

Mr. RAPHAEL: Well my friend has four jobs while I have but two, so whatever taxation I may have to pay I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that he has to pay on all four of his jobs. Has the hon. gentleman given consideration to those thousands of men who were turned out of the railway service by the coalition Government during their regime? Would the hon. member support a resolution that certain of those men have to be put on a lower wage in order to make up for that deficit? His idea is only for increased taxation. How many members on that side who so ably walked across the floor to support him in his amendment will support him in his new taxation scheme? I think he would be a beacon light for those members to gaze upon, but I feel also that he would be gazed upon with apathy by those members. Would the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) raise her voice in support of taxation to give the kiddies an extra pint of milk per day?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Decidedly.

Mr. RAPHAEL: There was another proposal put up to the hon. member, who so ably went before the unemployed for their votes, but she was not so keen about that; she said she would give it consideration. I say definitely that the hon. member, if she was sincere in her talk of how she wanted to assist the unemployed she should have made up her mind about the second plan also. I do not intend to labour the question any longer, for I will have opportunity on the main Address-in-reply debate to speak my mind more fully but I do hope that we on this side shall let it be definitely known where we stand, that we are four square behind the Government and are going to give that Government the chance to function, just as the people gave them a mandate to function. I hope that the Opposition will not be given opportunity to take control of the Treasury benches. We have been given a mandate from the people and we are going to carry out that mandate for the next three years. I hope that when the 5th October arrives, not only will members opposite be satisfied, but even the member for West Perth will also be satisfied with the improved conditions that will be forthcoming, so far as the Government can find the money.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	15
Noes	22

Majority against 7

AYES.

Mr. Brockman	Mr. North
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hughes	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Thorp
Mr. Latham	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Douey
Mr. McLarty	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cross	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Doust	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Fox	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Miss Holman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wiza
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munzie	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Collier
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Millington
Mr. Patrick	Mr. Willcock

Amendment thus negatived.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 2nd September, 1936.

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

QUESTION—IRON IMPORTS.

Mr. NULSEN asked the Premier: How many tons of iron were imported into West-

ern Australia during the 12 months ended 30th June, 1936, from—(a) Eastern States; (b) overseas?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Premier) replied: Quantities of iron and steel imported during the year ended 30th June, 1936, were as shown hereunder:—

	From other Commonwealth States.	From Overseas.
	Tons.	Tons.
Pig and scrap iron ..	2,232	334
Ingots, blooms, etc. ..	228	—
Angles, tees, bar, rod, etc.	9,133	790
Plate and sheet (including galvanised) ..	17,793	4,174
Structural iron and steel	3,068	292

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, PERMANENT WAY MATERIAL.

Mr. NULSEN asked the Minister for Railways: How many tons of railway permanent way material, and its value, are purchased on the average in normal years?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied: During the five years ended 30th June, 1936, two purchases of rails and fishplates were made, as under:—October, 1933: 3,815 tons—£45,495; January, 1935: 2,215 tons—£25,426; Total: 6,030 tons—£70,921; Average per year: 1,206 tons—£14,184.

QUESTIONS (2)—GROUP SETTLEMENTS.

Case of Couldridge.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it a fact that Groupie Couldridge, who was recently evicted from his holding, grew a crop of tobacco leaf for which he received a sum of approximately £250? 2, What portion, if any, of that amount did the Agricultural Bank take from Couldridge in satisfaction of their account with him?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, 1932—nett return from tobacco, £97 19s. 4d.; taken by Agricultural Bank, nil. 1933—nett return from tobacco, £49 18s. 7d.; taken by Agricultural Bank, £9 18s. 7d. 2, Answered by No. 1.

Area Held by Michelides, Ltd.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What area of land, originally held and used for group settlement in the

Manjimup district, is now in possession of Michelides Ltd., tobacco manufacturers, of Perth? 2, If any are so held, what is the area held on leasehold or freehold?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, 213 acres 3 roods 3 perches—now in course of transfer. 2, The whole of the area is freehold.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE GAOL, YOUNG PRISONERS.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Are there any persons serving sentences in Fremantle gaol under 21 years of age? 2, If so, how many?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Minister for Justice) replied: 1, Yes. 2, 13 persons.

REPORT—STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Mr. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) brought up the report of the Standing Orders Committee, showing that certain amendments had been made to the Standing Orders.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, report received and read, and ordered to be printed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.38]: I desire first of all to refer to a matter which is outside the control of the Government, but is of great importance to this State, namely the recent decision of the Privy Council in respect to dried fruits and other commodities. In company with the majority of members, and possibly the majority of residents of the State, I am exceedingly sorry that the appeal was successful. We know that because of the control which apparently existed, or was temporarily operated upon, in connection with dried fruits, those who were producing such commodities were enabled to earn a living which, if not ample, was sufficient for the maintenance of the industry. As there are many returned men and other small farmers engaged in the industry, I hope it will be possible for the Federal Government to

decide to take a vote of the people on this matter. It has been said that a majority cannot be obtained. If the necessary majority cannot be obtained, I am very doubtful concerning the future of the industry. Our dried fruits are of such a high-grade quality and enjoy such a splendid reputation wherever they are used, that I hope it will be possible for an amendment to Section 92 of the Constitution Act to be brought about. Owing to the absence of the essential legislation there is very great anxiety abroad, and we see the spectacle of country people steadily trickling into the cities. The position is a very bad one. On the production of the country, the cities, indeed the Commonwealth, must depend. It is highly important that consideration be given to those who are engaged in this industry. The statement that citizens would not provide the necessary majority may or may not be true. If they do not provide the necessary majority to carry the amendment, and it is found impossible to secure an efficient amendment or other legislation to overcome the difficulty, the Commonwealth as a whole will suffer greatly. I could if I wished, refer at length to the consideration given to different sections of various growers in Queensland, but that is well known to members. The dried fruits industry is deserving of consideration. In fact, it is essential that consideration, that will enable a living to be made by those engaged in it, should be given. Late in last year a serious calamity befell a large number of settlers in the Bickley Valley. This is an old story. I have been grieved and disappointed that the Government have apparently been quite indifferent to the results of the storm which affected the district, and the grave difficulties which the growers faced and are still facing to-day. Some of them have been supplied with funds to provide for sustenance. Many of them have been very hardly hit. If, after a visit to the district by Mr. Gregory, M.H.R., and certain members of another place, the State Government had exercised a little practical sympathy towards the growers, I think the Federal Government might have been, and probably would have been, induced to assist those unfortunate people. It has been pointed out to me what happened at Broome. I am entirely in sympathy with the Broome people, and I

heartily commend the Government for having stood by those who were so badly hit. Not only were the people injured in respect of their equipment, boats and so forth in connection with the pearl fishing industry, but, worse than that, many lives were lost. In my opinion the Government did wisely, and acted as a beneficent Government should act, when they extended that consideration to the Broome pearl fishers. The Federal Government, following the lead of the State, also did well. The Bickley case, it may be said, is not analogous to that of Broome; but in the sum total of human suffering it was very much like the Broome calamity. Certainly, no lives were lost at Bickley; but those engaged in orchard work in that district have been deprived of the fruits of their labour for some time, and that position will continue for a while. I cannot understand why it is that the State Government, who must be fully seized of the position—it has been ventilated in this Chamber on various occasions—are apparently immovable in respect of practical help. The people of the State most generously subscribed to a fund which was opened a day or two after the storm, following which assistance, the Lotteries Commission were good enough to provide two grants. Later, a distress fund having been formed, the Lotteries Commission were again approached, and on this third occasion also made a grant. On the first two occasions the amount provided was reasonably substantial; on the third occasion, however, it was an amount of £20. I hope the Lotteries Commission may consider the matter further. An amount of £20, of course, is ridiculously inadequate to the requirements. If there was justification for a grant, then of course there was justification for a grant something like approaching adequacy, or at all events a grant which would enable those settlers to continue for some time without fear of lack of food. It has been said that if the settlers are suffering so badly, it is a case for sustenance; but I cannot imagine any Minister of the Crown looking on that suggestion with favour. If those men leave their orchards and go out to work for sustenance, or indeed in any other employment, it will be a long while before those orchards come back. In fact, an orchard neglected becomes, in place of an asset, a heavy lia-

bility. I am sorry the Acting Treasurer is not in the Chamber at the moment, because this subject is one which has a deeper and wider significance than even the Bickley disaster, grave as it was. If our citizens are to lack help at a time of grave need, as in the case of Bickley—well, good-bye to that respect for government which otherwise it would deserve. Many of the Bickley settlers deserve and need the help which a grant would give. If that grant had been provided by the State Government, most likely we would have had some help from the Federal Government. But we could not expect the Commonwealth to take the initiative. It was surely an obligation on the State Government to do what was essential, and thereby, having full local knowledge of the subject and having provided a grant, show that the Federal Government could with every justification, as in the case of Broome, assist. I do not wish to labour the matter, although it is one that I could talk about considerably more than I have done. The practical indifference, the actual non-action, of the State Government as regards assisting the Bickley settlers, in my opinion, calls for reconsideration. I am hoping that the new Treasurer, so soon as he is thoroughly convalescent and has taken up his duties, will be good enough to review it. There is every justification for this matter to be reconsidered and for action to be taken upon it. I cannot understand why a Ministry which looks with sympathy on the one case should be so immune to argument, and to the plight of the sufferers, in the other. The "West Australian" put up a splendid report of the Bickley disaster, illustrated by photographs, which of course showed that the difficulties of the settlers could not be questioned. Many fruit trees were uprooted, and the storm was so severe that numbers of native trees even were broken down. The sufferers have been without marketable fruit ever since, and I understand that position will continue for at least another 12 months. A small grant has been requested, an amount of £2,000; and, since that seemed to be impossible, £1,000 has been asked for. If that sum were provided, it would be an unanswerable argument to the Federal Government. I want my work in this Chamber, and in connection with my representation of

the Swan electorate, to continue without loss of respect for government: and I do ask that the Bickley settlers may even at this late hour receive consideration. In fact, their needs to-day are greater than has been the case hitherto, because up to date they have had no marketable returns following the damage from the storm. I shall take an opportunity to bring the matter forward again on the discussion of the Agricultural Estimates, or possibly in connection with the Treasury Estimates, by which time I sincerely hope the Premier will have recovered and have given his consideration, and I trust approval, to the provision of a sum for those who have suffered so heavily. Another subject which has frequently been mentioned here is in respect of railway crossings. I am aware that notices have been erected at some crossings, but I question whether they are sufficiently effective to do what is essential. There are warning signs in Jewell-street, at Maddington crossing, and possibly at other crossings; but I think an error has been made in erecting them in such close proximity to the railway. If my judgment of distance is accurate, the warning signs are only about half a chain distant from the railway line. The modern motor car moves with rapidity, and a distance of half a chain—

Mr. Withers: Your distance is wrong. It is nearer two chains.

