

**Legislative Assembly,***Tuesday, 6th September, 1932.*

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

**QUESTION—RAILWAYS, DINING CAR RENOVATION.**

Mr. PANTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it a fact that the Railway Department is renovating a dining car at a cost of approximately £3,000? 2, Is the car for the use of the Commissioner of Railways? 3, If so, does the department consider such a car is warranted at present?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Such a car is being renovated, and it is anticipated that the cost will not exceed £500. 2, Yes. 3, Yes.

**QUESTION—UNIVERSITY, PROFESSOR FOX.**

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that Professor Fox, of the University staff, preaches communism in his spare time? 2, Is it desirable that persons holding such views should be in a position to direct the education of our University students? 3, As the Federal and State Governments are pledged to stamp out this evil in Australia, will he take action accordingly?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, It is undesirable that persons holding violent views should direct the education of our University students. 3, The choice of professors at the University is not in the hands of the Government.

**QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK, REPOSSESSED FARMS.**

Mr. MILLINGTON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many farms were repossessed by the Agricultural Bank during the four years, 1929, 1930, 1931, and 1932,

respectively? 2, What is the total amount owing to the Bank (a) on capital account; (b) interest?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Properties came on hand during year 1929, 212; 1930, 293; 1931, 359; 1932, 655. 2, Properties on hand at 30/6/1932, 905; Agricultural Bank principal involved, £846,098 7s. 10d.; interest involved, £261,604 16s. 3d.; Industries Assistance Board, £278,941 19s. 4d.

**QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT, MERREDIN REQUIREMENTS.**

Mr. THORN (for Mr. Griffiths) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has consideration been given to the request from the Merredin Unemployed Relief Committee and other country centres that the allowance for sustenance workers in the country be increased to the same amount as that paid to sustenance workers in the metropolitan area? 2, Has any decision been reached as to complying with that request? 3, Is the unemployment branch aware that sustenance workers in Merredin are in a deplorable state regarding clothing?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, No.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.**

*Eighth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 1st September.

MR. WANSBROUGH (Albany) [4.40]: Having listened to and subsequently read His Excellency's Speech, I must say I have been unable to find in it much occasion for rejoicing, and am unable to locate any of that silver lining we heard so much about. Nor am I able to see that we have turned the corner and are on the highroad to active prosperity. The only bright spot on the landscape appears to be the goldmining industry, from which we have had so much to be thankful for. I trust it will continue to prosper. However, I regret the Commonwealth Government have intimated their intention to cancel the gold bonus, and I raise my protest against the manner in which the Federal Government are repudiating their contracts with this State. I hope that before the session closes, an opportunity will be given the House em-

phatically to protest against the marked way in which the Federal authorities are filching our State rights. I have listened patiently to the speeches of members, for which I notice my friend of the "West Australian" has said that I have remained very silent. I propose to break that silence this afternoon. Particularly have I listened patiently to the speeches of Country Party members on the cross-benches. To a man, they have claimed to represent exclusively the primary producers, but I have not heard from them a single protest against the increased railway freights, particularly those freights applying to single consignments. The member for Beverley (Mr. J. I. Mann) congratulated the Government on the reduction of the land tax, but I repeat that he made no protest against the increased railway freights and the abolition of the flat rate on single consignments.

Mr. Griffiths: We have left that to you.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: In my district are many small primary producers, and on their behalf I want to protest against the increased railway freights and the reduction of the flat rate on single consignments. During the past year or two those small settlers in my electorate producing fruit and vegetables have been able to market their produce direct with the consumers throughout the wheat belt, but recently the special rate they were enjoying has been cancelled. I urge on the Minister that he should reinstate that special rate, because without it the small growers are being penalised in the marketing of their produce. I wish to repeat my appeal to the Minister for Railways, made last year, that some consideration should be given to travellers on the Great Southern railway. The journey from Perth to Albany, and vice versa, occupies 17 hours. There is one refreshment room en route, at Mt. Barker. We should certainly have another at Beverley, where a sit-down meal could be partaken of both morning and evening. If the Minister will review the matter from the point of view of the public, and not from a Ministerial car, I am sure he will agree to the proposal. There is no need for any expense in the matter, for a room is already available at Beverley with ample accommodation for travellers. All that would be necessary would be to provide for trains to stop at Beverley

for 20 minutes when going in either direction. The railways must make travelling on the system more congenial to the public. The Albany train stops at every station and siding. The time has arrived when we should have an express at least between Perth and Spencer's Brook, whether going to Albany or coming to Perth. Some reduction in fares should also be made. Fares have been reduced in the metropolitan area both on the trains and the trams, and similar consideration should be given to country travellers. I wish to protest against unemployed married men being sent 70 or 80 miles from their homes, on sustenance plus 20s. a week. It is unreasonable to expect the men to go away for that amount, and something should be done to relieve the situation. I also protest against the Government for not giving sustenance to single men in the country districts. I cannot understand why similar men in the metropolitan area and at Northam should receive sustenance, and why it should be refused to others in the country. Some ten days ago I sent in a petition containing 90 signatures from single men in my district, all of whom are debarred either from receiving sustenance or work. That is wrong. Instead of single men being sent from here to the Frankland River, all the men required could be picked up around Mt. Barker and Albany. Something should also be done to prevent the delay in the granting of sustenance. Country men have had to wait three or four weeks before approval has been given in their cases. I also wish to draw attention to the away-from-home allowance of 5s. a week. That is used in order to make up the sustenance allowance, and is not really an away-from-home allowance. If a man is allowed 38s. a week for sustenance, 5s. of that is set down as allowance. The money is paid out at the rate of 9d. a day. If a man does not work because of the wet weather, 9d. is deducted from his pay. In any case he can work only five days in the week. The allowance should stand by itself and should not be taken into account as part of the wages. Special treatment should also be accorded in the case of large families of grown-up sons. I know of men over 60 years of age who have a son or two over 22. The old men get the sustenance, and the sons live at home with them. The sustenance should be given to the lads, because it is not conducive to good citizenship that they should be living on their parents.

The whole situation should be reviewed. In cases where there are several sons in a family, one or two should be made to earn their living and the father should be allowed to remain at home. I join with the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) in his protest against the action of the Government in calling upon hospitals to pay into Consolidated Revenue the Christmas Cheer donations that were given to them last year from the Charities Consultation. The money was raised for that specific purpose, was paid to the institutions, and is now being called up to go into Consolidated Revenue.

The Minister for Lands: That is not true.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: I know of cases where the money has been spent by the matrons, and it now constitutes a charge against the institutions concerned. That is a fact.

The Minister for Lands: I will give you the facts.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: The money was not a donation to Consolidated Revenue. I wish to express my appreciation to the Minister for Lands for his efforts to push on with land settlement in the South-West. I refer particularly to the Kalbar River plains. I hope he will find it possible to appoint an advisory board in the district, comprised of experienced settlers. Many men there possess a good deal of knowledge of the locality by virtue of their demonstrations and experiments. Most of them are successful, and would be only too glad to help the Government. They have become prosperous not through any assistance rendered by the Agricultural Bank. An honorary advisory board should be appointed, and their advice would be very useful to the Minister. I am requested by the Albany Road Board to thank the Minister for Works for visiting the district during recess. Members of the board are very pleased with the sympathetic consideration meted out to them. I personally thank the Minister for his attention to the wants of the district. We are indebted, too, to the Minister for Agriculture for having twice visited us.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is very nice there in the summer time.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: I also appreciate the difficulties of the Minister with regard to the Denmark wasting disease. Investigations have been made but the results have been slow in coming. The settlers are becoming despondent, because the outlook is so black. They will always have a big load of debt

around their necks unless this trouble is eradicated. On Thursday evening last I asked the Premier several questions about the matter, and the reply was furnished in the form of a return which was laid upon the Table. I cannot say that the return was very informative. Question No. 1 dealt with the number of stock treated under the McGough system and the Vita-Lick system. The return shows that no calves were treated under the latter system. The third question brought forth the reply that one calf had died. The information given was very vague and almost useless. Little or nothing is disclosed as to what the Government propose to do about the McGough system, or whether it has been a success or not. We are told it is too early to judge the results of the Vita Lick treatment; in fact it is waste of time to read the return. I am not particularly concerned about the action of the Government in exploring one system or the other, but I am concerned about the settlers, who have to pay their interest bills and their other commitments. The return shows that the McGough treatment lasted for 26 days and the Vita Lick treatment for five months. I believe it would be a good thing if the department took over the McGough system. In a statement made in the "West Australian" in May last, the Premier said that after 28 days of the McGough treatment the cows he saw returned to profit. He went on to say—

Since my last visit in December some of the herds have been undergoing a course of treatment, a number under the remedy supplied by Mr. McGough, and some under that of the Vita Lick Company. I inspected all of these cattle, and under each system they have been restored very much in health, and the butter fat production has increased by about 50 per cent.

If the McGough treatment will in 28 days bring a cow back to normal, there must be something in the formula. The Vita Lick people have also got something, but the formula and the process are slow. The Premier continues—

I also saw two cows which had been treated by Mr. McGough before my December visit.

These are cows which were treated under the jurisdiction of the Denmark Agricultural Society.

These animals are still looking quite healthy. It must be remembered that bad health causes a shortage in the butter fat production, and it is quite possible the cows have suffered

from the disease for some years without it being apparent. For the whole of that time the cows have been giving a smaller yield than they otherwise would do, and their owners have been drawing a correspondingly smaller income. Although I did not see any calves treated by the Vita Lick method, I saw two which had been receiving attention from Mr. McGough. These were looking quite healthy, and much better than one in the same yard that had not been treated by him. So far there does not appear to be very much to choose between the two forms of treatment. Both are satisfactory so far as they go. The point is that healthy cows have become unhealthy when taken to the affected blocks, and any treatment which merely brings them back to health will surely leave them open to a recurrence of the trouble. Failure to detect the disease before it becomes manifest has probably already cost the settlers a very great deal of money.

That is quite true, and the disease will cost many of the settlers their farms. Possibly, owing to the hard and hopeless work involved, it will cost some of them their lives. I suggest to the Premier that the Government should take over McGough's treatment. I will not say that the McGough cure is certain, but the cows treated by his method in November, December, and January last are in profit. Possibly the departmental officers may find some remedy which will cure the disease in a much shorter time. I know that I am on dangerous ground in even suggesting that experts might obtain some little knowledge from a person of lesser importance, but the whole matter requires immediate treatment. It is useless for the Agricultural Bank or the Treasurer to try to get blood out of a stone. The settlers are being threatened because they do not pay their interest. The only treatment available to them for the disease is the Vita Lick.

The Minister for Lands: Why does not McGough publish his formula, and supply it to the settlers?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: After two months' service to the State—admittedly in return for payment—McGough received an intimation that he was no longer wanted on the place.

Member: Departmental jealousy.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: Yes.

The Minister for Agriculture: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: Departmental officers followed in McGough's footsteps, and inspected the cows treated by him. One settler told me that an officer came to him and asked what McGough had done. In the case of those cows—which were treated three

years ago—the disease has never re-appeared. I am concerned not about McGough but about the settlers. However, McGough, after giving two months' service, was cast to the winds. Upon certain representations made by me, he was allowed to choose one out of five locations. He picked the only location which had disease on it; there was not a cow without disease on that block. To-day all the cows in question, 15 in number, are in profit. It is up to the department to do something in the matter of McGough's treatment for wasting disease. The Royal Commission on Dairy Farming in the South-West made an interim report to the Premier on the subject. It reads as follows:—

From evidence given, wasting disease has been prevalent in the Denmark area for 20 years, but apparently until recently had not been regarded by the authorities as seriously as it should have been. The initial stages of our inquiry embraced the area affected by wasting disease at Denmark, and we were so impressed with the seriousness of the position that, on returning to Perth on the 7th March, we submitted the following recommendations to the Hon. the Premier, who immediately took steps to expedite remedial treatment. Those recommendations were—(1) McGough's treatment:—The Commission has obtained overwhelming evidence that in many cases where McGough has treated affected animals, practically all have been restored to apparent normal health and condition. McGough informed the Commission that his agreement with the Government expired last Saturday. McGough offers his formula to the Government in exchange for a farming proposition with wasting disease on it, of the value of £700 net, with £300 in cash or plant and stock to that value. He further offers his services for a period of three months to instruct the settlers in the use of his treatment at a wage of £5 per week, plus petrol for travelling, he to provide his own car. (2) Vita Lick:—The Commission has also inspected stock treated with Vita Lick, and received evidence from some of the settlers that this treatment had been successful in arresting the disease—

That is quite true.

—and restoring the animal to health. The need for immediate action, in the opinion of your Commissioners, is so urgent that we urge the Government to accept one of the two alternatives, preferably the McGough treatment.

The Royal Commissioners had no axe to grind for McGough.

