they would be in a better

position financially. That, of course, is purely from a railway point of view. I am not saying that the country as a whole would be better off in that case. But certainly the Railway Department would be very much better off financially or commercially if they carried no wheat and no superphosphate.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is from a carrying point of view only.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: From a profit-making, commercial point of view. That is borne out by a comparison of the statistics. Several times when speaking on the commercial aspect of the Railway Department I have mentioned that there are about 50 different railway rates. Some hon. members think the department ought to be able to declare a flat rate, and that every description of goods should be charged the same, as one description costs no more to transport than another. I agree that it costs no more to cart a truck load of wheat or of timber than to cart a truck load of wool or of general merchandise. But the railway rate book is built up on the ability of the commodity itself to pay. If the commodity is an expensive one which can stand a high rate of freight, the rate is a little higher than that on a commodity of low commercial value.

Mr. Mann: Do not you think that a flat rate would enable you to combat the motor traffic competition?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If we had a flat rate, it would necessarily be about 1.9d. per ton per mile. The result would be to overburden some low class commodities with charges, so that when they got up into the country the difference in price would be so inordinate that they could not be dealt in. On the other hand, there are commodities of high commercial value, such as wool. The value of wool is about 1s. 6d. per lb., which works out at about £163 per ton. To cart a ton of wool 600 miles costs £8 13s. Now £8 13s. added on to the commodity worth £163 per ton does not make much difference to the cost of the commodity when delivered at port of shipment—in fact, a difference of only five per cent. That is not very much. On the other hand, superphosphate costs only £4 11s. per ton. If superphosphate had to be sent over the railways for a distance of

600 miles—as it often has to be to the Esperance district, when sea carriage is not practicable—on the same basis, the landed cost would be £13 4s., representing an increase of 200 per cent. Nobody would be able to afford to pay such a price for superphosphate. Therefore superphosphate, and other articles of low commercial value, carry a low railway freight. Groceries, drapery, general merchandise, tea, sugar and so forth, which are all of fairly high commercial value, can stand a good bit extra in freight without their cost at destination being materially increased, whether the distance be 100, 200, or even 600 or 700 miles. So while we charge £8 13s. to carry a ton of wool 600 miles, superphosphate is carried over the same distance for a charge of only 14s. 6d. If during the past five years—the period over which the member for Subiaco made his comparisons—every description of freight had gone up in the same ratio, the position would be the same. Unfortunately from the commercial standpoint, so far as the Railway Department are concerned, the low classes of traffic such as wheat, superphosphate, and so forth, increased considerably both in volume and in distance of cartage, whereas high class freights did not increase to nearly the same extent.

Mr. Richardson: Is there any particular reason for that lack of increase in high class freights?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: To some extent I suppose it is due to the fact that users of motor cars will carry cases of groceries with them when they come from the city.

Mr. J. H. Smith: People do not come with motor cars to transport wheat.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. Nobody ever dreams, either, of taking a load of superphosphate from the superphosphate works in a motor car. In that case people say, "Railway charges are so cheap that the small amount of saving is not worth while." The Railway Department have had to transport a considerable quantity of super. to the Esperance district, a distance of 600 miles, at a charge of 14s. 6d. per ton.

Mr. Ferguson: Could it not be sent more cheaply by boat?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, because if wharfage and handling

were charged at both ends these things would total about 14s. 6d.

Hon. G. Taylor: And then the super. would have to be trained again.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. In order that the railways may not be carrying the superphosphate at such a ridiculously low rate, and to save money, we have sent it round by State steamers at a higher cost, thereby avoiding the use of trucks for about a week and their returning empty from a considerable distance for the sake of carrying about six tons of super. per truck at 14s. 6d. per ton. Super. and wheat have shown large increases during the last five years, and that is not a good thing for the Railway Department, commercially speaking, but a good thing for the country, a thing at which we all rejoice. Our wheat harvest has increased consistently year after year with the exception of last year, when there was a very light rainfall in the far eastern districts. While it is an excellent thing for the country that the wheat harvests have increased so much, it is not a good thing from the commercial aspect of the Railway Department. I will give an illustration of what that means. In 1923-24 the quantity of super. carried by the Railway Department was equivalent to 17,625,000 ton-miles. Last year the ton-milage of super. was 41,000,000, or an increase of 133 per cent. Of wheat we carried 65,000,000 ton-miles in 1923-24, and last year 122,000,000 ton-miles. That represents an increase of 88 per cent. in the carriage of wheat over the five years, whereas the ordinary, average traffic increased by only 45 per cent. On the two lowest commodities we have from a railway standpoint, the increases have been 88 per cent. and 133 per cent. Fruit, which just about pays its way, increased by only 32 per cent., or 13 per cent. less than the average of 45. Timber, which represents a profitable rate, inasmuch as the department get 1.96d. per ton-mile, or just a little over the average and therefore slightly profitable, instead of increasing by the average of 45 per cent., rose by only two per cent. over the average of the last five years. It will be seen that while wheat and super., which are low priced commodities in point of freight, increased very considerably, fruit and timber, out of which the department used to make some small profit, increased by an amount considerably below the average.

The second-class traffic, which refers to higher-priced stuff, and for the carriage of which the rate is 6d. per ton per mile, increased by only 11 per cent., although the average increase was 45 per cent. For the highest class of traffic, the third class, which is carried at an average rate of 8d. per ton per mile, the increased traffic represented only 2 per cent. It will be seen, therefore, that the cheaper classes of freight increased doubly or trebly, whereas those classes upon which we make our profit hardly increased to any extent at all.

Mr. Lambert: Does that not indicate that the railway charges are prohibitive when you come to face competition in the carriage of the higher classes of goods?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If that were so, it would also indicate that we must change our attitude regarding the railways and deal with them on a purely commercial basis, refusing to carry any class of goods for much less than it costs to haul them.

Mr. Lambert: That would not necessarily follow, because if your rates were more favourable, the third-class goods might increase considerably instead of by 2 per cent. only.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They did not increase at all to any appreciable extent last year. Owing to restricted credits, those interested in the agricultural and pastoral industries had a rather severe time last year, and certainly did not make much money. In the ordinary course of events those I refer to, had they made reasonable profits, would probably have dealt considerably in a number of commodities for which the freight rates are fairly high. As they were not in a position to do so, the railways suffered correspondingly. Those people were fortunate in being able to secure sufficient credit to enable them to get their superphosphate requirements. Owing to their financial position, they were not able to go in for fencing or house building, and the railways lost that profitable freight in consequence.

Mr. Mann: While that has something to do with the position, do not you think motor transport has been more economical and has affected the railways?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think there is a truck in Australia that could carry stuff consistently at a rate

of 6d. per ton per mile. For years the railways have been able to transport satisfactorily, and if they could have a flat rate of 2d. per ton per mile, they could transport goods at that figure. If the railways were on a proper competitive basis compared with road transport, and had to face, comparatively speaking, no charges for maintenance or interest on the cost of the permanent way, they would be able to give that service at a still smaller cost. Reverting to the position regarding superphosphates, it is interesting to note that in 1924 the quantity of super carried represented 7 per cent. only of the total traffic hauled, whereas last year it represented 11 per cent. of the total traffic. That was on an average rate of .54d. per ton per mile, whereas the average cost of haulage was 1.83d. per ton per mile. Thus it will be seen that the charge was almost one farthing less than the cost of haulage. Then again our wheat traffic, which represented 25 per cent. of the total traffic hauled in 1924, increased to 33 per cent. of that traffic during last year.