Mr. SAMPSON: I was looking at the warning sign at Jewell-street last night, and I thought the distance was about half a chain.

Mr. Warner: You must have been travelling fast.

Mr. SAMPSON: Perhaps I was. In any case I think the warning signs are erected too close to the railway. I am thankful for what has been done, but the protection is quite insufficient. I do not understand why a Ministry fortunate enough to close the year with a surplus, of which circumstance they must have had some knowledge or advice prior to the actual close of the financial year, have not taken up this work and done it in a thoroughly efficient way. In South Australia for instance—one of the hard-driving States of the Commonwealth: I dare say the State in which the most rigid economy is practised and where the people are most economical—they do not risk the lives of their citizens on main road crossings. It has been stated that there are dangerous crossings out in the country in South Aus-

tralia; but even these are being amended. When I was in South Australia three weeks ago, I examined, and took photographs of, a crossing at a siding near Wilunga, called Hackham. The road previously ran over the railway line, and many accidents, involving a number of deaths, occurred there; but some while ago the road, which passed directly over the railway line, was turned at right angles so as to run for a few chains parallel with the railway and then cross it. That, of course, is the case on both sides of the railway. The result is that speeding motorists are of necessity required to steady down when reaching the proximity of this turning, and thus no additional lives have since been lost.

Mr. Warner: Have all trees been cleared from along the railway line?

Mr. SAMPSON: There are no trees as one approaches the line at that spot. If the Government, in spite of their surplus of £85,000 and their desire to spend £84,000 unnecessarily on trolley buses at Claremont, are so hard-pressed for funds, then, presumably, what is being done must be accepted as all that the Government are prepared to do. But people from country districts far beyond the Swan who have not an intimate knowledge of the Maddington crossing, for instance, are still in dire danger. I regret that the Acting Premier is not present, because, as I have said on a previous occasion, following a smoke social some time since, we very nearly came in conflict with a train at the Maddington crossing. Had we done so, the loss of two members of this House might have induced the Minister for Railways to urge sufficiently on the Treasurer the need for a subway.

Mr. Withers: If a couple of politicians were to be killed there, it might be a good thing to leave things as they are.

Mr. SAMPSON: I admit that in certain instances that might be regarded as well justified. I do not desire the residents of Bunbury and Collie or any other centre to be subject to these dangers. Recently quite a number of country residents were killed in one accident, and the danger should not be permitted to continue. The same conditions obtain at Bellevue. Every one knows of the dangerous crossing there, and it is scandalous to think that our citizens are not afforded better and more effective protection in connection with our railway crossings. Another railway matter that

cries aloud for amendment is the miserably inadequate headlights on locomotives. I have referred to this previously, and I believe I was responsible for the previous Government installing a number of electrically lit headlamps on some of the heavier engines, but I can assure members the position would be equally dangerous if they were struck by one of the lighter types that can move quite quickly.

The Minister for Mines: I would not care to attempt to stop any one of the engines.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position is so difficult that at times I believe railway drivers themselves—I do not blame them, because they cannot help it—run into other trains.

Hon. C. G. Latham: One of their own engineers did that.

Mr. SAMPSON: How can they avoid doing it? When some of these trains hauled by engines with miserably inadequate kerosene headlamps are approaching crossings, it is necessary for a motorist to sweep the beam from a strong pocket torch on both sides of the crossing before he can determine whether or not a train is in the vicinity. The present position is scandalous. I wonder the railway men do not protest vigorously against it.

Mr. Hegney: What kind of a protest is a "vigorous protest"?

Mr. SAMPSON: One that is intelligent, the motive actuating which is a sincere desire to clean up the existing unsatisfactory position. I believe the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney) was himself a railway man.

Mr. Hegney: No.

Mr. Withers: The proposition you suggest has been put up to the railway authorities for the past 30 years.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Government can finish up the financial year with a surplus of £84,000 and intend to spend a similar amount in providing trolley buses for a route where private buses do the job today, and yet are content to continue to wreck the nerves of the engine drivers and kill off the citizens of the State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You said they were slow moving.

Mr. SAMPSON: Undoubtedly the Government are slow moving, but occasionally the trains do move rapidly, and that is when the danger is greatest. The railway

crossings are decidedly dangerous. I would like the Minister for Railways to make greater use of his car and take regular runs that would involve crossing the railway lines a few times. The mere flicker of light that comes from the headlights on engines is mostly a pale smudge. It is impossible for the engine drivers to see what is ahead with the use of kerosene headlights, nor are those lights sufficient to enable the users of our roads to know that a railway engine is approaching a crossing. I believe that on occasions these miserable kerosene lamps have become extinguished, and the drivers have to put a light at the rear end of the locomotives to overcome the difficulty. The whole thing would be ludicrous if it were not so serious.

Mr. Thorn: The drivers do not know if the headlight is burning.

Mr. SAMPSON: They cannot possibly know. The light from those lamps would not pierce the darkness for five yards.

Mr. Withers: I used them for 25 years, and did not have an electric light on my engine at all.

Mr. SAMPSON: And the hon. member knew enough to get out of the railway service before his nerves gave way entirely. They did not have kerosene lamps in the days of Methuselah, but Governments, even in those days, did not turn loose their juggernauts, the effect of which would cause an increased number of deaths. At Mad-dington the department have taken some action. They put white lines across the road. We all know how difficult it is to see the road, particularly on a wet night, and presumably the motor drivers were to be struck with amazement on seeing the white lines, and would then pull up! People who drive motor cars do not always focus their attention on the road and could not therefore always be depended upon to pick up the white lines. Another brilliant idea was the installation of cats' eyes. If trains had been used in the days of Noah, that is the sort of thing that would have been done. The Bellevue crossing is also exceedingly dangerous, while there is another at Jewell-street in East Perth. I warn the Government that if they do not attend to the Jewell-street crossing in particular, we shall witness another full-dress rehearsal by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) of fully-justified criticism of

the Government. I certainly hope that these matters will be attended to. Efficient protection for those who use the roads is essential. People have to put up with a great deal, and that applies to the engine-drivers as well. Great sacrifices are being made to enable the railway system to pay its way, but there is no justification for the continued lack of interest, care or caution with regard to crossings where trains pass over our main or arterial roads. I do not urge special protective provisions in respect of other railway crossings, because accidents do not occur there. The people in the localities concerned have sufficient knowledge of the position to watch out for approaching trains. Strangers are those who are being done to death. When the Minister for Agriculture escorts some of his friends from Carnarvon on a tour of the metropolitan area, they may be struck by the wonderful magnificence of Perth and while being inspired with some of the Minister's lofty ideals, they may enjoy a run through Armadale. Should such an excursion be undertaken, the Minister may find himself a party to the death of some of his friends. However, I do not want to deal with this subject flippantly, but I desire to stress the need that exists for action by the Government. There is neither virtue nor credit in a surplus when the warnings I have given so many times go comparatively unheeded. I do not regard mere warning signs and strips of white paint across the road as sufficient protection for motorists and others. Leaving that matter, I desire to acknowledge an error I made when speaking at a deputation that waited on the Transport Board regarding the conveyance of honey. I informed the board that a member of the deputation had told me he had discussed a certain matter with the Minister for Agriculture, who had assured him that he was in favour of what was desired, namely, that in addition to the right to transport bees to follow the nectar and to bring back the resultant honey to the clarifying depot, it should be taken by motor truck to the distributing depot. I acknowledge I was wrongly informed. I assure the Minister I made the statement in good faith. Having made that acknowledgment of my error, I want to follow it up by saying that, in my opinion, it would

be wrong indeed to refuse the request of the deputation which was that they should have the right not only to take their bees to a district where nectar was available, and bring back the honey to the clarifying and bottling depot, but also to transport it to Perth. If, for instance, it is regarded as essential that honey shall be sent by train, it will ultimately mean that the clarifying, bottling and canning of the honey will be done in Perth. I know the Minister does not want that, and I certainly hope the Transport Board will give further consideration to this matter, and allow honey which, in my opinion, is a perishable product, to be transported in accordance with the desire of the deputation. The beekeepers have an exceedingly difficult job to perform. A very old member of the Beekeepers' Association wrote to me to-day asking me to refer to the market reports in the "West Australian" of Saturday last, wherein it was recorded that the best Adelaide honey was selling in the markets at from 2d. to 2½d. per lb. If we look up the market reports for a number of years back with regard to the produce of South Australia and probably some of the other Eastern States, we will see that the same old tale prevails. With all our advantages, our beekeepers cannot, bearing in mind the great distances that have to be traversed in this State to reach the necessary flora, produce honey at such prices as those I have quoted. How the South Australian settlers are able to do it, I do not know. Probably it is because the country there has been settled for a longer period; possibly the soil is more fertile or the nectar flows more freely. However, that is the position, and if the beekeepers of Western Australia are required to shoulder the added burden involved in the prohibition placed by the Transport Board on the conveyance of their honey, their difficulties will be still further increased.

Mr. Withers: I have heard beekeepers offered 3s. 6d. for a kerosene tinful of honey.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, that is true. They are having a most difficult time, in fact an impossible time. However, I submit this to the Minister, and I feel sure that his advice to the Transport Board will be to read into the Act what is desired by the beekeepers, namely, opportunity to convey their honey in their own trucks, or at all events in trucks

owned by those who do this work. There was recently confirmed the right of a number of producers to invest in a truck and use that truck for the purpose of conveying the produce of those concerned in the ownership; that has been decided by the court, so there is no difficulty in that regard. But there was a very definite effort made to defeat those who desire to carry their produce in this way. I wish to make a few remarks in regard to the building trade, and to say that to a large extent this is passing out of the hands of the workmen of Australia. I recall with interest the very fine appeal made by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) when, last year, he directed the attention of the House to the difficulty there was in securing plasterers. Thereby the hon. member did some service, or rather I hope it will prove to be of some service, because it is a fact that there is a shortage of tradesmen. At the moment there may be something in the nature of a slump but, generally speaking, there is a shortage of bricklayers, plasterers and, I believe, of concrete workers. So I trust the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle will not be lost sight of. Also I hope that those responsible may give consideration to boys anxious to learn bricklaying, plastering and concrete work, and afford them opportunity to acquire the necessary tuition. Given a few thousand bricks and other materials, and with necessary practice, in a little while those lads would be qualified tradesmen. If I remember aright, when our soldiers came back from the war, trainees were given opportunity to learn bricklaying and other work in the building trade. If that were done again, I am sure the member for North-East Fremantle and others would be pleased. There is, of course, a shortage of tradesmen in other lines, but in none more so than in the building trade. There is evidently no question from that standpoint, for I looked across the House to see words trembling on the lips of members, but no word was expressed.