The financial position of a number of those settlers whose cattle are affected by the disease is so desperate that we consider it necessary that the Government should supply this treatment free of charge in the interests of the settler and the State. Distribution of either

of the remedies should be left in the hands of the local senior inspector, Mr. D. Storrie. Mr. N. Kingston has lost nine cows and 40 heifers on one holding, and two other settlers had killed 150 calves because they knew of no cure. Departmental records disclosed the fact that 43 holdings are affected, and that, on these, 91 cows and 350 heifers are suffering from the complaint. It appears that once a cow is affected with the disease, in almost every case it becomes sterile, and if the cow does bear a calf, it is too delicate to be worth rearing; in fact on several holdings not one single calf has up to date been reared, and the settlers, through no fault of their own, have lost heart and are in straitened circumstances.

I do not think the Commissioners could have put up a better report than this on wasting disease. They inform the Government that one treatment is preferable to the other. I do not wish to cast any reflection whatever upon the Vita Lick Company. However, if dairy farming is to prosper in the Denmark district, the Government must do something quickly. Only a fortnight ago a body of men walked off from that district to Perth, and similar action may be expected from the Denmark settlers unless the Government act with promptitude.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Do you say that the Government ought to engage McGough?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: No; but his formula should be made available to the settlers.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: For how much can the formula be obtained?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: The cost of two months' treatment by the McGough method amounted to £59 3s. 4d., of which amount £40 represented wages. The cattle treated were 40 young stock and seven calves. In point of fact, other animals were treated as well; but in their case the treatment was only partial, owing to McGough's sudden dismissal by the Government. The formula is to be obtained for a very small consideration.

The Minister for Lands: What is the consideration? Isn't it £1,000?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: While the Minister for Agriculture was negotiating with McGough, the Premier stepped in and took charge. I may mention that cows, while alive, are the property of the Agricultural Bank, but that as soon as they are dead they become the property of the settler, who is then charged with their cost. To speak on group settlement is a hardy an-

nual with me, but I cannot let this occasion pass without appealing for fair treatment for the genuine settler. Why place the genuine settler on the same plane as the settler who is not genuine? Last June I wrote to the Premier on behalf of settlers on Group No. 113. I propose to read the bank's reply, especially in view of the answers to my questions the Premier furnished last week regarding this particular phase. The following was the bank's letter, which was signed by Mr. W. H. McCay, Secretary for Group Settlement:—

I am directed to reply to your letter of the 17th June to the Hon. the Premier, enclosing requests from Group 113 settlers (Swamp Section). Consideration has been delayed until special inspection and report was received. The Premier has discussed this with the General Manager, and each case has been individually considered by the Trustees. All these settlers, apart from liability to the Agricultural Bank, appear to be hopelessly involved with outside creditors, largely through banking on potato crops only. I am directed to advise you that—(1) Interest cannot be capitalised, as the existing debt is considered to be as high as these properties will carry; (2) Embargo on Eastern States potatoes cannot be imposed under the Federal Constitution; (3) Further advances for improvements are not considered to be justified in view of the existing liabilities to the bank and to outside creditors; (4) Advances for manure are not considered to be justified as the next crop result is purely speculative. The Trustees agree that settlers may give storekeepers a first lien over the next crop for supply of manure for the crop.

Very nice! These settlers are down and out, and the Government will not advance any more money to them. Yet they are to be permitted to give the merchants or storekeepers a lien over their crops. One particular merchant considered the risk was not too great, and took a lien over a settler's crop. The other day I asked a number of questions regarding the position, and the replies show the way the settlers have been treated. The first question I asked the Premier was—

Is it a fact that the Agricultural Bank have intercepted all incomes from settlers on Swamp Section, Group 113, Denmark?

The answer I received was—

The Agricultural Bank has claimed all potato proceeds, but no other revenue, under Section 37 (a), but portion has been released to each settler.

What a nice position that is! The settler is not advanced anything on his crop, but

immediately his potatoes are dug, the bank issues instructions to the merchant concerned that all proceeds from the crop must be handed over to the bank. The merchant, the storekeeper, and the man who did the work, the settler himself, are to receive no consideration; the money must be handed over to the bank.

Mr. Piesse: Did the bank advance any money to the individual you have in mind?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: No, the Agricultural Bank refused to advance any money to him, yet the bank commandeered his income. The brilliant idea is indicated in the answer to my sixth question, which was—

Does the Agricultural Bank propose to supply seed and manure to such settlers for this coming season's cropping, together with sustenance?

The Premier's answer was—

The bank proposes to finance a further crop of potatoes for the remaining three settlers, seed and manure to be a first charge against proceeds.

Why three settlers only? There are but five settlers on the Swamp Section, and all got outside assistance last year. Fourteen days after the crops were dug, they got 14 days' notice to quit. After an appeal had been made on their behalf, the notices were withdrawn. This year, after the crops had been dug, the bank, having intercepted the settlers' incomes, again served them with notices to quit. Is not the merchant, or the storekeeper, or the settler himself, to receive any of the money that is held by the bank? I appeal to the Premier to release the money over and above the current annual interest. Evidence given before the Royal Commission that inquired into the dairying industry recently showed that the bank was offered a six-ton truck of potatoes in January last when they were bringing £10 a ton on rails, but even up to to-day no acknowledgment of the offer has been received. In consequence of the order from the Agricultural Bank, merchants would not deal with them, and potatoes had to be held till June, when they were sold at £4 and £4 10s. a ton, the proceeds being paid into the bank. No wonder these people are becoming disheartened. This year they have been told that if they do not sign a mortgage for a certain amount advanced for the payment of seed and manure, there will be no distribution of the money claimed by the bank. Yet the Premier in his replies to my questions, stated that another

lien would be taken. After the settlers have signed up their mortgages, they are now calmly told that a further lien may be taken over their crops! The position is unbearable, and it is little wonder that the settlers are walking off their holdings. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) predicted that in two years' time there would be no group settlers left. I tell the Premier that in two months' time there will be none. It is up to him to wake up and do something. I appeal to the Premier to see that the money held by the bank is released, after making provision for current interest charges. I have received a letter to-day informing me that in one man's case the storekeepers and merchants had been warned by the bank regarding proceeds. A settler's potatoes were dug in March last; the bank held up proceedings, and nothing has been done. It is scandalous. I protest, too, against the way in which new settlers are treated. It is about time something definite was done to improve the position. I shall mention one settler's name, because he does not mind my doing so. In September last a man named Bullied took over a block on Group 113 as a prospective settler. He was given a six months' trial, and no money was to be advanced to him. The bank told him that if he could secure an advance from a merchant or storekeeper to cover manure and seed supplies, he could give a lien over his crop. He did so. In January of this year, three months later, the bank wrote to him as follows:—

Further to my letter of the 15th inst., you have failed to comply with requirements, and your occupancy of the holding as a putative buyer is therefore terminated. Provided you give a written undertaking to vacate when called upon, you may remain for the present as caretaker, until a fresh sale is effected.

The man has been given notice and is permitted to act as caretaker, although the bank has not advanced him a penny! The bank has threatened merchants that if they do not refund money paid to them by the settler out of his takings, proceedings will be taken against them. The settler does not owe the Agricultural Bank a penny-piece, and was merely there on trial as a settler for six months. Because he sold £120 worth of potatoes, the bank requires the money. What for? What had the bank done for that £120? It had not provided seed or manure. The bank had not provided

him with a bag of sugar, yet the merchant who provided the manure and everyone else who had participated in the distribution of the crop proceeds, has been threatened with proceedings unless the money paid to them is refunded. It is about time we had another Royal Commission to inquire into the whole position and close the settlements up.

Mr. McLarty: You were lucky in getting the last inquiry.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: That is so. Although I do not agree with all their findings, the Royal Commission submitted a wonderful report. With regard to the fat lamb industry, I appeal to the Minister for Agriculture to give consideration to the improvement of the Albany Cool Stores and the provision of proper facilities for handling fat lambs. It is useless for Government officers to lecture to the people in the country areas advocating the breeding of certain classes of lambs if the Government do not provide adequate handling facilities for them when the lambs are ready for export. It is no good telling the growers to send their fat lambs to Fremantle, because the freight is too heavy and the wastage altogether too great. With slight improvements to the cool stores at Albany, the position could be met, and I guarantee that within the next three years my district will be producing 60,000 fat lambs annually for export. I am satisfied that if the Government were to announce their policy and indicate that facilities would be available by the time they were required, the settlers would be prepared to go ahead.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you suggest the spending of £25,000 in anticipation of the lambs being bred?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: No.

The Minister for Agriculture: You cannot have a unit installed at less than that cost.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: All I ask is that the Government announce their policy, and let the settlers know that provision will be made to take their fat lambs.

The Minister for Agriculture: I may not be here.

Mr. Panton: Is that your swan song?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: It is useless asking the people to go in for the breeding of fat lambs for export unless the Government announce that they will provide the proper facilities for handling them at the port. The people should know where they stand and what is expected of them. I appeal to the Government to give more consideration to group settlers. We must not condemn all

because some are unsatisfactory. I know some really good, genuine men who have been on their blocks for 3½ years, and their hearts are broken. The Agricultural Bank has treated them in a scandalous fashion. A little more consideration should be extended to them and greater executive power should be granted to the officer in charge of the district. I have every faith in that officer and if Mr. Storrie were given a little more power, he would be able to deal with the position. The practice of directing proceedings from the head office is ineffectual. The officers in charge do not know where they stand, because of the orders that come down from Perth. Unless something is done quickly, I believe the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) will be far out in his calculations. I hope not, but the whole position rests largely upon the wasting disease, which is the curse of the Denmark district. While the departmental officers are investigating the position, why not accept the McGough formula as a temporary expedient, even if it is not regarded as a permanent cure? As the cows have to be treated annually under the Vita Lick system, the McGough treatment is preferable. The Vita Lick treatment has to be administered every day and has to be continued year after year. My candid opinion is that it is not within 50 per cent. as effective as the McGough treatment. I have been watching the developments, and while Vita Lick has undoubtedly checked the disease, the cattle remain stationary and do not advance towards better health. On the other hand, if after 28 days treatment the McGough formula results in a 50 per cent. increase in production, it cannot be unsatisfactory. The formula is to be had very cheaply. The Minister referred to the number of cows treated, but McGough is not permitted to treat animals inside the group area.

Mr. Marshall: Why?

Mr. WANSBROUGH: Because the whole thing has been handed over to the Vita Lick people. McGough has not a string to his bow. He had no friends behind him: that was the trouble. Next year we have to face an election. I hope that we shall all be returned, and that there will be no wasting disease.

MR. PARKER (North-East Fremantle) [5.31]: I do not propose to occupy much time, and I will be unlike some members who have made that remark on opening

and have then spoken for some hours. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government on their work during the last two years. No doubt it has been an extremely strenuous time for the Government, as it has also been for members of Parliament.

Mr. Sleeman: And the unemployed.

Mr. PARKER: A considerable amount of unpleasant legislation had to be passed, and it was subject to proper and due criticism, but I think we can all say that the fears that were entertained have not been realised. I refer to the financial emergency, rent reduction, mortgagees' rights restriction, and various other laws passed under the Premiers' Plan that have undoubtedly relieved the position considerably. This is proved by the fact that there have been no extraordinary disturbances and no riots. There has not been much upsetting of the people; in fact, the people have taken all the emergency legislation in very good part. It is quite true that the Acts have been ably administered, and, although they have not given satisfaction to all parties, they have given general satisfaction to the people at large. Unfortunately individuals who have not been able to pay their rents have received some relief, and landlords, although much burdened, have been able to support the burdens. No doubt, there has been a good deal of grumbling, but it has not been very serious. The taxes that have been levied on the people have not been particularly severe. The hospital tax is undoubtedly the most severe—1½d. in the pound—but we hear very little grumbling about it, or about any other tax. All said and done, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. There is a considerable amount of money still floating around available for various forms of investment for quick returns. Since the charities' consultation has been in operation, various mushroom consultations have grown up in the form of cross-word puzzles. We have only to walk along the street near newspaper offices to find people—who have been endeavouring to show their intelligence by solving the mysterious missing words—forming up queues, and the police having to be engaged to control them and ensure that they do not interfere with traffic. This shows that there is plenty of money about, and that people are not by any means destitute. It

is gratifying in one sense to know that unemployed people are able to win quite large sums of money. I presume they do and can only get their money from the dole, so the dole is apparently more than sufficient for food needs.

Mr. Sleeman: They do not get many sixpences from the dole.

Mr. PARKER: They get quite a lot of prizes.

Mr. Sleeman: Lucky ones.

Mr. PARKER: We have seen the names and photographs of unemployed in the Blackboy and Myalup Camps as the winners of large sums.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: They are not on the dole; they are getting £1 a week over sustenance.

Mr. PARKER: That is virtually the dole.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It is a different thing.

Mr. PARKER: The member for Geraldton probably knows of people on the dole endeavouring to increase their money by saving up sixpences and entering a speculation. Now they have to save only 3d. According to the Governor's Speech, the farmers are in a very much better position this year than last year. We are told that the quantity of superphosphate despatched to the farming districts is much greater than it was last year, and it is anticipated that the record crop of 1930 will be exceeded this season.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: I do not know that the farmers are in a better position.