Mr. Ferguson: There has been an increase each year.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, but from the railway point of view that increased haulage meant so much extra loss. The traffic has increased at a greater average ratio compared with other commodities that are hauled at a profit. If hon. members will look at the railway returns that were tabled a few days ago, they will see the position strikingly exemplified. Those figures show that last year approximately 9,000,000 ton miles extra were run on account of the general goods transported, and instead of receiving more revenue we actually received £9,000 less. The ton miles run were 358,000,000 in 1927-28, whereas in 1928-29 they were 367,000,000, or 9,000,000 more ton miles last year. The return also shows that the revenue derived on account of those extra millions of ton miles was £9,000 less than we received in the preceding 12 months. That indicates where we are getting to in connection with our railway finances. There is an increasing preponderance of low-priced freight compared with what was available in years gone by. That was strikingly evidenced last year when we had large quantities of wheat and super to haul and very little of the higher class traffic.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Did the competition of motor trucks in connection with the transport of wool have anything to do with that?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. I made specific inquiries in that regard and I found that the public of Western Australia are fully seized with the importance of supporting their own railway system. Of the wool that was exported from Western Australia, the railways transported quite 95 per cent. Some years ago we appointed a commercial officer in connection with the Railway Department and he interviewed the people who deal in wool. At that time considerable propaganda was indulged in, but the people loyally stood behind the Government.

Mr. Mann: The officer you refer to does his work very effectively.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There is no doubt about that. Most people are sensible enough to know that if we get a small percentage only of the high-class traffic, the railways will suffer accordingly and that would lead to an increase in the cost of transport of the lower class of goods, such as wheat and superphosphate. Hon. members will remember the claims advanced by the large deputation that waited on me at Parliament House in connection with the construction of the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. The speakers stressed the importance of the railway being constructed because of the tremendous effect super had exercised on the pastures in that district. I was assured that if the railway were constructed and the settlers were able to obtain their superphosphate supplies at the present cheap rate, instead of the holdings carrying one sheep to every six acres, within three years, when the pastures had become established and the use of superphosphate had increased the carrying capacity of the paddocks, they would be able to carry three sheep to the acre. From the inquiries I made subsequently through the Agricultural Department and elsewhere, I found that the statements of the deputation were incontrovertible. Speaking as the Minister controlling the railways, and looking upon that public utility as a purely commercial concern, I would not have the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway on my mind for a moment, because if we were to carry 5,000 tons of superphosphate over 150 miles on that line it

would represent a loss of £4,000 to the railways for the year. Of course we do not look upon the railways in that light at all. Whatever will increase the productive capacity of the country by 8 or 10 per cent. must be hauled over the railways even though it be carried at a loss. We know that the general economic gain to the State will indirectly benefit the railways and counteract the loss involved in that haulage. That is another reason why the lower class of traffic has increased on the railways during the last few years. During that period we have constructed a number of new lines and during the first few years of the operations of those railways into new districts, we practically haul nothing but wheat and superphosphates and very little of the higher class traffic. During his remarks the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) dealt with railway matters and seemed anxious to make a comparison regarding the position in 1923-24 and that obtaining at present. I will give the House some figures to show the comparative position. In 1923-24 we transported 253,000,000 ton miles and last year the mileage increased by 45 per cent., going up to 367,000,000 ton miles. On the average the return we received for every one of those ton miles in 1923-24 was 1.95d. Because of the preponderance of the low class traffic, and the increased use of the railways for that traffic last year, the distance hauled represented 367,000,000 ton miles, but we received for that haulage 1.71d. only per ton per mile. It will be seen that despite the extra ton mileage hauled, the railways received approximately a farthing less per ton mile than in 1923-24. Had we received the same rate last year, and had the freight gone up in each class of traffic, we would have received .24d. more for each ton mile transported. That would have made a difference of £367,000 to the railway earnings last year. Hon. members can compare the figures for themselves; they will be found absolutely correct. In other words, had the 1923-24 earnings been maintained in 1928-29, instead of the railways showing a loss of £179,000 last year, there would have been a profit of £188,000. There are other factors to be taken into consideration when we compare the two periods mentioned. For instance, during the time the Mitchell Government were in power, the Railway Department, through no fault of their own, but because of the fact that loan money

was comparatively hard to raise and interest payments were considerably higher, were in a difficult position. I think I remember one loan that was raised for the State during Sir James Mitchell's time that bore a rate of £6 12s. 6d. per cent. Naturally no Government in the circumstances would feel justified in spending any considerable sum of loan money that cost such a high figure. Fortunately, in later years the loan position eased and nowadays the average rate of interest is about £5 7s. per cent. Consequently because of the fact that loan moneys were so tight and interest rates were very high, a very small amount of replacement was done by the Mitchell Government. I am not blaming them, because using commonsense they could see that it would be extremely foolish to raise money at so high a rate of interest. However, during those years rails and sleepers should have been replaced, and of course, under ordinary conditions, would have been replaced. They were wearing out and in consequence, during the time the present Government have been in office, we have been faced with considerable expenditure on replacements of sleepers and rails and other things. I have here the comparison that has been made. In addition to the ordinary maintenance of permanent way and rolling stock, which cost £1,100,000 last year, we have what we call special maintenance; that is for things that do not require replacing every year. For instance, if a line requires re-laying, it will be only once in 30 years, or if it requires re-sleepering it will be only once in, say, 15 years. A certain amount of money is debited to working expenses each year for these things. In 1924 for rails £42,000 was spent, whereas last year we spent £53,000 or an increase of £11,000. In special maintenance during 1924 only £9,000 was spent, whereas last year we had to spend £14,000. In the purchase of sleepers in 1924 only £29,000 was spent, whereas in 1929 we spent £85,000, some of it to relieve unemployment and keep people at work. So there was an increase of £56,000 last year.

Hon. G. Taylor: I take it you have a lot of your sleepers in stock.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In any event, that sum of £85,000 was debited to working expenses last year. Then for the replacement of rolling stock in 1929, there was an amount of £13,000 as against nil in 1924; and for the replacement of tarpaulins

£16,000 was spent last year, as against £10,000 in 1924. So on these things in 1924 there was a total expenditure of £90,000, whereas last year the expenditure was £181,000. Those were the years compared by the member for Subiaco.

Mr. Richardson: I compared the figures of the whole five years.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But really the hon. member was comparing the financial position in 1924 with that in 1928-9.

Mr. Richardson: I gave the full figures for the five years.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not attacking the hon. member. All I want to do is to let him see the light and let him understand exactly what did occur. So really in those replacements last year we spent £181,000 as against the £90,000 spent in 1924. That expenditure was from revenue. I have already explained that I do not blame the Mitchell Government for not having done more. Still, the fact remains that we had to do a great deal last year and that we spent out of revenue £91,000 more than was spent in 1924. So there are those two items: The 367,000,000 ton miles on which we did not get to within one farthing of the amount that the Mitchell Government got, representing £309,000, and then this £91,000, making a total of £400,000 in all. Coming to the staff, it will be found that during the past five years the wages staff, through the incidence of the awards of the Arbitration Court, and the salaried staff, through the classification board, have received a considerable amount in increments. In 1924 there were employed on the wages staff 6,510 persons, and in 1929 this number had increased to 8,193. That is not a very big increase when we consider it is about 20 per cent., whereas our goods traffic in the same period increased by 45 per cent. But the average earnings of the wages staff in 1924 was £223 per annum, whereas in 1929 the amount had risen to £246, or an increase per man throughout the wages staff of the railway service of £23 per annum. The salaried staff in 1924 numbered 1,223 persons, whereas in 1929 it had risen to 1,420 persons. The average salary in 1924 was £289, whereas in 1929 it was £311, or an increase of £22 per officer per annum. These increases were not, as some members would like to make out, gratuitously handed out by a beneficent Government to the

railway employees. They were all given as the result of the settled policy of this country, that is to say, the Arbitration Court. And these increases in the number of officers and men who were working in the Railway Department in 1924 in comparison with those working in the department in 1929, meant an increase in expenditure of £220,000. That is to say, if the number of men we had in 1929 had been on exactly the same wages as were those in 1924, we would have saved £220,000 on the wages bill. It represents the extra remuneration the officers and men of the railway service have received through awards of the Arbitration Court. Of course we could have done as the leader of the Opposition did when he was in charge of the Administration and when very large increases in wages and conditions were made by the Arbitration Court, that is to say we could have raised the freight, had we so desired. But we preferred not to do that, thinking that in the ordinary way, so long as we did not get this preponderance of low class traffic, we should be able to make the railways pay without any increase in freight rates.