Mr. Hegney interjected.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am glad of that. Evidently the hon. member acknowledges that what the member for North-East Fremantle said, and what I have said, is quite true.

The Minister for Mines: There is a greater chance of its being true now that someone else has said it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have said it a dozen times in the House and the seed has fallen

on poor soil. But if we keep on saying a thing often enough and for a long enough period, the result is assured. I am quite with the member for North-East Fremantle in his endeavour to secure that a bigger number of apprentices, and consequently working tradesmen, shall be employed in the industry.

Mr. Marshall: What about the printing industry; are they all right there?

Mr. SAMPSON: I think the printing industry would carry more men. There are many districts where opportunities are offered for a local newspaper. A little while ago I was approached with a view to starting a suburban newspaper. I said that the plant was available, but where were the tradesmen? There is difficulty in getting those men except at a time when work is quiet, but generally speaking there is always an increasing number required, for more newspapers are being printed and more printing orders are being received. Still, I do not desire to speak on the printing industry, although I could say a good deal. I hope the hon. member who interjected will assist me to insist that all master printers shall employ such apprentices as the award permits. The employers should be compelled to do that.

Mr. Hegney: Have you a vacancy for one?

Mr. SAMPSON: No, I have as many apprentices as the award permits. A fair percentage of the printers in the city are from oversens. They are good men, but the boys of Western Australia should be given the opportunity, an opportunity that in many instances is denied them. Now I come to the subject of electricity in the hills and the outer suburbs.

Mr. Hegney: Swan View in particular.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, Swan View needs current.

Mr. Cross: What about Mt. Pleasant?

Mr. SAMPSON: The people at Mt. Pleasant require light, at all events. There are many places, (Glen Forrest, Mundaring, Westfield, Roleystone and others, requiring electric current. How many times have I spoken on this subject in the House, and how many times have the Government acted on my suggestions? They have made odd extensions of electric current in order to reach a few people, but the fruit and vegetable growers needing electricity have

had but poor treatment from the Government.

Mr. Tonkin: Is it current they want, or currency?

Mr. SAMPSON: They need electric current.

Mr. Tonkin: But they could do with a little currency.

Mr. SAMPSON: The one follows the other: give them a little electric current and they will soon have currency. I know that electricity in the hills and the outer suburban districts is essential. Why do the Government persist in an attitude of inactivity? Why do they not give to the people in those districts the opportunity that any other civilised country would give them?

Mr. Marshall: Why does not private enterprise supply the current?

Mr. SAMPSON: Private enterprise cannot come in on it. The Government hold a monopoly. In the city the Perth Municipal Council are doing what is necessary to make industries possible by providing the necessary current, but no interest has been shown towards the outer suburban growers, where the Government Electricity Department are in control.

Mr. Marshall: Why does not the road board take it on?

Mr. SAMPSON: Although I am not authorised to say this, I feel sure that the Gosnells Road Board, for instance, would provide something in the way of a guarantee. I know that the Darling Range Road Board, the Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board, and the Mundaring Road Board would provide guarantees. But this wretched attitude of asking someone else always to carry the risk—why do not the Government give to the people a reasonable opportunity? First of all, they say "We will make up the estimates and do the work if you can show us that you will take sufficient current to allow the extension to pay its way." At first blush that is all right, but we know that if a railway is to be built, you must first put the railway there so that the people may use it. Those people are not asked to put up a guarantee until the facility is in existence. It should be the same in respect to electric current. Many years ago, in 1922 I think it was, the late Hon. John Seaddan had a report prepared in respect of a suggested changeover from

steam power to electric drive in connection with the pumping stations, that at Mundaring Weir, and at the No. 2 pumping station. And that is where the proposal has remained. Meantime the steam method continues. It was shown at the time that there was a saving of £1,000 a year to be made—that was in 1922—if the change over were effected. Why do not the Government do it? For if the proposition would have paid in 1922, it would pay very much better now. Those pumps are becoming obsolete. I do not know how long they will last, but there is a better opportunity to make of this a profitable proposal than there was in 1922. Then the question is asked, what about those who are cutting firewood? I say that if electric current were made available through that district, we would have more spot mills and other industries. The Government should, to the utmost of their ability, develop enterprises and industries in the outer suburban districts. If a person comes into Perth to establish an industry, there is no question raised about the current he requires, for he can get that current right away. But if he wishes to go out to Mundaring, he cannot get the current he needs. At Armadale there is current available, because the Government have a brick kiln at Byford. Extensions of electric current should be made through many of those centres. The first result would be that more people would be found living there. If one produces first-grade fruit and first-grade vegetables, there is always an adequate demand for those products; and they can be produced if at critical times the grower has the electric power to pump water on them. I hope that the new Minister will use his persuasive eloquence on the Treasurer and will succeed in inducing him to provide the necessary funds. Fortunately the Treasurer is very sympathetic. As Minister for Railways, he has on different occasions told me of his desire that such extensions should be made. That is very gratifying. When the new Minister, Mr. F. C. L. Smith, returns from Kalgoorlie, I hope that one of his first acts will be to determine that the extensions will be made. In order that costs might be kept down to a minimum, I think settlers in the districts to be served should be permitted to submit tenders for the supply of poles and the sinking of post

holes. This would be helpful to the settlers who are having a very difficult time, and I feel sure they would be able to submit prices that would most likely have the effect of reducing costs.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.32]: I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on having been re-elected to that position and express the hope that you will occupy it for quite a long time. There have been a number of changes in the House since last session, but your occupancy of the Speakership is one on which members are agreed that a wise decision was made. I hope that you will enjoy good health for many years in order to carry out the duties of the office. Some interesting debate has resulted on this motion and one or two subjects have been mentioned on which I intend to speak. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) spoke about the lighting of railway engines travelling on suburban lines, and some of his remarks were treated with a degree of levity not at all warranted.

Mr. Sampson: They should have been taken seriously.

Mr. CROSS: I certainly consider that some change is long overdue, particularly in regard to the trains running to Cannington where they cross the road at Rivervale. Engines cross roads in quite a number of places, and on occasions I would defy anybody riding in a car to tell whether a train was approaching.

Mr. Marshall: A lot of people cannot tell at any time when they are in a car.

Mr. CROSS: It is high time that searchlights were installed on the engines in order to give the public adequate warning of the approach of trains. At present the danger is extremely great, and the number of accidents, particularly at Rivervale, emphasises the necessity for a change being made. I regret that the Minister for Railways is not in his place, but I believe that he will give serious attention to some of the remarks I intend to make. In some of the speeches made from the other side of the House detrimental comments have been offered regarding the Government's expressed intention to introduce another trolley bus service. Some of the remarks made were not warranted.

Mr. Patrick: It was not the extension but the route that was criticised.

Mr. CROSS: Before I have finished I think I shall convince even the hon. member

that the conversion of the Claremont route is warranted. Western Australia or Australia is not the only country in the world faced with street transport problems. Many of the problems are common to other countries of the world, particularly the problem of determining the most efficient and economical alternative to obsolescent trams. The arguments in favour of trolley buses, which have been responsible for their great advancement and development in America and Europe, including Great Britain, during the last few years, apply everywhere. One of the chief arguments is that cheap electricity is used as the propulsive agent of the trolley bus, and its comparative freedom from either tax or price fluctuation. Other arguments in favour of the trolley bus are its noiselessness in operation, and its mobility, while its low operation and maintenance costs give it an ever-widening appeal.

Mr. Thorn: With all those advantages the trolley buses are a losing proposition. They do not pay.

Mr. CROSS: They are not a losing proposition.

Mr. Thorn: They are.

Mr. CROSS: On that point I will convince the hon. member before I have finished.

Mr. Thorn: I hope you will.

Mr. CROSS: It may be difficult, but I will make an attempt. Every year proof is increasing that the answer to the passenger street transport problem is the trolley bus.

Mr. Patrick: That is why they are not found in cities like London.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. Marshall: He very seldom does.

Mr. Patrick: Neither trams nor trolley buses run in London.

Mr. Thorn: The member for Canning does not know.

Mr. CROSS: May I remind members that trolley buses can be run on electricity generated from coal produced in this State.

Mr. Warner: We are aware of that.

Mr. CROSS: Further, in the by no means unlikely event of war, that factor would be of paramount importance to the travelling public. Trolley buses are a distinct improvement, not only on electric trams, but on every other form of road transport. They are comparatively fast. Numerous tests have been made in other countries, definitely proving that trolley buses are faster, particularly in acceleration, than any

other form of road transport. Under actual working conditions it has been proved time and time again that the single-decker trolley bus fully laden can accelerate from a stationary position to a speed of 20 miles an hour in 15 seconds. Let me refer to a specific test made at Wolverhampton, England, a few months ago. The test was made under usual working conditions on a trolley bus route 8.9 miles in length. The bus used was a double-decker and on the trip it carried over 11½ tons of passengers. Working from a 500-volt wire—similar to ours in Perth—the average speed on the level was 27 miles an hour.

Mr. Doney: Too quick in the city.

Mr. CROSS: From a stationary position on a gradient of one in 12, the bus accelerated to 16 miles an hour in ten seconds. The quantity of current taken from the main for the whole trip of 8.9 miles was 24.2 units. The stops averaged 5.2 per mile. That bus was equipped with regenerative and rheostatic control and portion of the current was regenerated. The quantity regenerated was 4.2 units. Thus the average quantity of current used over the whole journey worked out at 2.3 units per mile. A number of gentlemen witnessed the trial, amongst them the general manager of the Cape Town Tramway Corporation. He had been making investigations into street transport problems in Great Britain and had extended his inquiries to several countries on the Continent, and it might not be merely a coincidence that a few months ago Cape Town imported a fleet of trolley buses. The fleet included 30 double-decker buses capable of seating 62 passengers each, while the remaining 20 were single-deckers with seating accommodation for 39 passengers.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They would not weigh 11½ tons, would they?

Mr. CROSS: I am not speaking of the weight of the buses.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But you said the passengers on the test trip weighed 11½ tons.

The Minister for Agriculture: About the weight of all the Upper House members put together.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member is trying to make a gibe of my statement that the Wolverhampton bus on the test trip carried 11½ tons of passengers.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That would be equal to 200 or 300 passengers, or else they must have been heavyweights.

Mr. CROSS: I do not know the number of passengers on that trip, but I do know that the facts I have given are authentic. It was an official trial under actual working conditions.

Mr. Thorn: I think you are exaggerating.