Mr. PARKER: No, they are not, because they are receiving so much less for their wheat. However, we were told by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at the opening of this Parliament that 75 per cent. of the farmers would be bankrupt. They are not bankrupt in the sense that I understood the hon. member to mean.

Hon. A. McCallum: More than 75 per cent. are bankrupt.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: You would say insolvent.

Mr. PARKER: When he used the term "bankrupt," I thought he meant the process of going through the court. Obviously, the position is not so. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act undoubtedly has done much for the farmer, and we are told that it will possibly be adopted in other States. Anyhow, it has benefited many of our farmers to the extent of enabling them to remain



on their holdings, and they are receiving advances in the shape of superphosphate.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Those advances have been made to keep them on their holdings.

Mr. PARKER: We hope we shall be able to keep them on their holdings until times become normal. We hope that prices will increase to enable them to make reasonable profits out of their holdings. There has been a good deal of criticism as to what the Government should do, and not much constructive criticism. I wish to offer some criticism that appeals to me as being constructive. One thing that continually passes through my mind, especially when I go to Government offices, is the number of girls employed in the civil service. As one travels to the city in the morning, one is impressed with the number of girls employed in offices generally. That does and must mean that the girls are taking the place of men. It is far more economical from the State point of view that the men, and not the girls, should be employed wherever possible. The men have responsibilities, whereas the girls do not have the responsibilities that men would take upon themselves if they could get the various jobs now filled by girls. It is economically unsound to have so many girls employed at work which could be done by men.

Mr. Marshall: I think Parker & Roe have a fair number of girls in their office.

Mr. PARKER: Unfortunately, not as many as they would like to have, and I am afraid the work is not that which men could do. I should like the Government to sell some of the vacant land in the North-East Fremantle electorate. A lot of Government land is reserved, especially in the Buckland Hill Road Board and in the Cottesloe municipality, and it is of no use for the purpose for which it was reserved.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: A lot of it is endowment land, is it not?

Mr. PARKER: I am speaking not of endowment land but of Class A reserves. One portion is on the eastern side of Broome-street, near the Cottesloe council chambers. It is of the usual sandstone nature, and very rough. It is situated opposite the golf links, and some years ago the golf club attempted to use portion of it for links, but that was impracticable, the land being too rough. It can never be used for recreation purposes. Furthermore, the Cottesloe municipality has the sea beach along one side, while there is a very broad railway

reserve running through on the other side. Consequently there are plenty of air spaces. Roads run along the beach and past other reserves, and there is not much land to produce rates. Again, on the railway side there is a long road, and on only one side is there property that is rateable, so it becomes a severe burden on the ratepayers to maintain the roads. If only some of the land could be sold, it would produce more rates for the municipality. True, it is not a good time to sell real estate, but I feel sure that land to which I refer would bring a reasonable figure for residential sites. In Buckland Hill a large area of land was re-purchased some years ago when the Government thought of building a railway line across the river at Blackwall Reach. I understand that that scheme is not now intended, and all that land is lying idle. Surely it would be wise to release the land for sale. The road board would then get some rates from it. The local authority has the river beach and also other Class A reserves which are quite sufficient for breathing spaces. Again, those extra rates would mean that more people could be employed in maintaining existing roads and building new roads that are so urgently needed in the Buckland Hill area. It is unfortunate that it is not within the bounds of practical politics to construct a modern bridge over the river, to connect up Fremantle with North Fremantle. I hope that, as soon as money is available, the Government that may then be in power will carry out this very urgent work. Members are in the habit of receiving all sorts of pamphlets in which are offered remedies for the ills suffered by Australia, and indeed the world generally. These pamphlets are written by experts, and so-called experts. I am not able to say who the experts are, or even whether the experts are correct. We know that in every walk of life one expert comes along with a theory of his own, and that another expert arises with an exactly opposite theory, and it is difficult to decide which expert is correct. We know that if we had a veterinary surgeon looking after farm horses, he would always be finding something wrong with them. I am not suggesting that veterinary surgeons are not useful because we know that their advice is very necessary; I am merely contending that if a veterinary surgeon had the responsibility of controlling farm horses all the year round, I am afraid he would always want to

have them under supervision so that they would always be in perfect condition, and perhaps in that way the farmer would lose the services of the animals. I sometimes feel that that is the case with our financial experts, and particularly those who rush into print and scatter pamphlets around. But, boiled down, is not the position that we have to live within our means, whether it be the individual, a corporation, or the State? The question is, how are we to live within our means? The attempts made so far have undoubtedly been of great assistance, but we cannot do everything at once. I am looking forward to the time when the Government will be able to permit sustenance workers to earn more money. There is no doubt that those who have been partly employed have not by any means been able to make sufficient to maintain that standard of living of which we are so proud. Unfortunately, we cannot afford to allow these people to earn more, though we can look forward to the time when those who in past years were thrifty will again be able, by means of their savings, to resume the payments on the dwellings not entirely paid for. The position to-day is that the Government must continue to look after those who have been unable to look after themselves. That seems wrong: nevertheless it has to be. I desire to say a few words on the subject of taxation. We know how unpopular taxes are, but I intend to suggest one or two that might not come within the category of being unpopular. I suggest that a tax should be imposed on the issue and distribution of dodgers—I am not speaking of electioneering dodgers, but those that are so frequently left in motor cars.

Mr. Sampson: That would not help the printing industry.

Mr. PARKER: I feel sure that the printing industry would not suffer by the imposition of a tax such as I suggest. Even if less paper were used as the result of the tax, it would not be the Australian worker that would suffer because all the paper that is used is imported. This tax, I should say, would raise a fair amount of revenue which would be useful to the Government.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: What do you suggest—a shilling a hundred?

Mr. PARKER: I have no wish to kill the printing industry by imposing a heavy tax.

Mr. Sampson: Why not tax legal documents?

Mr. PARKER: Those are taxed and it does not prevent the preparation of leases and other legal documents.

Mr. Hegney: Any way, the lawyers would not pay the tax.

Mr. PARKER: Another evil has arisen in our midst—the car watcher. I do not know why a person cannot leave his car in the street without having to pay someone to look after it. I am not suggesting that any of the men who take it upon themselves to watch cars are dishonest, but one has a feeling that if he does not put his hand in his pocket, the car watcher, or one of his friends, might accidentally drop his pocket knife on to a tyre. I say candidly, however, that I do not know of any such thing having happened.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Perhaps you always put in.

Mr. PARKER: No, only once I think, and that was because the car watcher claimed to know me and he might have come from my constituency. In that instance I was not prepared to risk refusing to pay him. I do not know why the police force, for the maintenance of which we all subscribe, should not have the duty cast upon them of protecting property of this description. Notice of the introduction of a Bill to deal with the stealing of cars has been given in this House, and it may assist us to do away with the car watchers of to-day. These people apparently have some sort of organisation and they wear a uniform. Seemingly, they have come here to stay, but they are imposing on the people an unnecessary burden. One cannot go to a picture show without having to pay 6d. or 1s. for parking his car in the street. Surely the police force are capable of preventing theft or damage being done to cars parked in the streets. If a person has a valuable car, he should put it in a properly controlled garage, where men are employed on a proper wage. There is a further evil, and that is that a car watcher will keep his pitch and no one else can get near it. Sometimes the watcher will employ other men at an extremely low wage. Recently I was in the local court where a man appeared on a small debt judgment summons, and he said he could not afford to pay anything because he was a married man and was receiving only 30s. a week as a car watcher. He added that he was not receiving the tips: he was employed by someone else. Another man who appeared

before the court the other day in connection with a minor disturbance in a hotel described himself as a car watcher; so obviously he was not watching cars at the time. If these people are permitted to remain, why not collect something from them by way of taxation?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The general feeling is that it is organised blackmail.

Mr. PARKER: I know, and that is the reason why most people pay. Candidly, however, I have not found that to be so, but it is the feeling that is held. I was pleased to see the railways had reduced their fares on the suburban lines with a view to getting back some of the traffic that has drifted to the motor vehicles. I am glad to see this because it is a matter that I mentioned when I was first permitted to speak in this House. I should, however, like to see a little more done by the railway authorities. Around most of the railway stations there is vacant land, and I cannot see why that land should not be converted into parking areas. People who live a mile or so from railway stations, and who own cars and at the present time drive direct to the city, might be prevailed upon to drive to the railway station and leave their cars there, if they could be assured that they were doing so with safety. Then they could utilise the railway service to the city. There would be much less risk of cars being interfered with if they were left on railway land; at any rate, a regulation could be framed to provide a severe penalty in the event of interference. I am not suggesting that the Railway Department should put men on to watch the cars. No doubt regular travellers would make some arrangement with the porter or station-master who naturally would keep a friendly eye on the cars belonging to such travellers. We would thus relieve congestion in the city parking areas and would secure more traffic to the railways. It was gratifying to notice a statement in the Press recently that the Government intend to consider more seriously the overlapping of departments, Federal and State, such as the Health Department, Public Works Department and others. It is essential that the people should be educated with reference to the effect of tariffs, which must be reduced if we are to promote trade with other parts of the world. Australia cannot live in a state of isolation, and I for one will be exceedingly pleased to see ships entering Australian ports full of produce, from other parts of the Empire for preference, and

from other parts of the world where necessary, that can be more easily and more economically grown or manufactured elsewhere than in Australia.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What would you do with the Australian workers?

Mr. PARKER: The reason why I want to see what I have indicated is so that the Australian worker shall be employed.

Mr. Sleeman: Where?

Mr. PARKER: At North Fremantle. If our ports are fully occupied with shipping, we shall have the workers of Fremantle, North Fremantle and South Fremantle earning good wages.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Then you would suggest that the workers displaced at the factories would be absorbed at the ports on waterside operations.

Mr. PARKER: I do not think it would make the slightest difference to the number of men employed in secondary industries, but I believe we would have far better goods produced in a far better way with lower overhead charges—

Mr. Sleeman: Did you refer to better goods?

Mr. PARKER: Yes—

Mr. Sleeman: That is a reflection on the Australian worker.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a libel.

Mr. PARKER: My statement was neither a reflection nor a libel on the Australian worker. I contend he will be better off if he gets the goods he requires at a reasonable price, due to less overhead expenses.

Mr. Sleeman: If you want him to have the cheapest goods, you want him to get them from the Japs.

Mr. PARKER: I was talking about satisfactory goods, not shoddy goods. I want to see Empire trading carried out for preference, particularly regarding goods that cannot be produced in Australia except with heavy overhead expenses.

The Minister for Railways: If we cannot buy outside Australia, how can we sell outside Australia?

Mr. PARKER: That is the position. No country is healthy if its ports are idle.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But no country progresses that relies on primary industry alone.

Mr. PARKER: I quite agree with that statement.

The Minister for Lands: But each country has to go through that stage.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It is always poor during that period of its history.

Mr. PARKER: We must go outside Australia for our markets.

Hon. A. McCallum: Are you arguing that the country makes the ports prosperous or that the ports make the country prosperous?

Mr. PARKER: I was arguing that a country is never prosperous unless its ports are full. We want ships to come here with full holds and to depart with full holds. We want to open up and maintain our trade with other countries.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Your argument was all in favour of unloading.

Mr. PARKER: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is what you said.

Mr. PARKER: No. I am not advocating the importation of goods at all. What I am arguing in favour of is trading with other countries, especially within the Empire. I want to see ships coming here fully loaded and departing with their holds full of our goods. It is by that means that we shall become a wealthy country.

Mr. Wansbrough: You want the trade to come to one port only.

The Minister for Lands: Some will have to go through Albany.

Mr. PARKER: Certainly; I do not want the port of Fremantle to be overloaded. I am sorry that the time is not ripe for the Government to be able to sell some, if not all of the trading concerns. I am sure that if those concerns were in the hands of private companies a greater number of men would be employed.

Hon. A. McCallum: The Government got rid of one in your electorate, and more men have not been employed.

Mr. PARKER: One in my electorate has practically closed down, but I am sure that if it had been in the hands of private enterprise, the concern would be on a far more healthy basis than it is to-day. It would probably have survived the present times of difficulty. That is a matter of opinion on which some of us will assuredly differ. My opinion is that trading concerns cannot be controlled by a Government. There is no scope for the workers to rise, nor yet any incentive for the manager to put as much energy into his work as there would be if the concerns were privately owned.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And, in addition, State trading seriously interferes with the profits of private enterprise.

The Minister for Lands: And the concerns contribute nothing towards taxation.

Mr. PARKER: Of course, State trading interferes with private enterprise.

Mr. Kenneally: Particularly the profits.

Mr. PARKER: That must be so. Unless we get right down to socialism, that is bound to be the position.

Mr. Sleeman: I presume you want the State ships sold, too.