Hon. G. Taylor: These increases in salaries and wages covered a period of four or five years.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and the average increase to each man in the service was £23, and to each officer £22.

The Premier: And we paid the increases without putting up the freight rates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The increases in my time were £79 to the officers and £57 16s. 9d. to the wages men.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am sorry the hon. member was not in the House while I was explaining exactly the reason why we have had to do so much. Perhaps it would have done him some good to have the position fully explained. Certainly I was not ungenerous to the hon. member while he was out of his seat. I gave reasons why various things had occurred during the time the hon. member was in charge of the Administration. I said the hon. member, in raising capital for expenditure on the railway system, had had to pay £6 12s. or £6 13s. per cent. and that, naturally, he did not expend very much loan money during that difficult period. I also

said it did not matter which Government were in power at that time, it was not likely that they would raise much money while they had to pay so high a rate of interest. So if we had not had that £220,000 increase in wages and salaries, that is to say, if we had had the same rates last year as obtained in 1924, the railway expenditure would have been £220,000 less and so, instead of showing a loss of £179,000, we would have made a profit of £41,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You had £600,000 more in revenue.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will get a proof of my speech from "Hansard" and pass it to the hon. member to read, for I am sure he requires to be reminded of some of these things. When he shall have read that proof, I should like to hear his criticism, if he can break down anything I have said or any of the figures I have given. Dealing with passenger traffic, too, we are in rather a serious position from an earning standpoint. In 1924 there were 18,133,000 passenger journeys made by the people of this State. One would think that with the increase we have since had in the population of the State, the new railways that have been built and with the facilities we have provided for travelling, the railway passenger journeys would have gone up to some corresponding extent; but last year, instead of 18,133,000 passenger journeys, there were fewer than 15,000,000 passenger journeys, or 3,000,000 journeys less, spread over the last five years. The people are not using the railway system for the purpose of passenger transport to anything like the extent they were five years ago. The earnings from passengers in 1929 were £77,000 less than they were five years ago. We could, perhaps, economise by deciding to restrict the conveniences we are giving the people for travelling. But owing to the fact that we are building new lines we must give a certain amount of passenger accommodation so that the people may be able to use the railways. Our train mile passengers have not gone down to any extent at all, because on these new lines we must run trains at least once a week. It would be hardly worth while having a railway for any less traffic. A considerable portion of the passenger traffic that we get is special travelling. But if the Leader of

the Opposition wants to come down from Northam, there are any number of people ready and willing to bring him down by motor car.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But I come down by train.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Still, if he wanted to get down in a hurry, he would not have to wait in Fitzgerald-street, Northam, for more than an hour before he found some motorist who was coming to Perth and who would be glad to have his company.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: To weigh down the back of the car.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is a fact that a considerable number of people do not use the railways for passenger traffic now, but use motor cars instead. So we have the position that renewals meant an increased expenditure of £91,000 and the wages bill on the average meant an increase of £220,000, the two items totalling £311,000. That was our increased expenditure. On the other hand, while our passenger service cost the same to run as before, the revenue decreased to the extent of £77,000 and because of the incidence of the lower class freight, we received £367,000 less than we would have done had we had the same average rate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The rates are the same.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was not in the Chamber and does not understand what I am talking about. I have explained the position fully. Every one with the exception of the hon. member understands it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I know all about it, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I regret that the hon. member was not in his place, because I would have liked to enlighten him on those aspects of the Railway Department's activities.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I have all those facts.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: While our expenditure has increased by £311,000, our revenue would have produced an additional £444,000 had we had the same class of freight as we had five years ago. Consequently we would have been about three-quarters of a million better off than we were in 1924, but for the circumstances I have detailed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Three-quarters of a million!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. The hon. member smiles, but I invite him to peruse my figures carefully and endeavour to break them down. I took considerable trouble to compile the figures and get them checked. I have not missed anything.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think you have included something which should not have been included.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It all resolves down to the question of how the railway system is operated. If we desired to operate it as a commercial undertaking, we could easily do so, but the policy of this State has not been to treat the railways as a purely commercial concern to produce profit. The policy has always been to operate the railways for the purpose of assisting the production of wealth. Some people seem to be under the impression that because the railways are run by the Government, if they desire any concession, it is only a matter of asking for it and the department should meet their wishes. A good deal is done by the railways in the name of charity. Concessions in the shape of tickets at 1s. per month are granted to VII. and ex-VII. school pupils to travel to suburban schools. Of course, charabanc or motor transport attempts nothing of that kind. Because we desire that the youth of the country should have the advantage of good education, we provide facilities for children to travel so that they may attend higher schools, and they are charged the purely nominal fee of 1s. per month.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you carry many in the course of a year?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, a considerable number. From a commercial point of view that fee does not count at all. Were the railways run on a commercial basis, the Education Department would be required to subsidise the Railway Department to that extent. In the country districts, wherever school children can take advantage of railway travelling, they are conveyed to the nearest school entirely free of charge. We have always done that. Consequently the railway system is not conducted on a purely commercial basis. Blind people, each with an attendant, are carried free. Donations in the shape of a bag of wheat or a bale of wool for a charitable institu-

tion are carried over the railways free of charge. The Government desire to encourage charitably-disposed people by ensuring that the maximum result of their charity shall be received by the institution concerned.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is nothing new, is it?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. I quote it to show that the railway system is not run on a purely commercial basis. Quite a number of minor services, such as carrying flowers for kindergartens, violet and wattle days, are arranged at nominal rates. We are not desirous of extracting the last ounce out of producers by means of high freight charges. We desire, in the interests of production, to carry fertilisers and other commodities at very low rates, entirely ridiculous rates from a commercial standpoint, but we do it in the interests of production, and I think it pays the State to do it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It pays the railways, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But there would be just as much work for the railways if we charged a little more for the carriage of sugar. Farmers would use just as much sugar. As I have pointed out, if the same set of conditions had operated in 1929 as operated in 1924, we would have been £750,000 better off than we were in 1924.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: With precisely the same freights?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have put up the fares, have you not?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; on the other hand, a lot of rates have been reduced during the last four or five years.