Mr. CROSS: The fact of trolley buses having been introduced into Cape Town conveys some idea of the capabilities of such vehicles. There are some very steep gradients in Cape Town, as members will understand when I say that the trolley bus route terminating at Kloof Nek involves gradients ranging up to one in nine. I might mention that one trolley bus route in Wolverhampton in Britain has a gradient of one in seven. The trolley buses in Cape Town are all fitted with rheostatic plus regenerative control, and the transmission is such as to deal satisfactorily with climbing steep gradients and with providing the necessary electrical power for braking down steep inclines. Cape Town is not the only place in South Africa which has introduced trolley buses. It was the fifth city there to introduce them. They already had them in Durban, Johannesburg and a couple of other places. In Great Britain, the experience has been that conversion to trolley buses has been followed by an average increase of 33 per cent. in the number of passengers carried on the systems, and it has been definitely proved that operation costs are considerably lower than those of electric trams or petrol buses. Why do hon. members think that a place like Wolverhampton scrapped its electric trams and instituted trolley buses? Thirty-seven years ago the City of Manchester decided to scrap its fleet of horse-drawn trams, of which they had over 2,000. In their place they installed electric trams. Last year Manchester decided to scrap the whole of the electric tram system and convert to trolley buses. There are quite a number of places in Great Britain which have established trolley bus services, including Brighton, Manchester, Bournemouth, and Bradford. As a matter of fact, up to the beginning of 1935, 26 cities in Great Britain had definitely determined to change over from trams to trolley buses. Last year the London Transport Board decided to convert from electric trams to trolley buses.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: In the city? There are no trams in the city.

Mr. CROSS: The city is confined practically to a square mile. Having decided to convert from trams to trolley buses, the London Transport Board in January of this year ordered another 690 buses, having at that date over 100 already in use. Why do members consider places like Manchester, London, Bradford, Brighton and Grimsby have decided to scrap their electric trams and to instal not petrol but trolley buses?

Mr. Withers: Are they privately owned?

Mr. CROSS: Some are owned by companies, others by corporations and local governing bodies.

Mr. Withers: Ours are State-owned.

Mr. CROSS: As a matter of fact, in Great Britain before they can convert to a trolley bus service they have to secure Parliamentary sanction.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That has not to be done here, has it?

Mr. CROSS: At the beginning of 1935, 26 cities in Great Britain had substituted trolley buses for electric trams. At the same time 23 other cities had obtained the necessary Parliamentary sanction to establish trolley bus services. It might be interesting for members to know that at the beginning of this year there were ten Bills before the English Parliament introduced on behalf of various companies or local governing bodies seeking the right to change over from trams to buses. I could name some of them; I have a list here. The only argument against the substitution of trolley buses for trams in Great Britain is financial. In this connection I propose to give the expert opinion of Mr. C. Owen Silvers, A.M.I.E.E., consulting electrical engineer to the Wolverhampton Tramways and Transport Board. There must be a very definite reason why so many places in Great Britain, America and elsewhere are converting to trolley buses. The reason is that they have discovered that a trolley bus service can be established, including the cost of the buses together with a substantial contribution towards the cost of road construction, for less than half what it would cost to reconstruct double tramlines. I propose to let members know Mr. Silver's opinion about this, because he is regarded as one of the world's greatest experts on transport problems. Mr. Silvers states—

I have made a calculation from the accounts of some of our larger city tramways, and from the figures have struck an average which gives rather an interesting result. For the existing tramways I have taken the amount set aside for track renewals and the amount spent dur-

ing the year on track maintenance and repairs. The average cost per mile per annum for track renewals, repairs, and maintenance was £2,966. Later Mr. Silvers writes—

I have assumed that the number of tram cars is replaced by the same number of trolley vehicles bearing a tax of £120 each per annum, which money goes to the national fund for the making and upkeep of roads. The amount paid in vehicle tax per mile of route per annum is approximately £1,000.

A fair average cost of a good tarmac road, about 30 feet wide, is £3,500 per mile. With ordinary heavy traffic the life of this road can be estimated at a minimum of seven years, and from my experience in Wolverhampton I can say it is likely to be very much longer. If we pay five per cent. interest for the money and accumulate a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. sinking fund for its redemption in seven years, the loan charges will be £625 per annum. Maintenance, in the form of tar feeding and gritting, will cost approximately £220 per annum. This gives a total annual charge of £845, to which we will add 10 per cent. for contingencies, making a grand total of £927 10s. per mile per annum. Thereby it will be seen that in some cases the public service vehicles tax would more than cover the total road cost at the present rate of tax, and the whole of the other traffic on the route would in effect be running tax free. At the same time the passenger transport authority would be saving in the same instance £1,966 per mile per annum, the difference between track maintenance and renewals on the one hand and road tax on the other.

Mr. Silvers concludes—

I suggest that at this point the problem is not parochial, but of national importance.

Road engineers the world over agree that it is an expensive policy to construct roads between tramlines, and motorists the world over will agree that tramtracks do not improve any road. I admit that the trolley bus has its limitations. It is route-bound and overhead gear has to be erected and maintained, but at the same time the advantages of the trolley bus over the electric tram and the petrol bus are not only numerous, but important, particularly on frequent-stop services.

Mr. North: Do you support trolley buses running along Mounts Bay Road?

Mr. CROSS: I will deal with that later. The trolley bus is more comfortable: it is free from gear change jolts: it is free from vibration and from the smell of noxious fumes: and its unlimited torque in transit makes it speedier in traffic, and gives it better acceleration than its petrol-driven counterpart. It uses home-produced power which is not likely to fluctuate in price as does oil fuel. The maintenance and repair

costs of a trolley bus are lower than those of a motor bus which has a complicated engine and clutch and gear box. It has been proved in Great Britain that on suitable routes the total operation costs of trolley buses is considerably lower than in the case of trams or petrol buses. Quite a number of places in Great Britain have introduced trolley buses. Before the last session of the British Parliament at least ten other cities were seeking power to convert their tramways to trolley buses. There was a Bill before the British Parliament seeking authority on behalf of the Brighton Corporation to run trolley buses along the routes of new tramways. The corporation is seeking a loan of £75,000 for the removal of the tramtracks. An effort has been made to amend the Cleethorpes Trolley Vehicles Act to authorise the Great Grimsby Street Tramway Company to run trolley buses in the urban district of Cleethorpes and to abandon their tramways. The Huddersfield Board, per medium of a Bill, is also seeking power to use trolley buses. The Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Traction Companies are seeking power to run trolley buses on certain routes and to abandon the electric trams. Even in Wales the local body at Llanelli is seeking power to run trolley buses. The Stalybridge, Hyde, Moseley and Dukinfield Transport Board is seeking power to abandon tramways in favour of trolley buses.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Your Minister for Mines said that when he was in London the authorities were extending the tramway services there.

Mr. CROSS: That may be so. The decision of the London Transport Board made last year, after very considerable thought and a great deal of investigation, was that they definitely decided not only to establish trolley buses but to abandon tramways. They now have obtained statutory authority from the British Parliament to do that, and are making rapid strides in connection with the job. I suppose that to-day the 690 buses which were on order at the beginning of the year are nearly all in use. It would not be hard to assume that by the ninth month of the year quite a number of those buses will be in operation. In fact, nearly 1,000 trolley buses must be running in London to-day. All European experts agree that trolley buses are the

most serviceable, the cheapest, and the best of all forms of vehicle for use in the transport of passengers, and particularly in places where urban frequent stop services are required. Experts say that trolley buses alone can give that degree of comfort, mobility, and rapid and cheap transport which is demanded by the public. I have some figures taken from the largest companies and corporations operating in Great Britain. These show definitely that the establishment of trolley buses has been followed by an average increase of 33 per cent. in the number of passengers carried. The Leader of the Opposition spoke on the Address-in-reply concerning the fact that the Government had decided to give the people of Claremont up-to-date facilities. Quite a lot has been said about that community having a satisfactory service at present.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Your championship did enough for the last three years.

Mr. CROSS: I was on the right track.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are always on the right track.

Mr. CROSS: I cannot believe that the people in so many European countries, and in what one may say are scores of cities in Great Britain, are changing from electric trams to trolley buses simply as a fad. They are doing it because they find from experience that they are an improvement over every other form of transport, and can give a degree of comfort and rapid transport that are now desired by the public.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You would have the city of Perth become an insignificant suburb.

Mr. CROSS: At present neither the taxis nor the petrol-driven buses can pick up passengers along the Claremont tramline. No person can say that the present slow and obsolete tram service at Claremont is giving satisfaction. If it were taken off to-morrow the buses and taxis running along that route could not cope with the traffic that would be left.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why?

Mr. CROSS: I have been down there at the busy period of the day, I have seen five trams on the track all overlaid, and not able to clear the people along the track. I have been at the Claremont Fire Station in the evening at peak periods, and had to

wait three-quarters of an hour before being picked up by either a bus or a taxi. If the tramway service were discontinued at Claremont to-morrow, the residents of Claremont, and towards Nedlands, would have no chance of getting either a taxi or a bus at peak periods. That is what goes on to-day. To cope with the traffic it would be necessary to put on another fleet of petrol-driven buses. It is all very well for the Opposition to talk. Perhaps they would rather see buses run on American oil and petrol than have any consideration for our locally-produced coal.

Mr. Warner: Do you call that a good argument?

Mr. CROSS: It is one of the greatest arguments.

Mr. Patrick: I suppose you run your car on coal.

Mr. CROSS: The Leader of the Opposition complained that the Government did not seek Parliamentary authority for the expenditure on trolley buses. There is practically no reason why they should do so.

Mr. Thorn: Do you not think they ought?

Mr. CROSS: When the trams were first established, and for years past—

Mr. Thorn: What are you here for?

Mr. CROSS: The tramway service in Perth was never intended to run for profit. It was intended to run for service.

Mr. Sampson: When was that.

Mr. CROSS: From the inception of the tramway system in Perth.

Mr. Sampson: At the outset the trams were run by a limited company.

Mr. CROSS: From the time when the service was taken over by the Government, it has been generally recognised that it should always pay operating and interest costs. It has done so. In addition the system has accumulated a profit of over £98,000. It has always been generally recognised that these profits should be used to give improved facilities and greater comfort to the passengers. For years past has any attempt been made to give better facilities and more comfort to the passengers? Was any effort made to provide upholstered seats or to eliminate noise? The trolley buses represent a very real attempt out of accumulated profits to give the people of Clare-

mont, who have suffered so long, an up-to-date and comfortable service.

Mr. Withers: To the detriment of private enterprise.

Mr. Sampson: Where is that money?

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is mythical.

Mr. CROSS: The Leader of the Opposition complained that the Government had done this without Parliamentary authority. He raised no objection when trolley buses were first established in Perth. He sat behind the Government which purchased them without mentioning it in Parliament.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Parliament was fully acquainted concerning it.

Mr. CROSS: I should like to know when.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Probably you were not here. You were secretary of the union then.

Mr. CROSS: Oh no!

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, you were.