Mr. PARKER: I do not regard the State Shipping Service as a trading concern. I am consistent in that respect because in 1906 I attended a deputation to the Government asking them to put boats on the coast. I have lived on the North-West coast and know how essential boats are; just as essential to the North as railways are to the people outback.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is pure socialism.

Mr. PARKER: That may be so. I am not hidebound; I know there are exceptions that prove every rule.

Mr. Sleeman: Could not private shipping companies carry on there?

Mr. PARKER: When I was living in the North-West, two or three shipping companies were operating on the coast and there were far more boats travelling up and down then than there are to-day, even with the State ships. Unfortunately I do not think those companies would return to the trade, and it is essential to keep the State boats on the coast.

Mr. Sleeman: Then private enterprise has failed there?

Mr. PARKER: I do not know that we can say that, but I know that there were more boats on the coast when private enterprise was more interested in the trade. It has to be admitted that that was in the days before the Navigation Act was passed, and I cannot say what the position would be now. I take no exception to the State boats. I would like to see the Public Service Act amended in a direction that would make for economy and greater efficiency. Instead of having a Public Service Commissioner, there should be a public service board consisting of the Under Secretaries of the various departments. Their deliberations would have the effect of levelling the service up instead of the present position under which

one individual, the Public Service Commissioner, is supposed to know exactly what every clerk is doing and what his services are worth. Theoretically he is supposed to have that knowledge and to adjust conditions accordingly. If the Under Secretaries were to constitute the board, it would have a tendency to get away from the watertight compartments constituted by the various departments under the existing system. There would be made possible exchanges of officials that would be beneficial to the individual officers and to the service at large. So long as the service is divided into watertight compartments with the Public Service Commissioner at the head, many departmental heads fear to admit that they are overstaffed for the time being because they consider they might not be able to get the men back when business increased and their services were required. In those circumstances, a departmental head is chary about allowing another department to avail itself of the services of one of his officers. Human nature enters into the question and the greater number of men under an individual officer's control, the greater he considers his salary should be. All that sort of thing could be overcome if we had a Public Service Board composed of the different Under Secretaries, and there would be less inter-departmental jealousy. That sort of thing must always exist to some extent, but it could largely be avoided if my suggestion were adopted. I would like to see this matter given consideration with a view to effecting economy and securing useful results for both the Public Service and the State. It might help to eliminate some of the waste that always exists in Government departments and big businesses generally.

Mr. Marshall: Is the scheme you suggest in operation in any part of Australia?

Mr. PARKER: I cannot say. I do not think we should rely upon other people to carry out experiments for us.

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

#### THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [7.30]: May I join with those who have preceded me in the debate in welcoming to this Chamber the three new members who have been elected since last session, and join, too, in expressing regret at the loss of the very highly respected members that have passed away. I congratulate the new members on their

maiden efforts in the House. Personally I am grateful for the fact that I cannot remember my own first effort, but to those members who have come along this session I do heartily extend congratulation. I have noticed some criticism, particularly in certain sections of the Press, against what is termed the waste of time in discussing matters on the Address-in-reply. But one of two things must happen: either we should rid ourselves of this debate entirely, or members should be given opportunity for saying what they are expected to say. There are not many opportunities to discuss things in a general way. As a matter of fact, it is probably the outstanding feature of our system of Government that at some period of each session an opportunity should be given members to introduce matters of public interest in order that they should be discussed. So from that point of view I do not think a discussion on the Address-in-reply can rightly be termed a waste of time. It is true, of course, that we do sometimes repeat what another member has already said. But even that may be desirable, because what is said again may be said in a different way, and therefore may be considered from a different angle. At the moment we are living in difficult and strenuous times, and any members who can render assistance by introducing new views on a discussion of this kind are entitled to have an opportunity for so doing. But I do not wish to be misunderstood, because I recognise that, in the main, debates of this nature generally tend to discussion from a party interest angle. I do not know, after all, that that is not to be expected, because, while it is the Government's function to govern, it is the function of an Opposition to see that they explain their reasons for doing certain things, so that the public may understand the why and wherefore of it. Therefore, without a satisfactory Opposition we could not have a really satisfactory Government, and I do not complain of the criticism by members opposite, because, as I say, it is at present their function to oppose, and some day it may again be their function to govern, although perhaps in a different way from that taken by the present Government. But one thing to which I do take exception is the assertion continually made by some members, not all on the other side of the House, that those on this side have a lack of the milk of human kindness. Let me say in reply that we per-

nit people under license to sell milk to the general public, but that we provide by very carefully framed regulations that they shall supply only milk up to a given standard. We have no such regulation available by which we could set up a standard of the milk of human kindness, and if such a standard were ever set up, those who prate so cheaply about it would probably find that their own milk of human kindness was seriously adulterated and would not pass the standard. In reality it is impossible for any person to judge another on the quality of human kindness, for it is not always a question of what one does, but rather of what one is able to do. So we must judge the circumstances surrounding the action, as well as the action itself. I want to say for this side that it is not lack of desire, but is rather lack of opportunity, or of the necessary commodity that would enable us to fulfil our desire. I am sometimes termed the Minister for Unemployment, although I would prefer to be regarded as the Minister for Unemployment Relief. No one can charge me with lack of sympathy for the man who has to work either by his brain or by his muscles to earn a livelihood for himself and his dependants. I myself have had to do that from a very early age, and I have suffered from what others have suffered, namely, lack of opportunity to earn a living because of unemployment. So I know what it is to suffer in those circumstances, and I think it would be foolish to contend that one with that experience to look back upon would lose sympathy for those suffering in a similar way. But sympathy is one thing and action is another, and I and other Ministers ought to be judged from the standpoint of how far we can help with the means at our disposal. The criticism directed against us reminds me of a story repeated by Theodore Parker, who said a gentleman was once travelling in a coach and had on his knee a rather interesting box which caught the attention of some passengers. One of them said to him, "Excuse me, but what are you doing with that box?" The answer was, "I am carrying this box because inside it is a mongoose." "What are you going to do with that," was the further question. The man with the box answered, "I have a brother who suffers from over-indulgence in drink. Unfortunately at the moment he is seeing snakes, and so I am taking the mongoose along to kill those

snakes for him." "But how foolish," said the other, "for those snakes are only imaginary." Whereupon the bearer of the box lifted the lid, remarking, "So is the mongoose only imaginary." That just sets out the criticism we sometimes have. All the evils imaginable are put up for the purpose of attacking the Government. It is done by all Oppositions, but more often than not the mongoose they carry to kill the snake is only an imaginary one. The other day I tried to arrive at what would be the amount of money required during the coming financial year if the Government were to accede to all the suggestions offered to get us over our troubles.

Hon. P. Collier: That is just your trouble over there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, they are all around us. I had to stop because I found that much of it was of an unknown quantity. But as much of it as was known reached something like £2,000,000 in addition to what we look for. It is one thing to make a suggestion, and quite another to propose means of carrying it out. At the moment, none can know better than those on the Treasury benches and those on the front Opposition benches that you cannot accomplish much without the wherewithal to do it—and we here know that we have not the wherewithal. Somebody said we are gradually untangling the tangled skein of the world's troubles, and that as we untangle one knot we find another. That is what is happening. As fast as we make good in one direction, something arises in another direction which presents a difficulty four times as great as the one we had just finished with. What are we actually suffering from? If it was something of a local character it might be simple enough to find a remedy, but as a matter of fact what we are suffering from is a world depression over which Australia, and particularly Western Australia, has no control whatever. It is useless for us to attempt to find in Western Australia a remedy for the world's troubles. We could not apply it, even if we were to find it, and so we have to accept the position and do the best we can.

Hon. P. Collier: That is what I explained two years ago, but your Premier said it was a local trouble.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: What may have been said two years ago and what is said to-day are entirely different. The hon. member knows that sometimes, in one session we have passed an Act, per-

fectly satisfied that it would meet the position, and before Parliament again assembled, difficulties had arisen requiring an amendment of that Act.

Hon. P. Collier: You are repeating what I said at the last election, when your Premier said it was a local affair.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Well, great minds seem to be working in harmony.

Hon. A. McCallum: You should not cast an accusation against the Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: Your Premier said it was a purely local matter.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Very well, the Premier two years ago said it was a purely local matter. I do not think anyone could deny that it is now quite beyond our control.

Hon. P. Collier: As it was then.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In Australia we are suffering largely from two main factors: one, the cessation of overseas borrowing. That is the main factor.

Hon. P. Collier: And that had ceased before the last elections.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member wants to make some party gain out of it, he may do it.

Hon. P. Collier: I want only to get you back to what the Premier said.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The first difficulty is the cessation of overseas borrowing. That amounted to a large sum in Australia and to a relatively large sum in Western Australia. We are also suffering from a serious decline in the prices of our exported commodities overseas. Those two things together could not but have a serious effect on employment throughout Australia. It has been held by those who have investigated this matter in detail that at least 200,000 men could not do other than lose their employment as the result of the cessation of overseas borrowing in 1929. If we add to that the fact that our commodities for export overseas have fallen 33.1/3rd per cent. or, according to figures I have read, something over £120,000,000 less is coming to Australia from products sold overseas, it can be seen that nothing short of serious unemployment and a serious decline in internal business would follow such conditions. A community such as that of Australia, and particularly Western Australia—after all we export a greater amount

per head of the population than does any other State of the Commonwealth—that depends so largely upon the sale of its products abroad must be seriously affected by such conditions. Until there is a rise—and a noticeable rise—in the price of our commodities sold overseas, I cannot see how we are going to surmount our troubles. People may talk of turning the corner and of things getting better. I believe things are better, and if they are, it is largely due to the fact that we are becoming more accustomed to the conditions. That may appear to be pessimistic, but it is my view. I do not think we shall be able to claim to have turned the corner or to claim that things are definitely better until the products we send overseas bring higher prices than they are bringing at the moment. When that happens, we shall unquestionably have turned the corner and shall make a rapid return to prosperity.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: An indication that way would release credits.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Probably it would. When it is understood that a 1 per cent. variation in the price of products exported from Australia to the world's markets represents £1,450,000, it can be realised what a reduction of 33 1/3rd per cent. means. Therefore it is easy to understand that until we do secure a rise in commodity prices overseas, we shall not get out of our troubles. Our exports to-day are worth about half of what they were worth in the years 1925-1929, and unless we get a better return for them in what is after all a medium for fixing value, namely, sterling, we shall not have an opportunity to provide employment for the men who are suffering from lack of work. I have previously stated, and I wish to repeat, because it should be emphasised, that we in Australia as a whole and not less we in Western Australia, are suffering because of our system of finance. I do not propose to set up myself as a financial expert, but there are one or two things that should be obvious to anyone. In the first place we have continually told the people that we ought to put our house in order by providing that we shall not borrow money for expenditure on other than reproductive works. Every Government claims that it does so. As a matter of fact no Government has ever attempted to do it. Let me take a case in point. The Federal Government impose a tariff on imports. The State

Government are charged with the duty of developing the State and its industries. To do so we have to undertake public works. Those public works from time to time necessitate the use of material, and 10 per cent. of the material has to be imported. The Federal Government has established a right to impose duty on all goods imported whether by a private trader or by a Government. Yet we are supposed to be a sovereign State. We have to pay the duty. The point I wish to make is that the States pay duty on imported goods to provide public works, and the Federal Government immediately pay the import duties into their ordinary revenue account. In other words money that we borrow for public works is taken by the Commonwealth in the form of duty, paid into their ordinary revenue and used as such. It was estimated by a committee who inquired into the matter some years ago that in 10 years the States had had to borrow, overseas mainly, for governmental works in respect of which they paid duty not less than £50,000,000, all of which had been spent by the Commonwealth as ordinary revenue. But the States cannot unload in that way. The States cannot write off the amount. The States have to repay the money and have to pay the interest on the money. Take another instance: We boast, and my friend opposite has boasted, that a fair sum of money has been provided in the past for the development of mining. This applies to all Governments. During the five years the hon. member was in office, no less than 62 per cent. of the money actually expended from loan for mining development was paid into the revenue of the State for water consumed by the mines at Kalgoorlie. It was diverted from loan to revenue.

Hon. P. Collier: Indirectly it helps.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; as a matter of fact it reduces the charge on mining and assists in the production of the commodity, which is desirable, but that does not alter the fact that we have consistently obtained loan money for the purpose of public works and have diverted it to the revenue of the State, whereas the public have believed that we were using the money for reproductive works. I am not charging this against one Government more than another. All

Governments have done it, and while they could get the money, would do it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You can multiply that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, I am merely mentioning two self-evident cases. In the circumstances, as there are not now the same opportunities for the States to borrow money, we cannot render assistance in some directions where we think we ought to help. We cannot help because the aid previously given was made possible through the medium of loans, which to-day are unobtainable. The result is that somebody is suffering. This brings me to the point that while it is simple to criticise and easy to suggest what ought to be done, it is quite another matter to find the means. Coming to unemployment and to what has been attempted and done by the present Government, I admit readily that the problem of unemployment that has to be faced to-day is entirely different from the problem as we know it in normal times. I do not think that even members of the Opposition will deny that. Therefore we have to find different methods to treat the problem. In normal times we had unemployment, but probably in a small degree only. Men, with the exception of a comparatively few, do not know what it is to have permanent employment throughout the whole year, and to be assured of receiving a certain amount of pay per week or per month. In the main our people depend upon wages from week to week. It is generally accepted that a man is not expected to be in work the whole year through. Previously, when he was out of work, he was not a charge on the State. On one occasion when on the goldfields I was out of work for nearly eight months, getting only an occasional job here and there. I had no permanent employment during that period. I think the Leader of the Opposition had a similar experience. But I never heard of registering for sustenance, or going to the Government for a dole or for relief, simply because I was usually able to save a few pounds while I was in work. If I could not do that, I had a few friends, who felt it their responsibility to help me. I candidly admit that many friends of the unemployed are not now in a position to render such help because their work is intermittent and their income reduced.