Mr. Lindsay: The same argument would apply to the year 1925 as compared with 1915.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, but in the interval from 1915 to 1925 there were considerable increases of freights. The present Government have not adopted a policy of increasing freights to meet the heavier charges consequent upon arbitration awards and other increased expenditure. The Leader of the Opposition was not in his place when I gave the comparison between this year and last year. If he will turn up Appendix J, he will find the figures

I quoted. We carried goods 10 million more ton miles than the year before—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I heard you say that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And for it we received £9,000 less. It is impossible to challenge that comparison.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who is to blame?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS? No one is to blame. The reason lies in the fact that low-class traffic is increasing as compared with high-class traffic. Because the Railway Department made a loss last year, I do not regard the position with alarm. During the last five years we have made in profits an amount greater than the loss of last year. Because we have one bad year in a commercial sense, there is no need to become panic-stricken and levy extra imposts. Next year, if we have a good harvest and good business on the railways, we shall get through. Notwithstanding that wages and other expenditure have increased, given a good season and good business, there is no need for any alarm about the loss of last year. We shall be able to get through and do what the Railway Department have done for this State during the last five years anyhow—render very good service to the community.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.40]: I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without offering a few words on this debate. Unlike many of my friends who have spoken from the Government side of the House and can see nothing but good in the Governor's Speech, and unlike many of my friends on this side of the House who say the Speech is not too bad and there it not a great deal of harm in it, I can see no virtue whatever in the Speech. It is not so much what the Government have done as what they have not done that appeals to me. I believe the function of the Government of the country is to do the best they can for every part of the country, irrespective of whether Ministers live in the South-West portion of the State, on the goldfields or in the metropolitan area. To my mind the Government have failed and failed lamentably, during the last five years, to carry out their duty in the best interests of the State. One of the principal functions of any Government is to keep the community satisfied—to have the whole of

the citizens satisfied and see that they are employed in avenues creating wealth for the benefit of the State. Again I say the Government have failed. Unlike some members, I am not going to promise to be brief in my remarks; I desire to give full voice to what I consider are the opinions held by the people in the portion of the State I represent. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) the other evening impressed upon the Minister for Agriculture the duty of his department to endeavour, as the South-Western Conference suggested, to combat the red mite and lucerne flea pests. We were assured by the Minister for Lands that every effort was being made to that end. I desire to tell the Minister for Agriculture that if his experts are not successful in the near future, this great menace will be the means of practically wiping out the pastures and intense culture in the South-West. I have heard that some method has been devised to combat the pests. I ask the Government to make additional experiments with a view to exterminating those two pests. I do not know whether we can blame the member for Beverley (Mr. C. P. Wansbrough) or the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) for the disease known as the Beverley sheep disease, but that disease has spread to the South-West and is a very serious menace. The Minister might be able to tell us whether his department have discovered the means to combat that disease. We do not know what the braxy-like disease in sheep really is, but we have an idea that it may be due to the increased fertilisation of pastures. I now come to the remarks of the member for Forrest (Miss Holman). She made them in a very fine spirit when she moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply. The hon. member did a very serious injustice to the South-West when she applauded and upheld the action of the Minister for Forests in his dedication of the forest area there. Throughout her speech I can say, without wishing to be hard upon her, that she showed she did not know her subject and did not understand one tittle of what she was saying.

The Premier: Which proves that you do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will prove that the Minister for Forests does not know one thing about his business. We talk about a forest conscience. If ever a Minister had a forest conscience this Minister has it with a vengeance. His forest conscience is so

twisted and warped that he can see nothing but jarrah trees, and not one thing for agriculture which is the making of this country. If only he knew his job, things would not be so bad. When we waited upon him as a deputation what did we get? He spoke to us quite candidly and in a straightforward manner. He told us with all the effrontery in the world that if he were in his job much longer he would make the area of dedication four million acres instead of three million acres.

The Premier: Are you referring to one of my strong-minded Ministers?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister for Forests had no thought or consideration for anything else. At least he was loyal to the Conservator. He said "We have a wonderful forest dedication down there" We have heard of the Empire Forestry Delegation. They came to Western Australia and they said, "What wonderful forests you have. What a wonderful rainfall there is the South-West. Look at the beautiful karris and red gums you have." Perhaps they did not know the difference between a red gum and a black butt. They saw a mass of timber and found they had a sympathetic Minister. They said "He is a wonderful man. Is it not a glorious thing to have a man at the head of the Forests Department who will listen to us, who will be carried away by us, who is prepared to forego the interests of the agricultural part of Western Australia just to say that for all time he will dedicate this huge area of country to the growth of timber, that he will never allow a farm to be established upon it, never allow another apple to be grown there, and never allow another sheep to graze upon it." That is what we got from the Empire Forestry Delegation. The Minister for Lands is also to blame. This sort of thing cannot be done without the sanction of the Minister for Lands. I shudder to think what would have happened if the policy that is in operation to-day had been in operation 30 years ago. Not one railway would have been built, not an apple would have been grown in the South-West, and no settlement whatever would have taken place there.

The Premier: Your trouble is that every settler has a vote but the jarrah trees have none.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: My trouble is that the Minister for Forests and the Conservator have been hoodwinked by the Eastern States. Other parts of the Commonwealth have sacrificed their timber areas, and now they are approaching us through the Minister and telling us that our forest areas must be dedicated. For the future we are to grow a lot of useless trees, and the other States and other parts of the world are to have the population. The Minister for Forests claimed it was our duty to look to posterity. He said "Look at the heritage we have to protect for the next hundred years." This sort of thing will be going on not only for 100 years but probably for 200 years. The Conservator says "I have a scheme for conserving and dedicating to forestry another million acres. Will you agree?" The Minister says "I agree." The Conservator then says "I have another scheme for reforestation" although already we have some three million acres dedicated. The Government are going in for a system of reforestation that will cost £10 an acre. To cut out all useless timber, ringbark the red gums, and leave only the straight trees, will cost £10 an acre in the first place. This represents, over the three million acres, a sum of £30,000,000, which will have to be spent at the outset. The Government say "Look at the great wealth that will be created." There is no market for the timber. I believe that timber is not required in the world as it was a few years ago. At one time all our culverts were built of timber. To-day the Main Roads Board use steel and concrete for their culverts. Even in Perth the buildings are erected of concrete and steel, and very little timber is used. The present scheme for reforestation is holding up agriculture. The Minister for Lands says that in some places we can carry three sheep to the acre in the South-West. I claim that our carrying capacity is greater than that. We can carry one cow to the acre in our forest country. It is the finest country ever known. We have never experienced a drought. We have no bad seasons. We have good seasons, and sometimes we have better ones. Look at our fruit industry! What has that meant to Western Australia? If we had had the forest dedication system 30 years ago we should have had no fruit industry to-day. We can talk in millions about our fruit.

The wheat growers are not the only people who can do that. Over a million bushels of apples were produced within the State this year. This centenary year will be known for all time because of the misguided actions and short-sightedness of the Minister for Forests.

Hon. G. Taylor: Who is the Minister for Forests?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member does not know his business very well if he does not know that. This year 381,000 cases of fruit left Bridgetown, 26,000 gallons of cream, 600 bales of wool, 703 head of cattle, 6,800 sheep, 64 horses, 1,000 pigs, and 8,000 tons of timber.

The Premier: And what about asses?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The ass may have left but the donkey will return when the Premier goes down to open the Show.

Hon. G. Taylor: He will not go now.