Mr. CROSS: In the report of the Commissioner for Railways for 1933, concerning trolley buses, the Commissioner states—

In view of the necessity of relaying the Kensington-street track, and the expenditure involved—

Hon. C. G. Latham: The trams were stopped there.

Mr. CROSS: The report continues—

—it was decided as an alternative to pull up the track and introduce trolley buses. They have been ordered, and will arrive at Fremantle on the 9th June.

I can find no reference in "Hansard" to any mention being made of this in Parliament by the Minister for Railways of the day.

Mr. Withers: It never was mentioned.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are wrong.

Mr. Sampson: Did not the Government amend the design of the trolley buses in Perth?

Mr. CROSS: The only public reference I can find is in the "West Australian" of the 22nd June, 1932. I could find no reference in "Hansard" at that time. The first mention that Mr. Scaddan made of this matter was reported in the "West Australian" on the 22nd June, when he was replying to a deputation from the Lands Endowment Committee of the Perth City Council. Mr. Scaddan's remarks were not made in Parliament.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Did you introduce a deputation from the Tramway Union asking the Minister to do this?

Mr. CROSS: This was a deputation from the Lands Endowment Committee. The Minister for Railways said—

It would be a good thing if Parliament could be persuaded to convert the tramway service along the Kensington-street track into a trolley bus service.

That was probably before he discovered that he did not need Parliamentary authority. The next reference I can find to this matter was in the "West Australian" of the 10th November, 1932.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CROSS: Before the tea adjournment I was quoting the only references I had been able to find as made by the former Minister for Railways to trolley buses. On the 10th November, 1932, the late Mr. Scaddan not only spoke of trolley buses but indicated that he agreed with the views of British and European experts. Those experts were unanimous that the petrol-driven bus was a distinct improvement on the electric tram. The same experts agreed that the diesel engine-driven bus represented a further improvement on the petrol-driven bus. It is true also that there is no division of opinion amongst British and European experts as to trolley buses being better than either of those two modes of conveyance; and it is evident from the statement published by Mr. Scaddan in November of 1932 that he agreed with those experts. He then said—

In the first place trolley buses had a mobility and a freedom in traffic which was absent from trams. That alone would minimise many of the traffic problems which were causing concern to the authorities. In the second place—and this was the most important factor—they had all the advantages of the petrol-driven buses without the disadvantages, and money for petrol went out of the country. The cost of operating these vehicles was far lower than that of petrol buses.

Mr. Scaddan also made an announcement in the "West Australian" of the 6th January, 1933, that the buses were expected to arrive about the end of February. I have yet to learn that Mr. Scaddan ever approached this Parliament for specific authority to expend money on trams. I say this despite the fact that during the tea adjournment the Leader of the Opposition discovered something which I missed—that the buses were mentioned.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I showed you that the Estimates contained the item.

Mr. CROSS: The buses had been ordered prior to that date.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They had not. They were ordered afterwards.

Mr. CROSS: No specific request was made to this Chamber for authority to expend money on buses. As I have already pointed out, from the report of the Commissioner of Railways it appears that they were actually ordered in Britain before the date of the making of that announcement in Parliament. The residents of my electorate are greatly interested in trolley buses. South Perth is a residential suburb second to none in the metropolitan area, and has a progressive road board. It is beyond contradiction that the suburb has made greater progress in the last few years than any other in the metropolitan area. In spite of that fact, South Perth has the worst transport system and the worst service of all the suburbs in the metropolitan area. Some months ago I wrote to the Minister for Railways asking for consideration on behalf of the suburb. We have a single-track line in South Perth and Como. For years past the service from the Mends-street jetty to Como has been gradually losing its passengers.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not en route, I hope.

Mr. CROSS: In fact, the service is so unsatisfactory that there are days on which the trams scarcely take the wages of the crews during the shift. I am of opinion that the time has arrived when special consideration should be given to providing an up-to-date service. That applies not only to South Perth, but to every single-track service in the metropolitan area. The experience of European countries is not only that trams are obsolete but that it does not pay to re-lay tramlines when worn out. I suggest that the Government give consideration to a policy of converting to trolley buses when Government tramlines wear out. Especially should that proposal receive immediate consideration where there are single lines of trams. As for the Claremont problem, we in South Perth will not complain if a decision is made to divert the trolley buses from the Claremont route, where it is at present proposed to utilise them, so that a decent service may be es-

tablished south of the river. I am definitely of opinion that the days of electric trams in Perth are numbered. Unless something drastic is done to furnish improved facilities for the travelling public, they will be driven off the tracks altogether. The only thing to do is what has been done in all other countries—adopt a more mobile, more satisfactory, and more comfortable form of transport. There are some other matters I desire to mention not only as regards my own electorate, but generally. There is the question of full-time work or improved conditions for the unemployed. The time has arrived when further consideration should be extended to that proposal. However, I know that the Government have been giving attention to the matter. I was indeed pleased last night to hear the Minister for Employment announce definitely that improved conditions will be made available for part-time workers as from the 5th October.

Mr. McLarty: Then why did you not vote for the amendment last night?

Mr. CROSS: At the same time I want the Minister to arrange to extend improved conditions to another class of workers. There are some four or five hundred men at present classed as "C." They are men really not fit to work at all. They are most unfortunate because the officials of the Pensions Department say that those men are not sufficiently incapable and therefore are not entitled to an invalid pension. Nevertheless, men in that class are not fit for work. At present they are in receipt of 7s. per unit for themselves and the members of their families. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the position of those people because it is not possible to find suitable work for them. The Minister might agree to grant them an increased allowance that would at least enable them to live in common decency. Another matter I will refer to is the position regarding relief workers in the metropolitan area. Until a few days ago, men who live at Spearwood were working on a job at Kenwick and at the same time men who live at East Cannington were working in the Claremont district. I hope the Minister will see that men are placed as soon as possible on work near their homes. I realise it is a difficult problem, but I trust some consideration will be given to it be-

cause it is not fair that men who are on part-time only should have to pay upwards of 10s. a week in travelling to and from their work. During the Address-in-reply debate, some comment was heard regarding the reclamation of the Swan River foreshore. I know it is the intention of the department to move the dredge from where it is working at present and transfer it to the other side of the Causeway. I consider that before that is done the department should finish one part of the job. The dredge is now working at one end of South Perth where there is still a certain amount of reclamation work to be carried out. I believe the intention is to fill in Millar's Pool, but there is also certain reclamation work that should be undertaken adjacent to the Mends-street jetty and between Coode-street and the portion that has been reclaimed towards Victoria Park. Before the dredge is moved, those areas should be completed and then we would at least have one section of the reclamation work finished. Surely it is commonsense to finish one end before moving the dredge up river to deal with another section.

Mr. Thorn: You are thinking only of your own electorate.

Mr. CROSS: Surely it will be conceded that it is merely commonsense to finish one end of the job first. Of course, I have known instances of a farmer commencing to plough one paddock and before finishing it, plough part of another paddock. Then when he wanted to do his seeding, he did not have one paddock completely ploughed.

Mr. Withers: The poor old farmer!

Mr. CROSS: During the last few years I have taken several deputations to various Ministers and frequently some difficulty has been experienced in obtaining up-to-date information because of the shortage of modern maps. I recall that on one occasion it was necessary to prepare a map of the area where it was desired to establish a new school. I went to considerable trouble on that occasion to prepare a map myself and, incidentally, that map is still the most up-to-date for that particular district. I draw the attention of the Government to the fact that very few up-to-date maps are available to-day dealing with any part of the great metropolitan area. The position is just as bad in the Federal departments. The maps of Perth possessed

by the Defence Department are 26 years old. To keep existing plans up-to-date or to provide maps or plans of new areas has been beyond the capacity of various Governments for years past on account of the cost involved. There has been much growth in the metropolitan area in recent years and when local governing bodies and Government departments as well endeavour to cope with the multiplicity of tasks they have to undertake, they require precise maps. Without fear of contradiction, I can claim that any Government official who has constructive work to undertake is hampered through the lack of suitable maps.

Mr. Thorn: You had better draw a few more.

Mr. CROSS: It is only necessary to instance the requirements of departments such as those dealing with water supply, electricity, traffic, main roads, electoral, as well as many others, for members to realise that up-to-date maps must be important and helpful to officers engaged in those branches of Governmental activity. The reason why few attempts have been made to overcome the difficulty is the enormous cost involved. I suggest that the modern technique of aerial surveying makes it possible to get up-to-date maps quickly, correctly and cheaply, and I believe that such a survey of the greater metropolitan area would be invaluable, not only to Government departments, but to local governing bodies as well. It would assist local authorities in their town planning operations and would be of material assistance to the Town Planning Commissioner himself. I suggest that the Government consider the advisability of setting aside a sum that would be sufficient to pay for an aerial survey of the greater metropolitan area. I do not think the cost would be as great as some members imagine, and at any rate the cost could be shared between the State and Commonwealth Governments, while the local authorities could also contribute. I suggest that a photographic mosaic of the greater metropolitan area should be taken starting from Robb's Jetty, embracing a strip up the coast for 15 miles, thence inland taking in Fremantle, Perth and all the suburbs, including Midland Junction, and extending to the foot of the Darling Ranges. That would take in an area of about 300 square miles. And if the whole

of the area as defined in the Traffic Act were surveyed, it would include about 550 square miles. The cost of such an aerial survey, including the cost of preparation of maps, is about £10 per square mile. So the outside cost of such a survey would be about £5,000. Such an aerial survey would involve the taking of about 3,000 air photographs, and these would be placed together to form one large map. Taking a scale of, say, 60ft. to the square inch, a map of 15ft. by 11ft. would be the result. That map could be hung in the Public Works Department and would be available for inspection. It would be very helpful to Ministers and to those local authorities who require maps of that description. It would not be necessary for a local authority to buy the whole map, for the map would be prepared in sections of from 30 inches to 20 inches. The original negatives being available, the Government Printer could take off any copies that were required, and they would be available for sale to the public and to local authorities. Aerial photographic survey is by no means a new process. It has been recognised in Great Britain and in Africa, and its value has been recognised in this State also. I recall that when Mr. Stileman was Engineer-in-Chief he advocated an aerial survey, and I believe that the Conservator of Forests agreed with the proposal, and that the Town Planning Commissioner has since advocated it. Recently an aerial survey was taken by the Western Mining Company. I am of opinion that this is a matter of considerable importance, and one that should receive some consideration when the Estimates are being prepared.

The Minister for Agriculture: They are taking one now in the North.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And the hon. member knew that.

Mr. CROSS: I did not.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And that is why he is suggesting it.

Mr. CROSS: I am suggesting it because every section of the community is hampered by the lack of up-to-date maps, and because it would not only have an historic value but because it would be of general service to every section of the community and particularly to Government departments. So I hope the Government will give consideration to the taking of an aerial

survey of the metropolitan area. There are several other things to which I should like to draw attention, but one that I must refer to is the question of Lassetter's Reef.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have been looking for that for a long while.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: We ought to have an aerial survey made of it.