Mr. Hegney: It is the responsibility either of the Government or of private industry.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not denying the responsibility. The point we have to face is that we have a different problem to deal with to-day. A great many persons receiving sustenance from the State at present would normally be out of work. They were satisfied to get a little casual employment here and there in and around the metropolitan area, trimming lawns and hedges and cutting wood, but those men were largely inefficient. To-day that work is not available to them because efficient men are out of employment, and the efficient men can do such work more rapidly than can the inefficient. Consequently men who in normal times would be partially employed are out of work to-day, and the whole burden of their maintenance is thrown upon the State. May I say to members opposite that sometimes we are roundly abused because we do not deal with every case as they think we ought to do. When a man deliberately registers and obtains sustenance or rations from the Government from the 1st January to the 31st December, and makes no effort to obtain any sort of employment, I am suspicious of him. It may be a hard thing to say in some cases, but I happen to know there has been more than one instance of a man getting rations to the extent of £2 9s. per week which he knows is assured on a Monday morning for the next six days, while a man who starts the week with nothing has to work fairly hard to find a job and has to work pretty hard when he gets the job to make up the £2 9s. for the week. Unquestionably there are men who have been using the unions of this State—the unions stand and have stood for a fair wage in return for fair work—who have accepted the £2 9s. a week and who have deliberately gone out and undercut tradesmen and then, in some instances, have been spokesmen at deputations complaining of the action of the Government. That is not a wild statement; it can be proved by evidence. When I accepted office I started with the belief that one could trust 99 per cent. of the community to be honest. I am sorry I have had to change my view. So far as I can judge there is too large a percentage in the community who, not out of wilful desire to be dishonest but because of a feeling prevalent among many people that the Government are good

game, take advantage of any opportunity that presents itself. It is not an uncommon thing for a man to get out of a tram car, not having paid his fare, and, with laughter, inform other alighting passengers that he had beaten the conductor for the fare, quite overlooking his admission that he had robbed the tramways of the 3d. fare. Such people do not appreciate the dishonesty of their action. They seem to think it clever. That man robbed the community and boasted of it. There are too many members of the community who imagine that the Government are fair game and that it is not dishonest to get something from them if they can. They think there is no wilful dishonesty or untruthfulness about putting up a false case in order to get something to which they are not entitled. That has been our experience, and we have had to tighten the strings. We have to hold the scales fairly between the man who claims on the Government and the man who provides the wherewithal to meet the claim. Members on the Treasury benches do not pay those claims, any more than do members opposite or the people in the gallery. Whatever the Government provide is found by the taxpayer, and surely I am not entitled merely to be swayed by the wailings of one section of the community and to disregard the rights of the other. Thus we have had to do things that were sometimes unpleasant, and that have had the effect of moving members opposite to say, as they did say, that we lacked the milk of human kindness, and were wanting in sympathy. It is not a matter of sympathy; it is a lack of proper judgment on the part of those who say such things. Members opposite have said there were many occasions during their term of office when they felt they should have done certain things but when, in justice to the taxpayers as a whole, they had to decline. That happens with all Governments. Whilst we may not be able to do all that members think we should do, we are able to boast that we are doing as well as, and perhaps better than, any other Government in Australia towards our unemployed. I do not suggest that members opposite would not do the same. They would be entitled to do it. Sometimes it is asserted that all we are doing is to provide ration orders. The member for Leederville (Mr. Pantou) referred to one or two cases in which he thought we had not been fair. If there is any unfairness, it is on the part of the hon. member,

who publishes details of a case that he only heard about a few hours before.

Mr. Panton: That is not right.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: He had no opportunity to ascertain the facts, but I will give them later on to show that he was unfair. The member for Forrest (Miss Holman) asserted that we did not do sufficient to help expectant mothers. Perhaps that is so. I do not suggest that any Government can satisfy everyone. We are doing as much as possible and as much as is practicable. Whenever a case is brought under our notice we render pre-natal assistance, and have never refused it. Apart from the ration orders, or the sustenance payments, we provide firewood in some cases free. We provide free transport to registered unemployed to attend sick relatives at our hospitals, and we provide free transport to enable our registered unemployed to go to hospital if they are sick. There are many ways in which help is given but which are not shown as actual assistance rendered. Everyone does not require sustenance and it is often imagined that nothing is being done. If anything can be urged against the Government it is over-indulgence, for probably we are doing more than is desirable in some cases. That is the cause of the feeling that the Government are good game.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: What is the percentage of people in that class?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member should not ask me that question.

Hon. P. Collier: Their percentage is not large.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is too large.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: One per cent. would be too many.

The Attorney General: It is ever growing.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If all were honest, we should have no difficulty. There would be no reason to have a waiting period, no ground for having a period of investigation to satisfy ourselves that the claim was correct, but because there is a percentage, small though it is, of persons who are dishonest, we are compelled to frame regulations which to the honest man seem absurd and unnecessary. We have to pass regulations controlling the operation of our mines, not because every mine owner would not be fair

in his treatment of his employees, but because some would not be fair. We have to make these regulations although they appear objectionable, because unfortunately too many persons are dishonest in their dealings with the Government.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Is that fairly general?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is general throughout the State.

Hon. P. Collier: There have not been too many prosecutions.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We prosecute only in a few cases. It is not desirable we should do so. There are not many cases of wilful and deliberate dishonesty.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you not penalising the honest people?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think not. We may be causing them a little inconvenience. That is not due to any want of desire on our part to help, but because we know it is necessary for the protection of others. It is not a question of having a store of money that we can handle at our own free will. Whatever we do we ought to do after weighing the position carefully, because the money is found by the community and we have a responsibility towards the community. We must take reasonable precautions to see that no unfair treatment is meted out to the taxpayers.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Posterity will have to pay a lot of this in the shape of loans.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: For the last 30 years I have heard about what posterity has to pay. I wonder what posterity is, and where it is. We are the posterity that is paying for the expenditure incurred by previous Governments. The posterity, as it would have appeared some years ago, is paying its quota to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: We are paying our quota by passing it on to the next posterity.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That may be so up to a point. Any posterity that has to carry any heavier burden than we are carrying to-day must break down. It is because of our loan expenditure, incurred by previous Governments, that we are carrying this heavy burden to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: We are passing our deficit on to posterity; every Government has done that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No posterity could handle a heavier burden than we are bearing to-day. To talk of posterity is like talking about to-morrow, because to-morrow never comes. We to-day are carrying a burden as great as any posterity could carry. If we make it any heavier, posterity cannot bear it. We therefore have to concern ourselves about the conditions as we find them to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: The legacy that is ours to-day is the result of the operations of Governments in the last 15 years.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That will not help us much. One may make a mistake and be aware of it afterwards, but one cannot wipe it out. Things that are written cannot be unwritten. We cannot overcome our troubles by talking of the mistakes of the past. We have all been doing that, and I am trying to emphasise that this is one of the causes of our troubles. We have been passing things on to posterity. Unfortunately we have now reached that posterity and have to pay the bill. We are doing the best we can with the funds that are available for the relief of the unemployed. There are people who suggest we should introduce an unemployment tax. I heard that stated with regard to our hospitals. A hospital tax was imposed, and I doubt if there ever was such an unpopular tax.

Hon. P. Collier: Because it was not a hospital tax.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I know. The same thing would apply to an unemployment tax. As soon as it is imposed, someone will say it is not an unemployment tax. Any tax will not help to put men back into work. No Government ever existed that could find employment for all the people, unless there is some other system of government I know nothing about. We cannot in Australia look to Governments to engage all the men who should be employed and keep them employed. If industry cannot be re-established so as to enable these men to go into industry, we shall never turn the corner.

Mr. Hegney: Economic disaster will follow.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am beginning to be doubtful whether there

is anything in these economic suggestions. We even get two professors who will disagree on vital issues.

Hon. P. Collier: And both are wrong.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Very probably. Let us therefore deal with facts. Government could not possibly employ all the men who are idle. This must be done by industry.

Mr. Sleeman: If industry cannot absorb them, Governments should treat them better.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Who is going to do it? Every time a man is thrown out of employment the purchasing power of the wage earner is reduced.

Mr. Sleeman: Don't we know it!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Who will pay? The hon. member knows that in the final analysis the wage earner pays all the taxes. The alternative is for everyone to work for nothing and share it with his comrades. Every hour of the day I have solutions of the problem put before me. During the war everyone knew better than Lord Kitchener, Earl Haig or Lord French how to bring the war to a successful issue. To-day people will say how this unemployment problem should be handled. The other day I met a man who asked me how the Frankland River people were getting on. I replied I had not seen them for a day or two. He said, "Do you know what I would do? I would shoot the lot of them." It is absurd to imagine that because a crank would put up a suggestion of that sort, a responsible Minister would do anything of the kind. I certainly would not have it in my heart to do any such thing. My job at the moment is to face facts as I find them and to do the best that is possible in the circumstances. We have provided certain relief work. Some people say we would get out of our troubles if we put all the men on full time so long as the money lasted.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I entirely disagree with that view. I have never yet been driven into doing something with which I disagreed.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are making a mess of the present business.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is because I would not do something with which I could not agree that the hon. member and I separated. That would not help us out of troubles, but would only increase our difficulties. I am not going to try it. We

put these men to work in order to give them something in addition to what we give under sustenance, a pound a week up. I agree that the man and his wife who only get 14s. a week sustenance are having a bad time, even with £1 up. The same thing applies to the man who has a child and is getting 21s. I am consulting the Premier to see if it will not be possible to provide a little more so as to give these people a chance. I contend that the man who has a wife and five children, and is getting full ration orders, is getting into his house more than he requires by way of rations. It would be better to issue no more rations, but to make payments in cash. I believe that system would enable us to overcome a lot of the rent problems that the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) talks about.

Mr. Sleeman: I wish you would try it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We may do so. If the funds were available I would lose no opportunity of trying out these things, but I have to consider where the pounds, shillings and pence are to come from. There is not an unlimited amount available.

Hon. P. Collier: What about the £500 that is being spent on the Railway Commissioner's car?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is employing men the member for Leederville wants to see put out of work. Will the hon. member say how that car can be renovated without the employment of someone?

Mr. Panton: There are any number of trucks requiring renovation.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Every time a job is started, someone tells us there is a better job that could be started.

Mr. Panton: Don't try to put that across me!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not trying to do so. I am putting matters as I understand them.

Mr. Panton: Your understanding is very bad.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The work that a man thinks better than another work is generally a work in his own district, and so the political element comes in. If the expenditure of £500 on the renovation of a car—

Hon. P. Collier: That is the estimate. The cost will be £5,000.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I could bring up instances in which works far

less justifiable were done by Governments of the past.

Hon. P. Collier: Not when men were starving.

Mr. Panton: The dogs in the streets are barking that this job is costing £3,000.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Talking of dogs, I am leading a dog's life.

Mr. Panton: Then you are getting your deserts.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Possibly. The hon. member made a reference to some man at Wanneroo—it should have been Waroona—who had a wife and three children, and the wife became mentally affected and was placed in an institution. In point of fact, the man was employed at Waroona, and not at Wanneroo. And he has two children, not three.

Mr. Panton: Then he has lost one since.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: For some time these two children have been cared for by another sustenance recipient, who has been exempted from country work. The men are not employed permanently away from home. They work a week or two on full time, and then are stood down for a period. They are paid £1 per week above sustenance. The member for Leederville has not the slightest conception of the number of cases brought forward, nor of the arguments used by men desirous of remaining in the metropolitan area when they ought to go into the country. The Government could not possibly formulate a policy to put work at the back door of every man. When the Government do find work in the metropolitan area, the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) comes along and says that there are residents of Victoria Park who have to go to Nedlands to work, and that therefore the Government should make a special concession to enable them to travel.

Mr. Raphael: Quite right, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The member for Leederville stated the facts partly. He did not state that another sustenance recipient was caring for the children, and was exempted from going to the country. No man in these days wants to leave his home to look for work. However, there was a time when members of this Chamber had to leave their homes in order to look for work.

Mr. Panton: Yes, lots of us.