The Minister for Lands: It is a nice invitation.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not want members to think I am opposed to a proper system of reforestation for our timber lands. What the deputation, and the South-West conference and I asked was that the Premier should grant us a reclassification of those timber areas. Before any more land is dedicated we want the whole of the South-West classified. I know of beautiful land that is dedicated to forestry. There is no co-ordination between the Lands Department and the Forests Department. The latter have the former in the palm of their hands. If a man applies for a block anywhere as far away as Katanning everything is subservient to the Forests Department. The application must go to the Forests Department before any approval can be given, and generally it means that it is held up for all time. I claim to know something about forestry conditions. I know that jarrah country is not good for agricultural purposes. The jarrah ridges and ironstone country will not grow anything else but beautiful jarrah. On the other hand there are sandy gullies and flats and undulating land which are suitable for agriculture. On every orchard in the district jarrah trees have been taken out, but in these days the Forests Department would not have given their consent to it. I claim that that was not forest country and never could be. If it were dedicated for the next million years

it would never grow jarrah, and yet that is the type of country that is reserved for forestry. We want this re-classification carried out by practical men, such as we have not yet had. The work should be done by duly qualified land classifiers. I have done my duty in enlightening members of the House, and letting them know what serious obstacles are standing in the way of the settlement of the South-West. A death-blow has been dealt to the South-West. I refer to the dedication of these areas. It is impossible to expand under the present system. No man can select 100 acres within the dedicated area. The forest has been taken on a face, irrespective of whether it contains good land or not. I desire to prove to the House that despite the Premier's remarks this will not be such a wonderful asset. The member for Forrest said the industry was in wonderful shape. I will prove that it is in a parlous condition. I have said that a large proportion of the sleepers that have been taken by the railways this year were cut by foreign labour. The Premier styled that as a wild and woolly statement, but I will prove it to the hilt.

The Minister for Railways: That will not be so for the future.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They are not being cut now because of the instructions that have been issued, although I believe they are honoured more in the breach than in the observance. I will tell the House what is being done now. Railway sleepers are being cut at scab prices.

The Minister for Railways: What do you mean by scab prices?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I mean at prices that are 7s. and 8s. a load under the union rates. And the work is being done by Britishers. I will give the House item for item. I do not blame the Minister. The railway officials say "If you want an order for sleepers you can have one. We will give you an order at £3 15s. on trucks." Wandoo sleepers will cost £4 5s. on trucks. The union rate for wandoo sleepers is £3 and for jarrah sleepers £2 8s. 9d. The Controller of Stores at Midland Junction has offered £3 15s. per load on trucks.

The Premier: Your idea of proving a statement is to make a statement in a loud voice.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I presume that the Premier is a good unionist and does not wish to see any of his employees working

for less than arbitration rates. Therefore I ask him to take a note of these figures. The cutting rate is £2 8s. 9d. It is impossible to put sleepers on trucks, if the men insure themselves—a charge equal to nearly 14s. per load—for less than £1 12s. per load. And yet the price is £3 15s. per load. To itemise: £2 8s. 9d. is the union cutting rate; 16s. per load is the carting rate; loading represents 2s. 3d., and turning 7d.—items which must be cut off the amount; insurance represents 14s., and royalty 7s. 6d. The deduction of 2s. 1½d. leaves a net amount of £4 10s. 1d. Yet the Government are offering the men £3 15s., and the men are prepared to accept that rate upon condition that they need not insure themselves. What will be the result if a married man, uninsured, is killed while at work?

The Premier: His wife will be a widow.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is a nice thing for the Premier to cast the matter off in that way. The workers of this country will be glad to learn that the Premier has no more sympathy for the wife of such a man than to say that if the man is killed his wife will be a widow.

The Minister for Lands: It is plain what you are fishing for.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the Minister for Lands likes to bite, he may. The timber industry is worth such a wonderful lot to this State that the last New Zealand order taken was let at £5 15s. per load ship's slings, Bunbury.

The Premier: You are playing to the gallery.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Unfortunately I am not. Neither am I playing to the unemployed, though perhaps later in my remarks I may do so.

The Premier: My word, you will!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was pointing out that although the timber industry is said to be very valuable to the State, the last New Zealand order was let at £5 15s. per load ship's slings, Bunbury. The average railway freight in the South-West is 23s. per load. Here again the timber industry suffers as against the wheat industry. The timber industry has to pay 3s. 9d. per load wharfage dues on every load of sleepers exported from Western Australia. Adding £1 6s. 9d. to £4 12s. 2½d. makes £5 19s., or just on £6. Such is the position of the industry for the sake of which dedications

are being made so that it may be a source of wealth for all time. The contractors are losing 5s. per load, without allowing anything for their office expenses or time or risk taken. Where does the success come in? How can anyone afford to supply sleepers under such conditions? The reply will be that some one must be undercutting. Some will say that it is done through foreign labour. I believe there is collusion and competition amongst certain persons to exploit the foreigners in our midst to-day. I honestly believe that. Last year I drew the attention of the Government to what was going on, believing that they were in sympathy with the workers. I now expose what is going on to-day. I told the Government a year ago what I was prepared to do if they thought it worth while to grant a select committee. To-day the position of the industry is too serious. Export timber is, of course, cut on private lands; but nevertheless I consider there should be a Royal Commission to inquire into the timber industry. That industry is in a parlous state from A to Z. Yet we find the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) applauding the action of the Minister for Forests in dedicating huge areas. She said the effect would be to give employment to thousands. I consider that we are working on wrong lines.

The Premier: You have not got a scrap of interest in the timber industry.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the effect was going to be to give employment to people—

The Premier: This is too thin.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the Premier—

The Premier: It is altogether too thin.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the hon. gentleman is considering his political hide, I can assure him that I am not considering mine. Further, I assure him that I am not speaking to my constituents.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Let me assure the hon. gentleman that I am speaking on behalf of an industry that needs to be placed on a better footing. I am combating certain statements made here by the member for Forrest. I consider it her duty even more than mine to draw attention to what is occurring to-day. She said the dedication of forests for all time would give employment to many people. What is the good of that if, as I have pointed out, people working in the industry to-day are working for less than Arbitration Court rates, not a shilling under them, but many shil-

lings under them, and uninsured? I am glad I have had this opportunity of pointing out the position. If the House is interested in the insurance of timber workers, I have here the details of that aspect and can give them. Apparently members are conversant with that phase. One point I desire to make clear is that the Government are asking timber workers to put sleepers for State requirements on trucks at 7s. or 8s. per load under union rates.

The Premier: That is not true.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Again I refute the Premier's interjection. Sleepers cannot be put on trucks under £3 19s. 11d. at the very lowest.

The Premier: Many of your statements are found to be unreliable.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Has the Premier no heart at all? Has he no consideration for men working for the Government of the day, who are supposed to stand for the interests of humanity? Does he not think these men should be protected by insurance? What is to become of the wife and children of a timber worker killed in his employment? Does the Premier find it in his heart to say, "Go on, Jim; we will employ you at ten or fourteen bob under union rates, but if you get killed the country will look after your wife and children"?

The Premier: I have investigated many of your statements.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: These figures cannot be refuted. I believe I have now exposed the timber position fairly well. The Minister for Forests should reconsider his attitude and say to the Minister for Lands, "Let us have more co-operation, let us work together. I will appoint an officer from my department and you appoint an officer from yours, and we will have a reclassification made of the whole of the South-West; and what is good for forestry I will take for perpetual dedication, and you can take the agricultural land." That is what I desire to see happen. As to railways in the South-West, I was disappointed when I heard the Minister for Railways say that there was nothing to be done with the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line as a business proposition.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Minister said that for the carriage of super. that line would not be a business proposition.

The Minister for Railways: On a commercial basis.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I realise that. But after the Minister heard the deputation say that with the carriage of super. and the fertilising of the land it would be possible to run three sheep to the acre, and even more—

The Minister for Railways: That, I said, was a very good thing for the country.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will show what a wonderful Government the present Government have been for the country. Members rise to exploit the deeds of the Government and to show what a marvellous Government they are.