Mr. CROSS: I am very pleased with the attitude the Minister adopted in connection with that reef. I deplore the fact that any such scheme should exist that would possibly have the effect of preventing outside capital and people from investing in our gold mines. I honestly believe there is any amount of scope for the investment of capital in this State. I suggest that if a company were formed, either in Australia or in Britain, there is plenty of scope for prospecting the possibilities of this State, and many areas for the prospecting of which companies could be formed. If such a company were formed, with a capital of a million pounds, they could prospect by boring in some very promising areas, as for instance, that between Coolgardie and Widgiemooltha. I believe that if the capital were raised and the company were systematically to sink 500 or 600 holes they would be terribly unlucky if they did not find three or four good mines. Such a scheme has great possibilities, and I hope the Government will do everything possible during their tenure of office to render every assistance to that most profitable of all industries, the goldmining industry.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands) [7.56]: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Marshall: You must stand right up when you address the Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SHEARN: If the hon. member will keep quiet for a little while, I will endeavour to show him that I believe, Sir, you are entirely capable of controlling the House. Also I think that as an old member, the member for Murchison might well have been prepared to extend courtesy to a new member. However, judging by his conduct since I have been in the House, one would look in vain for anything like that. But I am speaking under some difficulty, because I am only just recovering from a very severe cold, and I therefore trust that the hon. member will not seek to antagonise me more than seems to him necessary. I have had

to deal with interruptions elsewhere, and I do not for a moment think the hon. member's interruptions will be more formidable than others I have already met. I wish to associate myself, Sir, in the congratulations and good wishes extended to you by other speakers. I am in some degree qualified to do this, because I have had the privilege of meeting you outside; and so although I have had but little chance of appraising you in your honourable position of Speaker, I feel certain that you will administer that position with great honour to yourself and with satisfaction to us all. It is not my intention to address myself at any length to the motion before the House, as I assume from information I have received that I will have opportunity at a later stage to refer to many matters of general interest to the State and particular interest to my own electorate. Also I am reminded that the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) made an appropriate reference to a practical reform. Without having any desire to proffer advice, it would appear from the addresses I have listened to that much good would accrue from a reasonable curtailment of the debate on the Address-in-reply. It would give the Government opportunity to present to the House measures dealing with major problems that they have before them. At this juncture—a very crucial one—I am always taking note of the fact that subsequently we shall have opportunity to deal with all the matters that are raised in a debate such as this one. For that reason I am hoping that the suggestion made by the member for Katanning, which I have the temerity now to support, may bear fruit in the near future. Again there is another aspect that occurs to me as one interested in politics previous to securing a seat in the House, I mean as an occasional reader of "Hansard." There appears to have been in the past—and one might reasonably assume that it will recur—experience of legislation being introduced into this Chamber at a very late stage of the session, and either dealt with in undue haste or held over on account of the necessary adjournment that takes place at Christmas time. I support what the member for Katanning said, hoping that that weakness will be corrected. I wish to direct attention to the gradual increase in taxation, some of which is voluntary. I submit that the claim of the Government that they have not increased taxation cannot be successfully sustained. While

they have attempted to free from the incidence of the financial emergency tax those on the basic wage who will now be brought within the range of the tax, they have practically doubled the emergency tax on other sections of the community. As a result they received last year from the financial emergency tax a sum of over £800,000, and as there are returns yet to be assessed, that amount will undoubtedly be increased. It will be admitted that the Government have been most fortunate in that they have received the advantage of the reduced interest rates on loans overseas; that they have enjoyed considerable freedom from the need for finding moneys for hospitals, and that they have been generally relieved by the operations of the Lotteries Commission. With other hon. members I am afraid that that institution will be with us for quite a long time. The Lotteries have been the means of assisting many charities which otherwise would have had to call for Government assistance in order to ensure their continuance. In addition the Government have received over £800,000 from the Commonwealth by way of disabilities grant. The ordinary taxes such as income, dividend, duties, etc., have returned marked increases. The Railways have benefited from the operation of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, and practically all public utilities have improved considerably and therefore have assisted to swell Government funds. In the circumstances, surely the fact that the financial year closed with a surplus can create no surprise in the mind of one who takes into account the facts I have mentioned. It is plain, however, that through taxation, private investments and expansion of industries which are expected to provide exports for the State's existence are being hampered, and the position is being gradually forced on the State of recognising a large organisation of permanent unemployed. If we are to expect the provision of employment to be possible, with any degree of success, outside of Government services, it is imperative that taxation be closely reviewed and lightened wherever possible and practicable, in order that money may be available for expansion and to increase the private employment of the masses. I take this opportunity to draw attention to the unsatisfactory tram service on the Walcott-street route and the urgent necessity, apart from its due extension, of duplication from Beaufort-street. This would obviate

the great inconvenience and loss of time occasioned to residents of that part of Mt. Lawley and North Perth who have no other means of transport. In this regard I feel that I can support the member for Victoria Park in that where single lines exist they should be duplicated, or that a trolley bus service would be far more expeditious and generally more satisfactory than the tram service we have. I am not concerned as to whether it is to be a duplication of the tram line or the institution of a trolley bus service. What I am concerned about, and what the people in the locality are concerned about is the question of additional facilities. Another matter to which I wish to make brief reference is that of the lack of school facilities in Mt. Lawley and the adjacent territory. It is probably known to metropolitan members, and possibly to some country members, that in the Mt. Lawley-North Perth territory are large numbers of children of tender age who are compelled, through lack of these facilities, to travel to the Angove-street (North Perth) and Inglewood schools, both of which are at such a distance from the locality referred to as to be highly undesirable in the interests of the children. I have already, in conjunction with members representing that district in another place, submitted a petition which will be found amply to support the advocacy I submit for the provision of a school. Before leaving the subject of the schools, may I point out that some years ago a site was allocated for this purpose, and so it cannot be said that the question of a site or the cost of a site has been an obstacle to the provision of a school. I would urge the speeding-up of the provision of bulk handling facilities and of installing greater facilities at the terminals. Dairy products and kindred industries must be given every possible consideration and assistance. Side by side with rural development, a similar policy must be adopted in regard to the State's secondary industries, thus bringing about a co-ordination of those two factors in social organisation, the primary producer and the industrialist. I heartily endorse all that the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) had to say in support of the wonderful and commendable work being performed by the Boys' Employment League, and its amply justified claim for considerably better financial assistance from the Government. Another matter to which I would briefly refer is the fact that for many years the civil servants have been

seeking better conditions. Those on the lower-salary scale have good reason to feel a sense of dissatisfaction; the salaries paid are not reasonable and they are entitled to improved conditions. Last session the Government brought down a Bill—the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Act—and this Bill, I believe, had the backing of all members, with possibly one exception. The service now find that although they expected so much from this amending Bill, they are unable to obtain that reasonable satisfaction to which they are entitled. I suggest that there should be a tribunal of three Commissioners—I know that with some this is going to be an unpopular idea—whose duties in this connection need not engage their full time. Given this, and a sound scheme of superannuation, the Civil Service of this State would be of even greater value than it is to-day. After listening to some of the speeches in this House, and taking into account the turbulent period through which not only we, but Australia and the world at large are passing, I trust that we shall set about developing a better national conscience. The grim realities of poverty and distress have culminated in incalculable harm to the morale of our national life. The after-effects will be suffered for a greater period than can be estimated, and I therefore feel that some definite reform must eventually come, or even greater hardship may overtake us. The position of relief workers of the State has been discussed at great length and while, for the moment, I am not associating myself with what has been said either for or against, I am primarily and wholly concerned with the actual position in which the relief workers and the distressed farmers of this State find themselves. I feel that, as a representative of one electorate which I regret to say is very directly affected in this connection, it is my duty to make a reasonable and sound contribution in order to try and assist in, at any rate, ameliorating the position in which these people find themselves, and which has a very material bearing upon the prosperity, or otherwise, not only of the immediate community in which they reside, but of the whole State. I say quite fearlessly that, while we did last night have a speech from the Minister for Employment outlining certain proposals, surely we are entitled to what I might term a better clarification of the position which exists? Surely

it is fair to ask the Government to enlighten us as to what the plan is which they have in mind, and which I understand they propose to inaugurate in October, aiming, I presume, at full-time employment? The plight of distressed producers and relief workers justifies the fullest co-operation, irrespective of party, in a genuine effort to at least alleviate the present conditions. Confidence must be our dominating quality. We must rise above any demoralising tendency of doubt, we must return to a sound optimism based on never-failing confidence in the future of our State. We must vitalise this spirit and make it a permanent toreh, inspiring confidence in the future, not only of the State but also in the individual lives of our citizens. Finally, I urge that the prevailing conditions call for an absolute frankness by the Government from time to time as to their proposals to deal with the many problems confronting the State, and an equal readiness by those in opposition ungrudgingly to give their support to any definite project shown to be in the best interests of all, and not to any particular class or section alone. By the pursuance of this very clear duty on our part, we shall merit the goodwill and confidence of all, which, I suggest, is our inviolable trust.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [8.15]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON: I regret that the Government should have seen fit to use their brutal majority—

Mr. Marshall: The only majority we have is in hospital.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: —against such a friendly critic as I have always been. If you would not regard it as tedious repetition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the other hon. members who have offered their congratulations to you on your re-election to the Speaker's Chair, and may I express the hope that if, owing to the exigencies of the political situation, your occupancy of that Chair should be somewhat curtailed, nevertheless it will be congenial. Members on this side of the House, I know, will do all they can to help you in the discharge of those duties. May I also express my regret at the illness of the Premier and the ex-Premier, and voice the hope that

they will speedily be restored to normal health. I would also like to offer my congratulations to two personal friends on their elevation to Ministerial rank—the Minister for Employment (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke) and the new Minister for Railways (Hon. F. C. L. Smith). The speech which was placed in His Excellency's mouth by the Government, and with which he was pleased to open this, the first session of the Sixteenth Parliament of Western Australia, was merely a recital of the various fortuitous circumstances which have come to the aid of the Government during the last two or three years, circumstances which have, in varying degrees, been helpful to the Government and for which, apparently, they take full credit. It has been said that if the Opposition could find anything to criticise in such a nebulous document as the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, they would be the ablest Opposition which had ever sat on these benches. I do not intend to try. The elections were held last February and I have been searching in vain for some reason why they were held then, unless it was that the Government of the day did not regard it as very likely that those electors mainly concerned with primary production, who would then be busily engaged in taking off their harvest, would record such a heavy poll if the election were held in February instead of at the end of March or the beginning of April as usual. No reason has been vouchsafed to us by the Government, and it is difficult to find any. The Government have been returned to office with a very considerably reduced majority compared with the number of supporters they had in the previous Parliament. This has been due in a great measure to the inhuman preference policy they placed before the people. This policy provided that there should be no Government sustenance or Government employment unless the individual concerned was prepared to contribute towards the funds of some political union, approved of by the Government or Trades Hall.