Hon. P. Collier: We left our State for our State's good.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Leader of the Opposition is entitled to speak for himself. Next the member for Leederville mentioned the case of a man aged 63 years, who had three sons unemployed.

Mr. Pantou: That is a fact.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But the hon. member did not state what I shall now state, that in fact for at least two years past we have made it known that in the case of a man who is aged and therefore not in a position to do a day's work as well as his son could do it, we encourage the son to go and do the work if the father is put on work, provided the case is brought under our notice.

Mr. Pantou: You ought to be on that job, and not the officials. We put that proposition up to the officials day after day, and it was turned down.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Did I interrupt when the hon. member was speaking?

Mr. Pantou: No. You were outside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The department has encouraged the son to do the father's shift in quite a number of cases. Then comes the case of a single man who went prospecting. The hon. member drew a wonderful picture of that case.

Mr. Pantou: I am not going to allow you to put up what is not fair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Leederville says that the Minister has made a statement which is not fair to the hon. member.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know what the statement is.

Mr. Pantou: I am not going to allow you to make unfair statements. If you read "Hansard" you will find—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Interjections must cease from now on.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member referred to a single man who has been prospecting. Departmental officers interviewed that man. It was found that he had only just arrived, that he was not in serious trouble, that he was doing what many of us have done in the past when we were unemployed—living with a brother who was in work. But we did not rush to relieve a

brother of a family responsibility at the cost of the taxpayer.

Mr. Kenneally: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, under such circumstances as the present. If we are not our brother's keeper, is somebody else our brother's keeper more than we are? The man in question made no complaint. He was not dissatisfied. He stated definitely that his brother was not complaining, as he was in full-time work. Therefore the case was one which did not require any immediate action by the department. The hon. member also made some references to unfair treatment of returned soldiers not on sustenance. I was rather surprised at his statements, because I know that at the request of the Returned Soldiers' League—and I know the hon. member is a member of the executive of that league—

Mr. Pantou: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We notified the league, and also notified the local governing bodies, how they were to handle returned soldiers in receipt of pensions which did not permit them to obtain sustenance.

Mr. Pantou: That proposal was put up at a deputation, and you turned it down.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Now the hon. member makes a statement of which I want to complain. I say definitely that that system has been carried out, and is being carried out, with the assistance of the Returned Soldiers' League. On the 2nd June, 1931, the various local governing bodies were circularised to the following effect:—

Any returned soldier who, through being in receipt of a pension, is precluded from Government sustenance may, on presentation of a letter from the secretary of the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League, be included on your list so that he will participate in any "pick-up" for work.

Mr. Raphael: That refers to the Perth City Council?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. All local governing bodies were so circularised.

Mr. Raphael: Does that mean that you will subsidise the councils?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In connection with relief work our office gets into communication with the Returned Soldiers' League, and advise them of the pick-up proposed. We invariably pick up the

quota of returned men not on sustenance but receiving pensions. We register them as unemployed.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: What about old-age pensioners?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am answering the statements of the member for Leederville.

Mr. Panton: All I have to say is that an official of the Returned Soldiers' League must have told me a deliberate lie.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have a number of returned soldiers not on sustenance put on relief work to-day, men who were precluded from receiving sustenance on account of receiving pensions.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I wish to inform the Minister that I know of one returned man drawing £2 a week who has been out of work for a year and ten months. He could not obtain work because he had a pension. I am prepared to produce that man.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We went on in a proper and orderly way. Returned soldiers participate in relief work both in the metropolitan area and in the country. The employment officer of the Returned Soldiers' League is communicated with when men are wanted, and a quota from that organisation is included in pick-ups. Returned maimed and limbless men are engaged when night-watchmen, nippers, or other jobs of a light nature are offering. I think I have answered the statement that there is a lack of sympathy on the part of either the departmental officers or myself.

Mr. Panton: I was not complaining of the officials.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: What about old-age pensioners and their children?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They are up against a stiff problem with the Federal Government.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Their young sons are not entitled to relief work because the parents are old-age pensioners. What is the policy of the Government?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The policy of the Government is that no one in absolute need shall go without, but that nobody shall impose upon the community if he is not entitled to relief. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) made remarks criticising relief work, particularly that in the forests. I am sorry the hon. member based his complaint with regard to the activities of the Forests De-

partment on conversations he had with men who had been in the timber trade all their lives. That reminded me of the story of the mother who was greatly concerned about the welfare of the son. She went along to a friend and said, "I am worried what to do with my child, but I find he is very, very fond of animals, and so I am going to make him a butcher." Exactly the same thing applies to the man who has been in the timber trade all his life here. He is very fond of timber, but he is an excellent slaughterman. Until recent years no effort of any kind was made to conserve our forests. Anyone could go into a forest and destroy it, make as much as he could out of it and simply leave it. All who have studied the question know we are rapidly approaching a point when, unless something is done, the State is going to lose the extremely valuable asset represented by its hardwoods. For 50 years there have been large exports of our timbers. Large mills were put into operation, but those large mills will not be operating much longer—the timber is not there for them to operate on. That is going to be a very serious matter. As a matter of fact, there have been periods in the history of the State when the freight actually paid on timber conveyed over the railways has been greater than the freight arising from the carriage of the harvest. Surely such an industry is worth conserving.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: That was not exceptional; it was rather the rule.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so; and that is evidence that the work we are engaged upon is asset-saving. Although it may be that sometimes we appear to make blunders, it must be remembered that no one ever makes a blunder who attempts nothing. The man who attempts to do something may make mistakes, and it is worth while endeavouring to carry out the work we have embarked upon, even though mistakes may be made. Probably we have made mistakes. On one occasion we planted extensively the wrong type of pine in the South-West. It was a mistake; it may have been a blunder. We have rectified that, and we hope that we shall learn more as we go along. What we are doing to-day is merely this: Where a forest has been cut over, we put men on to clean up that forest. Very often there is an indication of misunderstanding of what the term "cleaning up the forest" implies. Some people seem to think

it means cleaning up the forest as one would clean up a paddock for the plough. It is nothing of the kind. Cleaning up the forest means simply taking out the trees that are of no value, such as over-mature jarrah, or timber such as redgum. By that means we give the young saplings an opportunity to get the sunlight and air so essential for their proper growth. When I tell the House that, from actual experience, we have been able to demonstrate that by such methods we improve the increment of the jarrah forest from 5 cubic feet to 80 cubic feet, surely that is evidence that it is worth while. It is easy enough to take out the best of the jarrah, leaving the over-matured trees and the redgums. That method means that in a few years we would have, comparatively speaking, no jarrah forests at all. The methods we are now employing assure that for all time in country suitable for nothing but the growing of jarrah, we shall have a supply of that timber, thus conserving an asset that is worth retaining. The belief of the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) is that we have been locking up country that is more suitable for agricultural purposes. There may have been grounds for that complaint at one time. Year in, year out, since the reorganisation of the department under the Forests Act—I refer not only during my regime but during the time of the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Forests as well—we have exercised every possible care. We have sent out men to make a classification of the forests and we have leased, wherever possible, such land as was suitable for agriculture. I want to warn members that there is sometimes difficulty in the way of releasing land for that purpose. From time to time, members may have seen a nice fertile gully in the jarrah forest. The trouble is that so often that gully is right on the edge of a hill, and experience has shown that a man in possession of such a gully very soon clamours for an area on the hillside, in order to run his dry stock there. Eventually he makes such inroads into the jarrah forest that experience has proved it is far better to keep such settlers out altogether. Then again, there may be isolated blocks respecting which the cost of transport proves so expensive that it is far better to buy the settler out, than to allow him to continue. Thus it is that on occasions one may see

fertile gullies or flats in the jarrah forests that might be regarded as more suitable for agricultural purposes. Members can rest content that the position has been properly considered, and it is regarded as not desirable to release those areas for agricultural purposes. We are rapidly approaching that stage in our departmental policy when we shall be able to have men in the forests permanently. They will remain in the forests all the year round, engaged, when not required for forest purposes, on developing their own blocks. We can do that best by having such blocks occupied by men who will be under the control of the Forests Department.

The Minister for Lands: We are doing that now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so; we are doing it to a certain extent.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Are you nationalising the farms?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not a matter of nationalisation at all. The men are responsible only to the Forests Department for the work to be done in the forests, and they are responsible to themselves for the operations on the farm. Another feature of the scheme is that we require a certain number of officers, and we are placing them in parts of the forests where they can get the facilities they are entitled to. They are not scattered all over the place. We endeavour to reserve places for the officers where they can have homes and blocks that are worth while and where they can avail themselves of school facilities for their children. These are some of the main features of the work of the department, and surely they indicate their utility. Consider the position of mallet bark. The same position applied to that tree. Men went in with the axe and destroyed the trees until we had almost lost the mallet bark industry. The tree grows in the Great Southern and Eastern districts on land that is useless for other purposes. No attention was given to its regeneration. Mallet bark contains wonderful properties for tanning purposes. We were approaching the point at which what happened regarding our wattle trees was to happen with our mallet bark. Western Australia is the home of the wattle and yet we are actually importing wattle bark from South Africa.

The Minister for Lands: We sent the seed to them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The position was worse than that; they came and got the seed. That is how we paid attention to our forest properties. Under our present-day policy we are able to produce mallet bark on a commercial basis. We are retaining the valuable mallet bark as an industry of the State, and surely that, too, is worth while. We are planting pine trees in various centres. Formerly we sent £200,000 out of the State annually for soft woods. We are endeavouring to keep that money within the State and we are developing the pine forests.

The Attorney General: We already have our pinus insignis on the market.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, to a small extent.

Hon. P. Collier: The plantation on the Mundaring catchment area is worthy of inspection.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. It would be well for members who criticise the work of the Forests Department to look through our plantations. They should not go alone, but should be accompanied by an officer of the department, because it is easy to misunderstand what is being done. We have heard a lot of talk about fire-breaks. On a farm, a fire-break is ploughed land, which makes it impossible for a fire to reach the crops. On the other hand, a fire-break in a forest looks about the dirtiest thing on earth. The method adopted is to keep the forest protected by fire control by means of a slow creeping fire, which cleans up the undergrowth and makes it impossible for a fire to cross it. The trees themselves are left standing, and no attempt is made to remove them. The fire-break in the forest is not like one elsewhere. I have heard men say that fire-breaks are really fire risks, but they are nothing of the sort. In summer we often see smoke arising from the bush, and think it is on fire. More often than not, it is merely evidence of fire control. The creeping fire is put through to save the forest from a proper fire. There are times when the young saplings must be protected, and the method is to put the slow fire through so as to prevent a disastrous fire from consuming the whole of the standing timber. There is no chance of a destructive forest fire in protected areas. Surely that is work that is worth while.

Hon. P. Collier: We have every reason to be proud of the forest policy in this State.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of course we have. We have had to learn from experience what is necessary to protect our hardwoods; we could not learn from what was done elsewhere. The problems of hardwood and softwood, respectively, are totally different. I want to say advisedly that in Mr. Kessell, our Conservator of Forests, we have one of the best public officials I have ever met. I believe he knows his job thoroughly. He has the sympathetic assistance of his men.

Hon. P. Collier: And he has a world-wide reputation.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, his reputation is not confined to Australia, but is world-wide. I tell members definitely that although they may consider some of the work Mr. Kessell is doing is not quite to their liking, they can trust that officer to do what he believes to be right in the interests of our forests and of the State generally. I had proposed to deal with matters affecting the mining industry, respecting which I know some of my friends on the Opposition side of the House are concerned, but I shall deal briefly only with a few points. I protest against the statements made by some members, and particularly by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith), who suggested I had no sympathy with the mining industry or with the men engaged in it. I want to tell the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, and I say it in the presence of my predecessor in office, that no one who has occupied the chair of the Minister for Mines is more sympathetic, or has done more active work to assist the goldmining industry than I have. I come of a mining family, and was born in a mining camp. I commenced work as a miner and remained in the mines until I was 21 years of age. My brothers also worked as miners, and, with one exception, each of them went to his grave as a result of miner's phthisis. To suggest, therefore, that I would not be sympathetically inclined to the industry in which I was born and reared, and in which practically all my brothers gave their lives to the ravages of a disease common to that industry, is not becoming in that hon. member until he knows otherwise.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: I did not suggest that.



The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member looks up the records of Parliament, he will see that the Miner's Phtthisis Act was placed on the Statute-book by me.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: You are putting up an Aunt Sally to knock it down. I did not suggest it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am doing nothing of the sort. The hon. member is the Aunt Sally, because he spoke without his book. The Miner's Phtthisis Act was placed on the Statute-book by me, not when I was a Labour Minister but as a member of the Mitchell Government.

Mr. Panton: And you left it there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I can argue that point, too.