Mr. Withers: You have said that yourself.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) does not mean it. I never heard such language as the hon. member used the other evening. It was faint praise. He damned the Government with faint praise. He said they should do so-and-so and such-and-such.

Mr. Withers: So they should.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Why does not the hon. member come out of his shell in view of the way Bunbury has been neglected? Why does he not say to the Government, "If you do not treat my port like other ports, you will lose one supporter"? The whole of the South-West would applaud him.

The Minister for Railways: For selling his vote!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He has the goods to sell, not his vote. Bunbury is the second port in Western Australia. The port of Albany is not too good so far as overseas shipping is concerned. The Minister for Works when introducing the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook Railway Bill got a great deal of support. To refresh the minds of members I should like to read portion of the speech then made by the Minister. However, I do not propose to weary the House with it.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: As the Premier interjects, "Hear, hear," I will read the speech.

Member: Making a speech by reading!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I should be only emulating the deeds of some other members. However, I will not accept the Premier's challenge to read that wonderful speech of the Minister for Works. I know that every member of the Chamber read the report of the Railway Advisory Board.

who inspected the country. The nature of that report was simply astounding. It went so far as to say that the whole of the South-West had been seething in expectation of development for many years. As soon as that report came in, the Premier, with a great flourish of trumpets, indicated that he was anxious to do something that others had neglected.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, for 16 years.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Mitchell Government had appointed an advisory board and as soon as they came along, they said that one railway was not sufficient and three were required.

Mr. Withers: Your party said they did not require anything.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.

Mr. Withers: Your party never put forward any proposition.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They said there was to be a railway from Jarnadup to Denmark and that it must go through. There are now a few men down there with some picks and a few barrows! That is all! Then they said they required a railway from Manjimup to Mount Barker. They regarded it as most essential for that line to be built. When it came to the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway they were emphatic and said it must be built immediately. The Premier came along, threw out his chest, and gave his blessing, telling the people that the railway must be built. Men were put on to cut sleepers straight away. Those sleepers were cut and they are there to-day, stacked alongside where the line is to be built. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) knows that these are the facts. When the Minister introduced the railway Bills in this House he said that the time was over-ripe for the work and he dealt with the Advisory Board's report. The Minister for Lands sits smiling in his seat to-night; he has his 3,500 farms scheme! The Surveyor General, the Director for Agriculture, Mr. Lord of the railways, and Mr. Anketell went out to report on the project and when they came back they said to the Premier, "Yes, here is some wonderful country that has been positively neglected. It certainly requires a railway to be built." On the other hand, we have another part of the State where we can immediately settle 2,500 people successfully. We can give them 400 acres of land

and railway facilities can be provided at a cost of about £100,000. That sort of thing is too simple for the Government. They can see through it too easily. For that reason the Government consider they must get into complications. They say to themselves, "We must produce something that will justify our existence in the eyes of the world. Let us have something big and elaborate. Let us get something in millions. What about a 3,500 farms scheme? We will be able to spend a lot of money on that." They went into the matter; they framed their scheme; they got enough money to swamp themselves and they fell in head over heels; they have drowned themselves in it and have got nowhere! However, I have already told how the report of the Advisory Board was obtained. As though that was not sufficient, the Government got others along. Among them was Bankes Amery who said to the Government, "On the figures the Advisory Board have put up and on the costs, there is no trouble about it. You can get the money; it is there for you. Go on with the scheme." He told the Government to go on with the scheme in conjunction with one or two other items such as a few water supply schemes! Other schemes were the Penberton railway, the Norsenan-Salmon Gums railway, which has been built and now we have still others. What have the Government to say to all this? Deputation after deputation has waited on the Premier. At Bridgetown last November, the Premier said, "We will build your railway." I said to the deputation, "That is satisfactory. The Premier has told you that the Government will build the railway. He must intend to build it immediately, because he will not have an opportunity after next March."

The Premier: You have a wonderful imagination.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The railway still awaits construction. A deputation interviewed the Minister for Railways. The member for Bunbury should have spoken in favour of that line. We had got tired of interviewing the Premier, who said the same thing time after time. We felt we should have a change and so we saw the Minister for Railways. He was most affable and all smiles. He told us that he had heard all about our railway.

Mr. Withers: I have said more about the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway than you have!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. H. Smith: The Minister told us that he would see the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Agriculture and discuss the proposition with them, and later he would see the Premier. That is as far as we have gone.

The Minister for Railways: What did you expect me to say?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That you had conferred with the Premier, that he had promised that the line would be built and that the construction would be put in hand straight away!

Mr. Withers: And then there would have been cheers from the gallery!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Bunbury seems to be biting a lot to-night; I do not know what is the reason. I have an indictment to launch against the Government regarding the unemployment difficulty. If it is the function of anyone in the State to deal with that problem, surely it is one of the fundamental functions of the Government to keep our people employed. This House should not allow the motion before us to pass without indulging in a great deal of sincere criticism of the Government. Had Ministers not neglected the South-West, the unemployment difficulty would not have been created. The Premier says we have no money.

The Minister for Railways: He does not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier says we have no work on which we can put the unemployed.

The Minister for Railways: No fear, he does not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What about the 3,500 farms scheme, this beautiful myth, this dream of the Government, news of which they are spreading broadcast? What has been done at Forrestania? The Government have picked up a crowd of men, set them there, and dropped them like hot cakes. They took contracts and accepted commitments and then, without a moment's notice, the Government put them off, although the men had nine days' tucker still on hand.

The Premier: There is not a scrap of truth in what you say.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I challenge the Premier and this House on the point. I can give the names of men who are prepared to come before the bar of the House and prove my statements.

The Premier: Your most reckless statements!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The men are prepared to come here to substantiate the truth of them.

The Premier: There is not a shred of truth about them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: On top of that, will the Government say they cannot find work for the men who are in the country at present? They say that, despite the fact that they have in hand £500,000 of Commonwealth money! This is the Government that confess they are concerned with the interests of the working man! What are they doing for him? They profess to be acting in the interests of the primary producers. What have they done for them? They have done nothing but load them up with taxation hand over fist. And all this time they allow men to walk the streets starving and looking for a feed! It is deplorable. One man hanged himself at Manjimup because he could not find work. What a dreadful thing that is! Yet the Government have £500,000 of Commonwealth money unexpended. Why is that so? It is because the Government cannot find the 15s. in the pound that the State should find under the agreement with the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Railways: Oh no!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Government are content to allow all that money to remain idle. Had they found their quota, there would have been about £900,000 available for expenditure. Yet we have people walking the streets looking for work. In this House we have members who speak of this wonderful Government. Even on the Opposition side of the House there are members who say that the Government are not too bad! For my part I cannot see one virtue in them, particularly when I remember how they have neglected the South-West.

The Minister for Lands: What about the group settlements?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will deal with them later on. I believe the time is ripe when, in the interests of this State, members should speak their minds. They should state their cases and fight them. They should expose to the people of Western Australia the way the present Government have acted while they have been in power. They have held office for nearly six years and they have

run the country into a state of stagnation. Look at their policy regarding the dedication of forests, and their lack of foresight in the building of railways in the South-West. It is time the people knew what happened. Think of the 120 men who are down at Pemberton and are stranded there! I can give the Premier the names of the men who have been down there for upwards of 12 weeks. They are all a good type of men, used to pick and shovel work, and they are waiting for the work they were to do. What is the explanation? The Government are merely seeking to relieve themselves of their liability in Perth and are putting up a smoke screen. They are sending men down from Perth, although there are men waiting on the spot for the jobs that were offering. I am receiving protests from them every day. We hear of 20 men being sent to Jardee and eight men wanted here and a few men there. All the time there are 120 men on the job waiting for work!