Mr. Sleeman: The primary producers are doing that now.

Mr. Doney: Where did you learn that?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: That policy did not meet with the approval of the electors. I suggest that if there is another election in the near future, that particular plank of the

Government's platform would not be placed prominently before the electors, but would be kept religiously in the background.

Mr. Wilson: Nonsense!

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Those who are vitally concerned in the welfare of the State are considerably perturbed at the disastrous season that is evident in some portions of the State. In the pastoral areas the squatters are in the midst of the worst drought they have ever known.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think it is the very worst.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I think it is the worst they have ever experienced in the pastoral areas. That would certainly apply to the Murchison country, even if it did not apply to the North-West. Those engaged in the pastoral industry in the areas I refer to will need to receive very careful consideration at the hands of the Government. It will tax the resources of Western Australia to the utmost to assist those pastoralists who cannot build up their flocks under present conditions. In many instances the carrying capacity of the holdings has been decreased by more than 50 per cent. It will be a difficult problem, when there is no possibility of securing stock from outside sources, to enable those people to build up their flocks again. The flocks will have to be built up from the few remaining stock found on the various properties, and that will naturally take a long time. Any requests that are placed before the Government by the pastoralists should receive very sympathetic consideration.

The Minister for Agriculture: You do not doubt that.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: In the agricultural areas the season, although starting late, has given some promise of being fairly satisfactory. The crops of wheat and oats are looking fairly well. We are, however, on the verge of a precipice and unless we get very copious rains during the next few weeks the crops in many districts will be a total failure. If that failure comes, particularly in the north-eastern section of the wheat belt where there were such disastrous crop failures last year, what is going to happen to the settlers there? In the ordinary course of events we have no right to expect heavy rains in those districts during September. The average September does not give promise of a heavy rainfall, and without such rainfall the crops there will be very light. In my own district the rainfall to

date is exactly 50 per cent. of the average. The worst feature is that although the earlier sown crops are reasonably sure of yielding well, in districts that are carrying considerable quantities of stock there are no water supplies for the ensuing summer. Not only is there no reserve of moisture in the subsoil to stand to the crops and the feed if we get a week or two of dry hot weather, but there is no water in the dams to provide for the stock throughout the long summer months. I believe the Railway Department will be very severely tested. It was difficult to arrange water supplies in one north-eastern district last year in the wheat belt owing to the dry season. If this sort of thing is going to happen over 50 per cent. of the State during next summer, the Government will have to give serious consideration to the requirements of our farmers and residents in those districts in the matter of water supplies.

Mr. Doney: A lot of the big public dams contain only one-tenth of the amount of water that is customary for this time of the year.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Many of the dams on farms have not as much water in them. The Government Statistician estimates that the crop this year will be between 28 and 29 million bushels. He would be a bold man who would forecast the harvest for the current year. Everything will depend upon the next few weeks. That which has gone by in the last few months has no bearing on the matter. The question of finance enters largely into all operations of the Government. During the discussion on the Address-in-reply last session I placed before the House certain figures dealing with the financial resources of the present Government, and compared them with those of the previous Government. The figures were vigorously challenged by way of interjection by the then Premier. He assured the House that when he replied he would tear them to pieces and indicated, by way of interjection, that they were absolutely wrong and incorrect, and that I did not understand them. At that time I had the figures for the three years of the previous Government, and for the two years of the Collier Government, and I was compelled to take the Treasurer's estimate for the third year. The figures for the third year are now available. By adding together the expenditure under the

loan account and the revenue account, I find that a sum of £11,418,000 is the average amount that the Mitchell-Latham Government had available to spend each year. During the three years of their office the Collier Government had available for expenditure £12,241,000 annually. That is an increase of £823,000 in excess of the amount available for expenditure, as an average over the three years, compared with the amount that the previous Government had to spend in their three years of office. If we add to that £823,000 the sum of £114,000, which was the net average annual increase in the amount received from the Federal Government by way of special grants, and which did not appear on the Estimates, and the sum of £117,000 representing the additional receipts from the petrol tax, it will be seen that the total is almost exactly £1,000,000 more than the Mitchell-Latham Government had to spend.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is per annum.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes. That includes the expenditure under loan and revenue accounts, and represents in round figures £1,000,000. That is just about the amount I mentioned that the Government had available for expenditure in excess of the sum the previous Government had.

Mr Tonkin: How was it that the credit of your Government was so low?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: My reply to that interjection is that the percentage of reduction in loan made available for expenditure in Western Australia was exactly on the same basis as the reduction for every other State of the Commonwealth. The credit of Western Australia in the time of the Mitchell Government stood no lower than it had stood during the life of any other Government of this State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was better than South Australia's credit under a Labour Premier.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) knows very well that the amounts of loan are fixed by the Loan Council, and that the applications of the various State Governments are considered by that Council. The reductions made were practically the same in every State. The hon. member knows that during the period of the Mitchell-Latham Government we were in the throes of the worst depression Australia has ever experienced. He also knows that soon after

the Mitchell-Latham Government went out of office there was a gradual increase in both revenue and loan expenditure in every State of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Tonkin: Your party fought the election on the cry that you could borrow more money than the previous Labour Government.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The present Government have finished up the financial year with a surplus of £80,000 odd. While I consider that surplus a matter for congratulation so far as Western Australia is concerned, as the Government have more available in the way of loan funds and revenue, nevertheless I am not in a position to agree with the Leader of the Opposition and those who have showered congratulations on the present Government because of the fact that they show this surplus. I personally would be inclined to give the Government more credit had they expended that surplus in the direction of assisting those of our wealth producers who are labouring under a load of debt, and who might with a little further assistance have been able to carry on their avocations with some slight degree of profit to themselves. We hear a great deal about increasing the purchasing power of the people. We hear it not only in this Chamber, but outside as well. I would suggest that one of the ways in which we might increase the spending power of our people would be to increase the earning capacity of those who are mainly responsible for the production of the wealth on which the 450,000 people in this State live. It has been mentioned that the primary producers of Western Australia have been responsible for exporting from this State more than £90,000,000 worth of primary products. Every man, woman, and child in this State has lived on that sum of £90,000,000. Yet during the last six years, at any rate, those who have been mainly responsible for the production of that wealth have been working without any profit at all. It would have been more to the credit of the Government had they come to this House and said, "We have no surplus this year. We have expended an additional £100,000—or £200,000—to assist that section of the community which is responsible for the production of the wealth upon which we all subsist." If members on the Government side of the Chamber are anxious to impress the country with their fair-mindedness, I suggest they do not do it by trying to make

political capital out of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on the Supply Bill. I have heard numerous comments outside this Chamber on what the Leader of the Opposition said on the subject of unauthorised expenditure. Attempts have been made to create political capital out of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition offered some criticism of unauthorised expenditure during the debate on the Supply Bill. It has been stated on the authority of members of this House that the hon. gentleman opposed the purchase of an additional State steamer. I suggest to Government supporters that notwithstanding their enthusiasm they should not endeavour to obtain political kudos in that direction, because it will bring no credit to them in the long run. The Leader of the Opposition never criticised the purchase of a State steamer. With other members of his party, particularly those of us who have had the privilege of visiting the North-West, he knows very well that the people there regard State steamers in somewhat the same light as our agriculturists regard the State railways. Living on the only privately-owned railway in Western Australia, I know full well the value of State railways. I believe that the Opposition would be prepared to assist the Government in the purchase of this necessary ship for the North-West. There is no reason why the Government should not purchase it; but I suggest that there was no blackguard hurry to rush into the expenditure, and that it would have been fitting for the Government to refer the question of expenditure to Parliament first. The same thing applies to the trolley buses. Backed by the Minister for Mines, the member for Canning (Mr. Cross), who is nothing if he is not enthusiastic in the support of his calling, assured us that the previous Government had done just about the same thing in connection with the purchase of similar vehicles. I have here the very "Hansard" from which the hon. member quoted to prove his case, and now I would like to read two or three passages from it. I quote from "Hansard" of November, 1932, page 2066:—

Item—Tramways, Perth Electric, £20,000:

Hon. A. McCallum: Will the Minister explain what is included in this item?

The Minister for Railways (Hon. J. Scaddan): The expenditure is largely for the completion of some bogey cars that were partly constructed. We thought it would be well to complete them and get them out of the way.

Unfortunately we have had to adhere to the old type because of the difficulty of introducing a new type. As there were only five bogeys to be completed, we thought it better to complete them. The balance is to provide trolley buses in lieu of re-laying the tram track along Kensington-street.

Mr. Cross: But the buses had been ordered prior to that date.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: They had not.

The Minister for Mines: From what date are you quoting?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: From the debate on the Estimates, November, 1932.

The Minister for Mines: In June of 1932 the Minister told the public, through the "West Australian," that the buses had been ordered.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The report continues:—

I have already explained that the cost of taking up the old rails and laying new ones to run the same service and earn the same revenue would be approximately the same as the cost of providing trolley buses over an extended route.

That will not apply at Claremont. That is an entirely different thing.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Government have shifted the rails there.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: There is absolutely no necessity to place trolley buses on the Claremont route. The member for the district, who, I take it, just after an election can fairly claim to represent the public opinion of the district, states definitely that the people there do not want the buses. Those vehicles are about to be foisted on to the people of Claremont by the Government. And for what reason?

Mr. North: I mean, provided the restrictions on the buses are lifted, of course.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: That goes without saying. What is the use of any Government forcing people to have a facility that they do not want? What is the use of the Government spending £80,000 odd to provide a facility that somebody else is quite willing and ready to provide, a facility which will meet all the requirements of the district?

Several members interjected

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: It is a remarkable thing that when the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) was on his feet the other evening, every member on the Government side of the House was as mute as the proverbial mouse. When somebody else

gets up to speak, members opposite continue with their interjections and will not allow him to proceed. The organised silence that we heard the other evening did credit to the discipline of the Government. If the Government have this money available for expenditure, surely there is a greater, more national, and more useful purpose to which it could be devoted.

Mr. Sleeman: Yes; the Fremantle bridge, of course.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: There are infinitely more useful services to which the money could be applied than the construction of that bridge. I admit that the provision of a new bridge at Fremantle would be infinitely preferable to the trolley buses for Claremont.

Mr. Doney: Of course.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The Claremont people are well enough off to pay for their own transport facilities, and there is no necessity for the Government to make provision for them. A greater permanent return would accrue to the State if the expenditure of this and other money were devoted to the further development of the agricultural areas in the direction of providing water supplies, roads, schools and facilities of all descriptions, together with a reduction of costs that would enable the producers to have a reasonable chance of showing a profit on their operations. If that were done, the benefit to the State would be infinitely greater in the long run than will result from the expenditure on the Claremont trolley buses.