Hon. P. Collier: At any rate, it was not proclaimed until we took office.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is true. It must be remembered that the object of the legislation was to make a preliminary survey regarding the ravages of the disease, and how best to combat it. The Miners' Relief Fund was inaugurated by one of my Ministers—the late Jabez Dodd. I could mention other matters as well. The sections affecting tributers' agreements that are embodied in the Mining Act, with the exception of one that unfortunately was found to be faulty, were inserted by me as a member of the Mitchell Government. Yet the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe suggested I had no sympathy with the tributers. It is by deeds that one should be judged, not by words. What I have cited represent deeds accomplished by me. Then again, the hon. member suggested I had lost sympathy with prospectors because I have had to make some changes regarding the State batteries. Surely he loses sight of the fact that there can be no comparison between the conditions now and those prevailing for the prospectors in 1920. With their 7 per cent. increased value of their output, they are now infinitely in a better position, notwithstanding the deductions, than they were in previously. We have heard boasts of much more money having been spent on mining development. It must be remembered that £100,000 was provided on the Estimates every year for mining development, but 70 per cent. only was expended, and of that proportion, 62 per cent. represented merely a book entry, being taken from Loan and paid into revenue to

the credit of the Water Supply Department for what was known as water rebates. The transfer may have been for the purpose of assisting mining, but the fact remains that the expenditure was not as great as it was stated to be. Nowadays the fact is that I cannot find that money for the assistance of mining development because the Treasurer has not the money available. He cannot go on the loan market and get the £100,000 that I require. In the circumstances, I have to do the best I can with the money available. I venture to say that when the history comes to be written of the operations during the last 2½ years under our amendment of the Act it will be found, notwithstanding the assertion that there has been a lack of sympathy, that there has not been anything of the sort, but that we have been very active in demonstrating our sympathy. I heard the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy), when sitting in Opposition a few years ago, get up in the House and make the same sort of statements regarding the lack of interest on the part of the then Government in those engaged in the mining industry. The hon. member declared what he would do if he were Minister for Mines, that he would put a State battery wherever there was gold to be crushed, in order to allow every miner to treat his stone. I interjected across the Chamber that he might be putting up something that would surround him with difficulties some day, and the Leader of the Opposition said to him "Yes, do not promise too much; we may have to find the wherewithal." Later the member for Magnet came into office as Minister for Mines, and it was suggested that he erect a battery at Yalgoo. But he explained that he did not propose to erect a battery at Yalgoo, that alternatively he would allow the miners to take their stone from Yalgoo and have it treated at Cue. Where, then, was the unsympathetic Minister?

Hon. J. C. Willecock: But it is very different now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Of course everything is different now. Too many things affecting the community's welfare are viewed from the party angle rather than from the angle of the interests of the community.

Hon. P. Collier: But things are now very different at Yalgoo from what they were when the hon. member turned it down.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is true. The hon. member said we are not doing our duty because we have not established a battery at Kalgoorlie. But the years have rolled on, and no effort was ever made to establish public crushing facilities at Kalgoorlie. There is a public battery there to-day. The hon. member criticised that battery at Kalgoorlie, and said it was inadequate. But the point is, are we to take the half loaf or none at all. That battery was established at Kalgoorlie without public outlay by the Government, and was taken over by us. I will give members the particulars.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What were you saying about the battery at Yalgoo just now, before I came in?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: What I said about the battery at Yalgoo was said when you were not present in the Chamber—perhaps because of that.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What about the railway station at Mt. Barker? That ridiculous policy of yours, building a railway station big enough for Perth!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member, if he only knew it, is rendering me a service, for just now I am searching for some other particulars.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I understand you said something nasty about me.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, it is not in my nature to say anything nasty about anybody. The hon. member said there was room in Kalgoorlie for 30 or 40 head of stamps to comply with the existing demand. I have had requests from a number of places for batteries. When I was up North there was a request made for a battery in the lower part of the North-West. But the point is that unless there is a reasonable chance of the mining operations in a district proving permanent, no Government are justified in spending thousands of pounds in the erection of what may prove a mere monument. We have made a survey of the position in Kalgoorlie, and we believe the 10-head battery in Kalgoorlie will meet the position for some time to come. In July last there were 6,000 tons of ore booked at that battery. But that does not mean there is that much ore at grass. As a matter of fact they book up to three months ahead. The chances are that the total amount treated will be 1,500 tons or 2,000 tons. The capacity of the present mill is 1,000 tons per month. There have

been crushed for the first four months 900 tons per month, and we hope to increase that to 1,000 tons. The estimated cost of erecting another 10-head mill, as suggested by the hon. member, is £10,000, and I do not know where I am to turn to look for that amount. If the hon. member can find £10,000 and thinks there is sufficient work for his suggested mill in Kalgoorlie, there is nothing to prevent his erecting it. If he does erect it, and gets the expected crushing, he will have my blessing. But I do not think he would take such a risk. Of course if the Government like to take the risk, and spend the taxpayers' money, it does not matter. But I am satisfied that we can do all that is necessary in Kalgoorlie with the existing mill. We are paying £30 per week rent for this plant for a tonnage exceeding 10,000 tons per annum, and a minimum of £21 per week rent when the tonnage falls below 7,000 tons, with the right to purchase at £5,000 at the end of five years. That was not a very bad bargain, although appearing liberal from the owner's point of view. The taking over of that mill relieved the congestion in Ora Banda and Coolgardie. At the time the mill was taken over, the department was paying £80 per month in rebates to private mills for all that we are now crushing at this mill. And approximately we are saving £200 per month on cartage subsidies to Ora Banda and Coolgardie. So it was not a bad bargain after all. And it meant no capital outlay. Perhaps even the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) will admit that it was better than wasting four or five months in erecting a mill of our own and so delaying the relieving of the congestion at Ora Banda and Coolgardie. The member for Hannans (Hon. S. W. Munsie) referred to the water supply at Ora Banda. I met the Premier at Kalgoorlie, when a deputation waited on him in regard to this matter. For years members opposite had an opportunity to provide that water supply, but it was not provided.

Hon. P. Collier: There again the tonnage comes in.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But whatever ore there may be in the Ora Banda district, it has been there all along. The hon. member, if he turns up the files, we find that the difficulty in regard to carrying on operations in Ora Banda due to the shortage of water supply was brought under his notice when he was in office.

Hon. P. Collier: But there was only a small tonnage available there then.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It does not alter the fact that, according to the statements made, mining operations could not be carried on because there was not sufficient water supply in the district then.

Hon. P. Collier: The whole question is whether we are justified in spending money according to the tonnage available.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Let me admit that the hon. member is correct in that statement. It does not alter the fact that the Ora Banda prospectors urged that a permanent supply of water be provided when the hon. member was in office, and that while he urges on the one hand that the conditions are different in point of tonnage, really the difference is in point of funds, which we cannot find.

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot afford not to find the funds now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think I am stating the facts; there has been no change.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course there has been a change.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: There were 40 men in Ora Banda when the request was made to the Collier Government, whereas there are now at least 200 men prospecting in that area. So there was a difference.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There was a difference, and there is a difference to-day, in that loan money is not available for the work.

Hon. P. Collier: Yet there is money for national roads to pleasure resorts.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The petition was made from Ora Banda to the then Government that the operations could not be carried on without a sufficient water supply.

Hon. P. Collier: There were then only a few men there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We are faced with the same position to-day. One of two things must happen: we have to provide the men with a better water supply, either by wells and dams, or by connecting up with the goldfields water scheme. If the latter course be adopted, we might find before long that the number of men operating in Ora Banda had been greatly reduced. We would then be charged with having constructed this expensive work cost-

ing, according to the estimate, some £16,000. And probably the water that is now available is all that will be necessary when the district gets back to normal. Can the mining properties in Ora Banda carry the additional cost of water to make up a 15 per cent. shortage? I do not think they could carry it very easily, and certainly they cannot get the water for nothing, unless indeed the general taxpayer pays for it. We have done all that is possible up to the present; we have sent an officer from the Water Supply Department and another from the Mines Department to make a thorough survey and see how this problem can be met. It has to be met, but at the moment we cannot say whether it shall be done by additional dams and wells, or by a pipe-line scheme. We cannot allow Ora Banda to go out of existence for want of a proper water supply. I am going to conclude my remarks on mining by saying to the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe that when we reach the Mining Estimates I will have an opportunity to give him some further figures regarding the lack of sympathy displayed by me, and that probably he will find them informative. But in passing I will say that that one Act of ours, the Miners' Phthisis Act, which I put into operation, has cost the State £240,000.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That was not your Act; you did not put it into operation.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We put it on the statute-book.

Hon. P. Collier: And you left it there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It might not have been on the statute-book to-day if I had not put it there.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You put it there! You didn't put anything there.

Mr. Kenneally: You did not even proclaim it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Which Act of Parliament have we to-day which did not require to have a beginning? There were plenty of opportunities for members opposite to have brought down and passed such a measure. All that the hon. member complains about now is that the Act was not proclaimed when I went out of office.

Hon. M. F. Troy: And no compensation was provided.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a dead letter.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: During the past three years we have provided £178,000 under that Act. And, while

others were sustaining a "cut" because of the financial emergency, we did not apply it to those under that Act.

Hon. P. Collier: You did apply it, but I protested.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is true; but I did not apply it.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, the Government did, and then backed down.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: As a matter of fact it was applied by officers of the department in the belief that it came within the scope of the Financial Emergency Act. When attention was directed to the matter, the money was paid without the loss of a single penny to anybody.

Hon. P. Collier: After we had protested about it.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You did nothing.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The member for Mt. Magnet has done everything on earth! He is the only one who has accomplished anything! At least, one would think so to hear him. He talks more than he operates. There is nothing I can find on record that he ever did. During the last 2½ years we have provided £178,000 for compensation under the Miners' Phthisis Act, and during the last two months we have provided an additional £10,000. I do not suggest that we have reached finality regarding the men in the mining industry. The Miners' Phthisis Act was only designed to make a survey. Although the member for Mt. Magnet was in office for six years—

Hon. M. F. Troy: We did it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member, with other members on that side of the House, has approached me in the last few months and asked me to amend the Act. More than one of them urged, as I will urge, that in actual working, the Act is undoing the very thing we intended it should do.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I never approached you or discussed it with you.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Leader of the Opposition, the member for Hannans and the member for Murchison were there.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I was not there.

Hon. P. Collier: Eastern Goldfields members were there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There can be no purpose in the State continuing to find large sums of money for com-

pensation for men to go out of the industry unless an effort is made to prevent the need for their leaving the industry arising. We have to amend the Miners' Phthisis Act to provide something at least that will lessen and will eventually, we hope, eliminate the difficulty that arises because of the occupation of mining. I know the member for Mt. Magnet will dispute my efforts to do anything effective. Quite a number of things have arisen as a result of experience. Men who have given the best of their lives to the industry have left it and found other jobs. They have been away from the industry more than two years, and now they want to return to it but cannot do so owing to the restriction in the Act. We intend to loosen that restriction. While we shall avoid anything in the nature of T.B. in the mines, if we can do so, we shall not prevent a man who is slightly dusted from going back to the industry because he cannot pass the test.

Mr. Corboy: Some stupid things are being done from that point of view.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, we hope to review the position. This cannot be done except by agreement amongst the members. If there is any party kudos to be obtained from it, I do not care who gets it. On this side of the House there is no representative of the goldfields at all. It is only because I happen to have had some early experience of mining that I received the portfolio of Minister for Mines. Consequently I cannot help any member on this side of the House by anything that I do.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is the point.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: What I protest against is the continual charge by members opposite of lack of sympathy to the mining industry by members on the Government side.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You must do your duty.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If I have failed in this matter, it is not due to any lack of sympathy. It may be due to lack of knowledge. I would not pit my knowledge against that of some members of the community. More likely is it due to lack of the wherewithal to do all that I desire.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no question of lack of sympathy or knowledge on your part, but there is lack of sympathy on the part of those associated with you.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will not stand for that. I say distinctly that to my knowledge I have not submitted any

reasonable request to the Treasurer for assistance that he has refused.

Hon. P. Collier: What is "reasonable"?

Hon. M. F. Troy: He has not provided the money.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have told the House about the money provided by the hon. member. A sum of £100,000 was placed on the Estimates each year, of which £75,000 was spent, and 62 per cent. of that went into revenue. Why boast about that?

Hon. P. Collier: That was done by your Government. We merely followed what you had done. We did not start it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member did not stop it, either. I have been abused for a number of things that were done, but members opposite continued them. They did the same with the sandalwood royalties. They made an issue of that question at an election, and for six years they took an average of £50,000 a year into revenue.

Hon. P. Collier: Not that much.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, they took by way of royalties from sandalwood £300,000 in the six years. I ask the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe to note that in six years his party took £300,000 by way of royalties from sandalwood-getters, after having made it an election issue. Now we are told that this method of spending the Mining Development Vote was merely following the example I set. Well, if it was a bad example, there was no excuse for members opposite following it.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: I will agree with you there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: For the four years 1925-29 about £100,000 was placed on the Estimates each year. Of that amount an average of £75,000 a year was spent. Of the £75,000, 62 per cent. was transferred from the Mines Development Vote to the Water Supply Department for the payment of rates on the water used by the mines in Kalgoorlie. If that is considered to be a satisfactory method of assisting mining development, and if the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe is satisfied, I do not suppose I should make any complaint.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Your Government are not even doing that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, and I am not denying it. We have told the people who are getting the benefit of

a 72 per cent. premium on the commodity they are producing to pay for their requirements, instead of asking that payment be made by men who are getting less than the cost of the produce from their farms. Sympathy should not be extended in any one direction. Other people beside those engaged in the mining industry are entitled to sympathy.