The Premier: Can you not lower your voice a little?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will please myself how I speak. The Premier was on the box seat the other afternoon and he did not hesitate to raise his voice. He did not hesitate to go for the deputation. He said to them, "You are looking at the matter from a biased standpoint. You have agricultural minds and not forestry minds. You are not looking at it from my point of view at all. As agriculturists, no matter what your opinions may be, you are biased." The Premier himself was biased in other directions. The Premier did not lower his voice when he was speaking to them. He was most dominating in his attitude. He said, "That is my policy and it will stand while I remain in my present position."

The Premier: Of course, I did not say any such thing.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That was in the report in the "West Australian." The Premier will not draw me off from the contract regarding the men in the bush. They have received no sustenance. The boarding houses have kept them going for a considerable time. I asked the Minister for Works if he would agree to the men being provided with sustenance, but he evaded my question. Now we are told that the railway is going on.

The Premier: Of course it is going on.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is not. What is happening is that 20 men are put on to-day, given a few days work, and then knocked off. It is a scandalous state of affairs. If the Government were worthy of their salt, they would adopt a different attitude. What does it matter if there is a deficit of £500,000 provided that all people are at work and the money is circulated.

Mr. Lindsay: There would be no deficit if all the people were at work.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Government are content to allow things to remain as they are. They hold on to the £500,000 of Commonwealth money and do not provide their 15s. in the pound to make up the full amount. They are content to allow thousands of people to walk about the streets of Perth and elsewhere looking for work.

The Minister for Railways: You know why that has occurred.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is the function of the Government to prevent it occurring.

The Minister for Railways: What, knock the Commonwealth Government out of the way!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: You should have prevented the difficulty.

The Minister for Railways: Do not you know we are controlled from the other side?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Let me ask the State Government what they intend to do regarding unemployment? Under their arrangement with the Main Roads Board the Commonwealth Government say that we must call for tenders for work that is to be carried out. What is occurring here to-day? The Government insist that if any man, or any local authority through the Main Roads Board, accepts a tender for work, the men employed must be worked for only 44 hours per week. There is no Arbitration Court award about that. But the Premier told us when he came in that the people had given him a mandate to institute the 44-hour week. Even if that is so—and the Government say it is—I do not believe they have the authority of the Commonwealth Government to do it in this respect. Of course it is free from all political influence.

The Minister for Railways: Do not you believe in a 44-hour week?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I believe in a 40-hour week, or even in a 20-hour week.

The Premier: Yet you were shedding tears for the poor worker a moment ago.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier is not going to sidetrack me in this. I am telling the House that the mandate of the Main Roads Board is that the subcontractor must not work the men more than 44 hours per week, and must comply with the conditions of the A.W.U. It appears to me, and it is always known, that this Government is governed by the A.W.U.

The Premier: Of course there is not a scrap of truth in that, either. You ought to be ashamed to make such reckless statements.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am delighted to have an opportunity for making a few home-thrusts, particularly when they are long overdue. The Main Roads Board insist that the sub-contractor must work the men only 44 hours per week. Do you, Sir, know what is occurring? The local authorities are working under a 48-hour week and are paying their men the basic wage. Then the Main Roads Board, through no political influence at all, only the A.W.U. influence, say to the sub-contractors, "You must work your employees only 44 hours per week, and must pay them 6s. over and above the basic wage."

The Minister for Railways: Do not you believe in that for your district?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am only saying what the Government are doing. Here we have the local authority working in accordance with established conditions, and the Main Roads Board come along and let a tender for £1,000 or £2,000. So we have two sets of men working side by side, one set working for the basic wage, while the other set gets 6s. over and above that rate; one set working a 44-hour week, and the other set working a 48-hour week. That is true, and cannot be refuted.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am sorry I did not catch that remark. I do not think it was a very nice one. Now I want to touch on group settlement. While, perhaps, I shall not say a great deal, I cannot confess to very much admiration for the Minister in charge of group settlements. The group settlers, to a great extent, are very

well satisfied with their reclassification. They believe that the new classification will give them an opportunity to make good.

The Minister for Lands: Reclassification or revaluation?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Revaluation and reclassification at the same time. They believe it will give them an opportunity to make good. From my experience, and I am speaking for my particular district, I think they have a wonderful opportunity. No matter what has been said about group settlement in the past—and we all believe a great deal of money has been wasted on it—this board, to my mind, has got right down to tin tacks, and the Agricultural Bank, after taking over the settler with his statutory mortgage and his agricultural mortgage—well, the settler has a chance. The settlers have put up a recommendation. They are quite pleased with the whole thing, and I think it would not do any harm if I read this to the House; because it will show what the settlers' impressions are regarding what has been done. The secretary of the Group Settlers' Association writes to me as follows:—

Dear Sir, I enclose herewith a copy of a letter sent to the Minister for Lands, together with a detailed scheme for the liquidating of our statutory mortgage account and capital account. I am instructed also to send copies to Sir James Mitchell and A. Thomson, Esq., M.S.L.A., with the hope that the three of you may use your influence to have this scheme approved. We have given this matter very grave consideration, and we are of the opinion that the "scheme," as set out, is the right one. We strongly oppose any extension in the repayment of our statutory mortgage account. Any extension only means additional interest payments, which means a large sum over the extended period. In asking for a free of interest period and a graduated interest period on our capital account, our scheme gives in exchange a five-year shortened maturity, and commences five years earlier in repayments of principal. This should compensate for any earlier concessions. We also ask for a maximum rate of 6½ per cent. interest on capital account.

I feel satisfied that if the Minister will give that the consideration it deserves—

The Minister for Lands: You told me this afternoon you did not believe in that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. I said I thought the settlers themselves were foolish, because they were doing something against their own interests. The Minister is making an absolute misstatement when he says that I said I did not believe in it.

The Minister for Lands: But you told me in conversation that you did not believe in it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I spoke to the Minister for about two seconds, asking him if he had got the letter. If the Minister says I told him I did not believe in it, he tells a damned lie.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will withdraw that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, I withdraw it.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am not endeavouring to say anything about conversations. I am merely asking the Minister to believe that there is a great deal in it that is worthy of his consideration. If the Minister thinks I am making propaganda out of something about which I am fully entitled to speak, I ask, does he never attempt to make propaganda when trying to put his side of a case? Does he want to stand on a pedestal and challenge anybody to knock him off it? Is he, like the Premier, wanting to stand on a pedestal and dominate over all that he sees and hears?

The Premier: Talk sense.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I must be talking a lot of nonsense, for I am getting a large number of interjections.