Hon. M. F. Troy: A lot of the miners are working low-grade propositions that are not paying.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Lake View and Star, Kalgurli, and Great Boulder are not working low-grade propositions.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You are paying sustenance to farmers.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: A rebate on water was paid on behalf of the big companies in Kalgoorlie only, and they are now well able to carry the burden of the cost of water. I do not think I need make any apology because of the action of the Government.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Oh, oh!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Whether the hon. member agrees or disagrees, my attitude will not be changed one iota. In the circumstances prevailing we have to weigh all conditions in the balance, and not to consider one section only. We cannot agree to someone who is really unable to pay being compelled to pay for someone who can well afford to pay. Of the men who are producing gold quite a number, I admit, are on low-grade propositions, but that always will be so. The mining industry as a whole, however, is getting a 72 per cent. premium on the normal value of the commodity, while almost everybody else, with the exception of the fruit-grower, is getting less for his commodity—much less. Is it a fair proposition, therefore, that we should go to the people who to-day are on the breadline—some of them well below it—and ask them to continue payment to assist the production of a commodity the producers of which are well able to provide for themselves. I do not think we are; I consider that the action of the Government is justified. In conclusion, let me say I am sorry that I had to intrude into this debate. I might have refrained from speaking.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You should reply to questions raised.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I hope I have done so.

Mr. Marshall: Not very effectively.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Probably not. We regard questions very often from a different party angle. There is such a thing as being a one-eyed football barracker. I am going to make a confession; I have had it urged against me more than once that I am a one-eyed barracker.

Mr. Raphael: You are, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I know others just as one-eyed as I am, and I am not referring to the member for South Fremantle.

Hon. A. McCallum: You would not be wrong if you did.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is all a question of misunderstanding. We each have two eyes, but we see only one object unless we are cross-eyed. When we use a pair of field glasses, we look through two lenses and we focus them in order to see only one object. That is what we are trying to do. We have two lenses to look through, one is the man demanding something further from the Government because of his troubles and trials; the other is the man who has to provide it. Those two views have to be properly focussed in order to get a true conception of the task. That is what I have tried to do during the last 2½ years. I have full sympathy with the men who are suffering under existing conditions. I have the fullest desire to help them and I am trying to do it, but, as I have said, my sympathy unfortunately is restricted by the means available for the purpose of helping them. If I had an overflowing private purse, I would not be above helping, but my private purse is not overflowing and neither is the Treasury. The result is that I have to do what at times appears to be unkindly acts, because of the difficulty of obtaining the wherewithal to help. I hope members will not misunderstand the position. I may be attached to a party, but I hope it will not be said of me that I put my party before my country. On a notable occasion when the test came I put my country before my party, and would do it again if necessary. I have sat in Cabinet for 2½ years, and I do not know of any occasion when we discussed a question from a party angle.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You would not!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We are supposed to be a Coalition Government, constituted of Country Party and Nationalists members. As a matter of fact, there are four Country Party Ministers and three Nationalist Ministers, and I have not heard anything discussed in Cabinet, or at a meeting of Ministers, with the idea that one party should get an advantage over the other either under some Act or from some phase of administration. I believe that the conditions prevailing to-day will continue for some time to come, and would force any Government to do exactly what we are attempting to do. I would not be foolish enough to charge it against our friends opposite—

Hon. M. F. Troy: You could not prove it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I said I would not be foolish enough to charge it against my friends opposite, if they took control of the Treasury benches after the next election, that they would act any differently from what we have done. Force of circumstance would not permit them to do otherwise. While I am administering this department I hope I shall be able to hold the scales fairly between the man who has to provide the money and the unfortunate fellow who has to make the demand.

*[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]*

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [9.15]: I hope when a motion similar to this is before the House next year, the State will be existing under much happier conditions and our people be more prosperous than is the case to-day. I do not intend to deal with the economic situation, because so much has already been said and written about it. We all know the people are passing through a serious time. That applies in a general sense, not only to the workers, but other sections who are not directly engaged in the prosperous industry of gold mining. As the representative of a mining constituency, I would be pleased if all the workers in the State could look forward to the prosperity that those engaged in the mining industry on the eastern goldfields are enjoying to-day. I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister for Mines concerning the good work he has accomplished, and am prepared to give him every credit for it. I do want him, however, to adopt a more vigorous policy of

development. He could utilise the department for the purpose of re-opening goldfields that could be worked profitably in the interests of the State. There are large tracts of country known to the departmental officers which require to be developed by prospectors. It is necessary to equip prospecting parties, not only with money, but means of transport to enable them to go into these areas and search for the gold. Mining is our only prosperous industry. Is it not the right time when the Minister should finance prospecting parties and assist those who are now operating low-grade shows? Reference has been made to public batteries. I have frequently been associated with applications to Ministers for Mines for the erection of such crushing facilities. Most members interested in mining will realise that, if crushing facilities were made available in the Lawlers district, much additional wealth would be won. The Minister could well utilise the knowledge of his officers to concentrate upon that centre, where in years gone by millions of pounds' worth of gold have been won. I understand that three million pounds' worth of gold have been taken out of that district. The field has not been operated actively for a long time. Hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of gold have been won from the Kookynie field, although operations have ceased during the last 15 years. The opportunity still exists for useful development work to be done there. There is plenty of room for companies to operate that field, if only they would get into touch with the departmental officers and ascertain what the wealth of the field has been in the past. Such investigations would enable companies to interest Australian and overseas investors in the attempt to win more gold. Many goldfields have gone out of existence and have been forgotten as such. It would be well within the province of the Minister to resurrect the more important of these centres. He could do this by publishing the figures showing the gold production. The Minister has referred to the enhanced value of gold. In recent years on the eastern goldfields many companies have installed new plants. In some cases modern plants are nearing completion. Additional machinery will be installed on the Great Boulder mine, and the new plant on the Perseverance is nearing completion. This additional machinery will make a difference to the gold won and to the

number of persons who can be employed. The mining companies on the eastern goldfields were stirred into action when the Labour Government appointed a gentleman who was competent to advise them as well as the companies in respect to better mining practices. This gentleman was the means whereby new plants were installed by many companies. I am pleased to know that the mining industry offers such enormous possibilities both for investment and for the employment of men. Within recent years the production of gold per month has jumped from 27,000 ozs. to 54,000 ozs. This will give the community an idea of the great amount of work that has been done to secure additional gold and to assist in tiding this State over the depression. I wish to refer briefly to the water supply for the Ora Banda goldfields. When applications were put up to me, as Minister controlling Water Supplies, they received every consideration. Gold was then worth £4 4s. 11d. per fine ounce, compared with £7 7s. 7d. to-day. Not many men were engaged in the industry in that centre in those days, and it was not likely that the revenue would be sufficient to cover the cost of constructing the pipe line and excavating the tank. I understand that the district now offers much greater possibilities, and that if the water supply were installed, additional capital could be induced to assist in the work of development. Now is the opportunity to instal the necessary facilities and encourage people to open up the field. A great mistake has been made by the Government in the handling of sustenance workers. They have introduced a dangerous system. I remember reading the principles underlying socialism as it operated in Soviet Russia. A perfect state was visualised when it would be only necessary for the individual to work for two or three months in the year in order to satisfy his needs for the year. Now we have a Government introducing into the State a principle almost in line with the Communistic principles.

The Minister for Lands: But for quite a different reason.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Consciously or unconsciously the Government are introducing this principle into the country. They employ men only for three months in the year and expect them to live for the rest of the year. The principle they adopt is

to employ them for one week and not at all for two weeks. In the one week the workers are expected to earn enough to keep them for the ensuing two weeks. These are the principles taught by Communists. Do not the Russians say that although they are sacrificing the present generation for the future state, when the future state is established, it will be necessary to work for only two or three months in the year. The remainder of the year is to be available for cultivation of the arts and enjoyment, for taking that just meed of pleasure which they desire. The Minister for Lands interjected a little while ago that the principle had been introduced into this country for an entirely different purpose. Certainly that is so; but his Government are acting as a propaganda Government for communism, and should take that fact into consideration. I remember reading with disgust reports of the conditions in the lumber camps of Northern Russia. It was stated that men were forced into the lumber camps to work under a set of conditions which people should not be required to work under. What was the position of the men at Frankland River? When their story is published in the Press of Europe and America as it has been published in our Press, what will Europeans and Americans think of the conditions under which men are forced to live in Western Australia? Will not those conditions compare unfavourably with the conditions described as existing in the lumber camps of Russia? The Government have made a tremendous blunder. The whole trouble with the Frankland River men could have been averted. Those men need not have been thrown on the charity of the people of the metropolitan area if only the Minister had acted promptly. He and his officers fixed the rates at which the men were to work.

The Minister for Lands: It was not a question of price, but a question of piece-work or day-work.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You have no experience.

The Minister for Lands: I have as much as you have.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You have none.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The Minister says the officers fixed the piecework or contract price.

The Minister for Lands: It was fixed in the same way as it would be by any other Minister.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: When the men found they could not earn their keep at the price, the Minister could have appointed a conciliation committee to deal with the matter locally. Is not that the course followed in connection with all such disputes? The Government blundered. The Minister fell down on his job. He did not avail himself of the opportunity to keep the men down there on the employment which he says was all the Government could afford. That is the mistake the Minister made. He will have to carry the responsibility. No doubt he is prepared to do so, but carry it he must.

The Minister for Lands: I shall read the wire I received.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: He must accept the responsibility of having forced those men upon the charity of the metropolitan area for their meals.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Who is the Minister's adviser down there?

The Minister for Lands: You must give notice of that question.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: There is another matter applying to sustenance work generally.

Hon. M. F. Troy interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to cease conversing across the floor of the House.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I understand it is the Government's policy to offer single men a continuous month's work, after which they are to stand down for two months. In that respect the Government are heading for disaster. What will be the outcome of such a policy? Can we expect the people to remain as orderly and law-abiding as they have been up to the present? The Government are fortunate in having had such a peaceful people to deal with; but there is a breaking point, and there is going to be trouble in Western Australia. In addition, work is to-day being carried out in flooded areas, men working up to their knees in water on road construction that could well have been held over until the dry period of the year. Apparently the Government are satisfied. However, it is their responsibility. I desire also to bring to the Minister's notice a matter that is engaging the attention of numbers of my people on the goldfields. The benefit of the Workers' Homes Act is not extended to those who are engaged



in the mining industry. Why not? Has not the industry kept a large population? Are not those people entitled to homes? Seeing that the Government have been building workers' homes in the agricultural areas, why should not the activities of the Workers' Homes Board be extended so as to give those engaged in industry on the goldfields an opportunity of securing homes? This proposal was placed before the Chief Secretary when recently in Kalgoorlie. The hon. gentleman pointed out to the people that there was quite an easy way of getting a home. The necessary building material could be made available by the Government: £50 would buy only sufficient material to build a shack. The amount should be extended to £200 or £250. The Government realise that there is business in that proposal. Money is available. Kalgoorlie people would acquire these workers' homes. The land belongs to the Government, a quarter-acre block being leased at 10s. per annum. The cutting of the timber required for the homes would give additional employment in the timber industry. Rents have gone up enormously on the goldfields, so much so that the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council have been stirred into activity. They are asking for a fair rents court to operate in that district. The mining industry is prosperous. The homes are needed. The full cost of a home need not be paid immediately. If a worker has to leave a home, the agreement should provide for the transfer of the home, the man leaving it to receive the money represented by his equity. I shall say no more this evening, as the Estimates will come later, and many points which could be discussed now, will have to be debated then. I desire that the Minister for Mines should carry on his good work, such as he has mentioned this evening, but more vigorously for the further development of the mining industry.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.*

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

### QUESTION—CENSUS, EXAMINATIONS FOR POSITIONS.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the Minister noticed, regarding the proposed taking of a census of the Commonwealth, it is intended that the examinations for the positions, which are estimated to last about three months, in connection with the tabulation of the census, are to be held in Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney only. 2, Will he approach the authorities with a view to having this State's tabulation done locally by our own returned men?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. The positions referred to, however, are in connection with the tabulation of the results of the census, and this tabulation is mainly carried out by special machinery which is not available in Perth. The work must also be done under expert supervision, and it would be almost impossible for the Commonwealth census authorities to decentralise it in order to allow the tabulation relating to each State to be done locally. 2, The collection of the census data will be carried out by the local Commonwealth Electoral Department.

### QUESTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the great disability industry in this State is suffering through the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, is it the intention of the Government to introduce amending legislation during the present session of Parliament.

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Consideration will be given to this matter.