The Premier: We are exhibiting a lot of patience towards you.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am trying to put up my case in the best manner that I can. I think it is up to members on this side to put up a case and not let the Government ride rough-shod over them, not let the Government say, "You fellows sit down. You have nothing to do with the business of the country." However, I have this circular here, and I was only by way of saying that I thought it represented the honest opinion of a section of the settlers down there, and that perhaps the Minister would get some satisfaction from it and perhaps would find that their ideas coincided with his own, and that instead of putting the bank rates into operation it might be better to work it from that basis. I do not want to put up any propaganda when dealing with the group settlements, for it is not necessary. Now I have another grievance, to do with the water supply. This affects the Minister in charge of country water supplies, as it concerns the Bridgetown water scheme. Whoever heard of a scheme that has returned a profit of £36 this year and yet is rated up to the full maximum price of 3s.

in the pound? If it showed a loss of £20,000, £15,000 or £10,000 the Minister has no authority, under the Act, to rate higher than a maximum of 3s. in the pound. Yet because we have in Bridgetown a scheme that originally was established to serve the railway and two streets in the town, and has been extended and so has built up a little loss, we have to pay the maximum of 3s. in the pound. That loss has been steadily reducing over a number of years, and to-day the scheme shows a credit balance of £36. Nevertheless, when we come to the Minister for a reduction, he says, "Yes, when you have wiped out that other £109, the balance of the old debt, I will consider it next year. You can come back next year like good little children and we will then reduce your water rate to 2s. 6d." I have been looking into these things, analysing some of these water schemes, and the least I can say about the Minister is that he is very hard indeed and very unfair and unjust over the Bridgetown water scheme.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: As soon as you reduce your accumulated debt, you will get a reduction in the rate.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is a scandalous thing that we should have to pay 3s. in the pound on a scheme in respect of which we are already paying interest and sinking fund. But the Minister puts that clean out of his mind, forgets all about it, and lets it drift away. He will not remember that we are paying full interest and sinking fund, and that in another 13 years the scheme will have been paid off. That is lost sight of by the Minister, as is also the fact that the scheme shows a profit for this year. Yet he says that our rate cannot be reduced.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: If you show a profit of £36 per annum for the next three years, you will have wiped off your deficit and will then get a reduction in rates.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Another thing that affects my district to-day, that may not do so to-morrow, is the town of Greenbushes and its surroundings. There again we see the niggardliness of this Government, their paltry cheese-paring in an effort to save a few pounds. Greenbushes is a very important centre and has produced a great deal of wealth. Over £1,000,000 worth of tin has been extracted from Greenbushes, while the Lord knows what

value in fruit and timber has been taken out of Greenbushes. Over a period of 30 years the place has employed an immense number of men. But to-day, because the mining industry at Greenbushes is slack, just as it is in all other districts, the Government are cheese-paring in an endeavour to save £80 per annum. For many years past Greenbushes has enjoyed the usual conveniences that were its due, but now the Government say, "We are going to shift your law courts and your mining registrar into Bridgetown and so save £80 a year." Is not that a peculiar attitude? Is not that a cheese-paring policy for any Government to adopt? For the sake of £80 a year they are going to do away with the local court and with the mining registrar at Greenbushes and put to no end of inconvenience the farming community throughout the district right to Balingup and Kirup. Why any Government should do such a thing passes my understanding. With the redistribution, Greenbushes will be no longer in my electorate, but if the people of that town will accept my advice, the member for Collie, in whose district they will in future be included, will be challenged at the next election. When I go to Greenbushes I will say to the people, "How can you possibly vote for a Government that treated you in this slovenly manner? They say you shall not enjoy the privileges you have enjoyed for the last 30 years, and all for the sake of a paltry £80." I suppose it will cost £40 by way of payment to get the policeman to do the registrar's work. The Government, in effect, say, "We cannot afford to pay that £80."

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Is that the salary?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The registrar was taken from Greenbushes on account of there not being sufficient business, but a man is sent from Bridgetown. The cost was £80 a year. I feel that I could continue for another hour or two hours castigating and pointing out the blemishes and short-sightedness of the present administration. In the interests of this country I believe that the sooner a change of Government takes place, the better it will be. I believe the Premier would now go to the extent almost of cutting off his right hand for having signed the Financial Agreement. That agreement, to my mind, has proved a blot on the history of Western Australia. The Premier has budgeted for a certain amount

of loan money. Owing to the Financial Agreement, which, by his usual persuasiveness and oratorical powers, he succeeded in gulling members of this House to pass, notwithstanding that some members on this side of the House pointed out what an injury it would do to Western Australia, that injury has been done to the State, and I feel sure the Premier now agrees with me. Western Australia enjoyed the position of being able to go to the London and other markets in order to borrow money. To-day there is a Loan Council in Eastern Australia composed of State Premiers and representatives of the Commonwealth who decide what is necessary in the way of loan money for the development of Australia. I do not think my railway has been included in that amount, though I had hoped it would be. The Loan Council stated their requirements at £35,000,000, but we find that the Commonwealth authorities are not such big guns as they thought they were. They have been rebuffed; the amount proposed for this year has been reduced and we have to accept a proportionate reduction which will probably mean our receiving in the neighbourhood of a million below our anticipated requirements. What is the Premier going to do about that? Goodness knows the position was bad enough without that cut in loan money! I repeat, what is the Premier going to do? As a last request, I ask the Premier, who is Minister for Forests, and the Minister for Lands to endeavour to secure greater co-ordination between the Forests Department and the Lands Department. This is a big question to the South-West portion of the State. Land for agriculture is as the life-blood of the South-West.

The Premier: What are you back to now?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am making one last appeal, though I believe the Premier is so hard-hearted that he will not listen to it. I ask the Government to have a reclassification made, and not allow the Minister for Forests to go bludgeoning along and riding roughshod over agriculture, which is the backbone of this country. The Minister for Forests is going to dedicate another million acres for forestry. I do not think the Minister for Lands will tolerate that for a moment. Had the Minister for Lands been here at the time, I do not think that dedication would ever have been made.

A reclassification should be made, though I realise that can be done only by Act of Parliament. If a reclassification were made, as the deputation to the Premier requested, it would be in the best interests of the State.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 14th August, 1929.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Questions: State Insurance Office ... | 306 |
| Buildings, responsibility for safety ... | 306 |
| Address-in-reply, ninth day ... | 306 |

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

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

QUESTION—STATE INSURANCE OFFICE.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the figures supplied on Thursday last, relating to the Workers' Compensation Act, been audited? 2, In the figures quoted has any provision been made for losses which may occur under policies still current? 3, What was the amount of premiums received from Government departments in respect of all insurances contracted with the State Department?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The books are at present being audited. 2, Yes. 3, £86,151 6s. 1d.

QUESTION—BUILDINGS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1. Which Government department is responsible for the examination and approval of the construction of buildings in

which the public assemble, such as theatres, churches, and balls? 2, Has this responsibility recently been changed from one department and placed under an official in another? 3, If so, has the department formerly responsible given its full approval to the construction and safety provision of buildings erected since the date of transfer? 4, Are the Government fully satisfied that all reasonable provision has been made for public safety in such buildings?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The Public Health Department is still legally responsible, although in practice this responsibility has now been taken over by the Principal Architect of the Public Works Department. 2, Yes. 3, Approval in respect of the construction of public buildings is now given by the Principal Architect instead of by the Commissioner of Public Health. 4, Yes.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.35]: Before touching upon one or two matters contained in the Speech before us, I should like to join in the felicitous greetings which have been extended to you, Mr. President, by previous speakers, and also in the expressions of gratitude conveyed by them to you on the work you did on behalf of the State during your absence. We realised that Western Australia would profit by your sojourn in the great centre of the Empire which you recently had the privilege of visiting. In this we can say we were not disappointed. We learned from the columns of the Press and other sources that by your able pen and your gifts and power of speech you sought to stimulate a keen interest in this State, and particularly in our centenary celebrations. At the same time you took the opportunity afforded you on many occasions to disseminate valuable information regarding the history of Western Australia, and the great opportunities open to those competent and willing to undertake the arduous work necessarily associated with life on the land. It is interesting for us to record in connection with the centenary celebrations that we have in this