Mr. Warner: And the State will always have the asset.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The farming community require a lot of money for the purchase of plant and reconditioning of their present plant. Their horses are old and worn out; their machines are decrepid and incapable of performing the work required of them. Any Government who have a penny to spare would be well advised, particularly at this juncture, to spend all they can spare, and all they can can raise by way of loan, in the country districts in order to bring about, in some measure, the rehabilitation of a section of the community unfortunately unable to help themselves just now. Why thrust facilities upon a suburban area where they are not required, particularly at a time when the

rural districts are crying out for development in various directions? I suppose the greatest problem Western Australia and Australia as a whole, have to face is that of rural rehabilitation. I have always had considerable faith in Government boards and State instrumentalities, but I confess to a feeling of disappointment with the results of the efforts of the State Rural Relief Trustees. I do not desire unduly to blame the trustees for the small measure of success that has attended their efforts. In my opinion, three very capable men were chosen by the Government to discharge these onerous duties, but it is impossible for them to achieve any great measure of success in view of the legislation under which they are operating. Until the Rural Relief Fund Act is amended, the very best will not be done in the interests of the farmers who have to be rehabilitated. That cannot be done until the Government introduce a measure for that purpose, or a private member does so. Unless the trustees are in a position to deal with secured, as well as unsecured, liabilities of the farmers, the latter will not get the full measure of justice that they have a right to expect as a result of the fund made available for their benefit by the Commonwealth Government. I know there is a certain volume of opinion opposed to tinkering with secured debts, but for the life of me I cannot see very much difference between a secured debt that any farmer has given to a Bank, some other financial institution, or to some private individual, in respect of which he has put his signature to the mortgage document, and another debt that has been incurred to the local storekeeper to whom one's word has been given that the debt will be paid.

Mr. Warner: There is no difference at all.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: In the mind of any decent individual, there could be no difference.

Mr. Doney: Morally the debts are on the same basis.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes, and if I borrow £1,000 from a bank and give the institution my farm as security, and I owe the local grocer for a pound of tea or a pound of sugar, there is an equal moral obligation upon me to discharge both debts. So it should be in respect of any assistance rendered the farmers from the Commonwealth fund that is being distributed by the State instrumentality. The three capable men who

have been appointed by the State to act in that capacity know how to discharge their duties, but they cannot do so to the fullest extent unless they are provided with legislative powers that will enable them to do the job properly. Let me quote two paragraphs from the report of the Rural Relief Trustees that was tabled recently by the Minister, The trustees report—

Associated banks and other financial institutions have exhibited a reluctance to write off any mortgage debts, but latterly a few small second mortgages have been bought out on a low composition basis, while in others a reduced rate of interest will be charged on a lesser amount than the total debt, the balance, probably representing accumulated arrears, being set aside for the time being. In a few cases banks have agreed to forego interest for a period, any surplus proceeds, after current seasons costs have been met, to be credited to the overdraft account. This method does not necessarily mean ultimate relief to the farmers from the heavy loading represented by the total debt, and at the moment there is the spectacle of many Agricultural Bank clients obtaining relief, while in the same district farmers in similar circumstances but mortgaged to other institutions, obtain no relief from their mortgage debts. The security of a first mortgagee cannot be written down without his consent, and often the amount of the second mortgage is too great, if the mortgagee registers an adverse vote, to permit the required four-fifths majority to render a scheme binding on all creditors including the second mortgagee.

There we have it clearly stated by the trustees that unless they are given ample power to deal with secured debts, they cannot do a fair thing with the money available at their command.

Mr. Warner: We must endeavour to get them that power.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I hope Parliament will see fit to provide that power for the trustees, not only over secured debts as well as unsecured debts, but to provide for a simple majority of creditors instead of the necessity for obtaining the requisite four-fifths majority as at present. I know this legislation was largely of an experimental nature, and we did not know exactly what to do with it. Had the Government of the day been prepared to accept the advice of practical farmers on the Opposition side of the House, the Act would have been far more workable than it is to-day. We will forgive the Government for that if they will take the necessary steps even at this late stage to amend the Act in the direction I

have suggested. The Rural Relief Trustees, in their report, further stated—

Section 6 of the Act empowers the trustees to suspend any debt or portion of any debt, if a farmer fails to obtain an effective resolution of creditors in favour of the scheme of adjustment submitted, but the trustees find that the utilisation of the suspension clause would in many instances militate against the farmer himself, as the policy of associated banks is apparently to stop advances if a farmer's application brings a bank's secured account within the scope of any proposal for general debt adjustment. For this reason a few farmers have withdrawn their applications. Much as the trustees would like to utilise the fund for the adjustment of debts other than the mortgaged debts, such a course is difficult if the remaining debt obviously represents serious over-capitalisation. The latter position is, of course, eased somewhat if the bank concerned is providing seasonal assistance for the continuance of farming operations.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to one sentence in particular. That sentence is: "For this reason a few farmers have withdrawn their application." I know of a few farmers who have not been game to submit their applications to have their liabilities reconditioned for the reason the trustees publish in their report. Side by side, as they say, with Agricultural Bank clients whom the State has written down to a reasonable degree, we have Associated Banks and insurance companies' clients who are entitled to just the same treatment as the clients of the State institution, yet they are not able to participate in the distribution of these funds which have been made available for the assistance of agriculturists generally. It seems to me the time has arrived when something should be done, and I do commend to the Government that they should ere long introduce into the House a Bill drafted on the lines I have indicated. We know that some of the money that has been made available by the Commonwealth Government has been extended in different directions for the assistance of our wheat-growers, a sum that was made available for distribution amongst the wheatgrowers and known as the wheat bounty. In most of the States concerned there has been distributed this bounty at the rate of 3s. 3d. per acre, but in Western Australia the distribution has been only on the basis of 1s. 10d. per acre. And the State Government are responsible for that. I grant that £161,000 of the money has been earmarked for necessitous farmers. But if the Governments in the Eastern States can provide for their

necessitous farmers and pay the full 3s. 3d. per acre, why is it not possible for the Government of Western Australia similarly to treat their wheatgrowers, giving them the whole of the Commonwealth grant and themselves making provision for the £161,000, or whatever the amount that was required for the relief of distressed and necessitous farmers. The Deputy Premier the other night submitted a long list of figures representing what this Government had done for our farming community. I venture to say he would have been fairer in his remark that no other section of the community was so liberally treated, if he had said that the whole of this money was debited to the farmer, and that the farmer would eventually be called upon to pay it back, and that a lot of it had been charged up to the farmer at from 5 per cent. to 7 per cent. per annum. Of course the farmer is not paying that interest; no one can pay interest with wheat at low prices over so long a period; but the interest goes on to the account books and will have to be paid when conditions improve. It is of no use the Government saying we have done all this for the farmer; as a matter of fact, we have done it, not for the farmer, but for the State, because through the farmer the State is going to reap the benefit. Who is going to contribute that wealth which the community of the State absolutely lives upon, if the farmer goes out of existence? We have 2,000 or 3,000 abandoned Agricultural Bank farms at the present time, and we do not want any more of them. The sooner the Government and the people realise that immediately the agriculturist who is on his own farm at present is brought into a reasonably profitable position, the other abandoned farms will be taken up and used for productivity for the benefit of the State as a whole. But not until those persons occupying farms find their farms are profitable, will the abandoned farms be made profitable. It is time the Minister for Lands told the people of the State, not, as he said the other night, that we are doing these things for the farmer, but let the people understand definitely that we are helping the farmer because we want the farmer to help Western Australia. If the Minister would do that, and do it in unequivocal terms, the people of the State, particularly those in the met-

ropolitan area, might be inclined to sit up and take a little notice. At present they do not appreciate the difficulties of the farmer at all; there is an almost total lack of appreciation of the difficulties the farmer is up against, a total lack of appreciation by most of the other sections of the community. Until there is general realisation of that fact, it will not be in the best interests of Western Australia. The decision of the Privy Council in connection with the dried fruits case is one that is fraught with great importance to our primary producers. There has risen up during recent years a consensus of opinion that the primary producers of Australia—and I am mainly concerned with those of Western Australia—were not able to get an adequate return for their labour unless the people of the State were prepared to contribute a larger amount than was returned to our producers by the export of their commodities overseas—a contribution in the way of a home consumption price for the commodities consumed within Australia. By virtue of the settled national policy of Australia our producers were compelled to pay an enhanced price for everything they had to purchase, and the people of the Commonwealth were gradually coming to a realisation of the fact that it was their duty to assist the farmer. The Commonwealth and the various States concerned instituted certain legislation to assist the farmer in this direction, but owing to the Privy Council decision that legislation has had to go by the board. I am hopeful that the Commonwealth and the States interested will be able to come to some satisfactory arrangement with each other by which this legislation will not be jettisoned. I wish to tell the House and the country that some such arrangement must be made to carry on the good work that was inaugurated by the passing of that legislation, the value of which has been exemplified in connection with our dried fruit industry, which was absolutely down-and-out until its products were marketed under statute. As the result of the operations of that legislation, our dried fruit industry has been placed on a very satisfactory basis. I had hoped to see that legislation extended, but, owing to the decision of the Privy Council, that would now appear to be impossible. However, I hope the

Minister for Agriculture, who I know is interested in this matter, and other Ministers for Agriculture throughout Australia will be able to evolve some scheme by which the legislation already on the statute-books of certain of the States and the Commonwealth will be continued. I want to make a brief reference to the lack of agricultural education in this State. This is a State mainly or almost wholly of primary production, but with the exception of the agricultural education which is provided at the Muresk Agricultural College, at the Narrogin School of Agriculture and at our various State farms, very little is being done by the country as a whole to provide for that very necessary agricultural education. We are spending a lot of money in the education of artisans, of all sorts of professional people, in domestic sciences and that kind of thing, and yet we are not doing enough to provide the education that is ideally suited for those people who will eventually have to take up an agricultural career. This applies particularly to our University. The State is finding a lot of money for the University; £30,000 odd per annum is the amount, I think. The State through the various Governments has been very good to the University in the provision of valuable endowment land and in other ways, but little in the way of agricultural education is being given at the University. I should like to suggest to the Minister for Agriculture, who I know is keenly interested in this matter, because he himself was a student of an agricultural college, that he should make inquiries from the University as to how much of the State's £31,000 is being spent on agricultural education. I believe that it is little or nothing at all, and that the expenditure on agricultural education at the University comes mainly from a private bequest. It is up to the State to say that, if all this money is to be found for the University, we have a right to expect that some of it will be expended on agricultural education.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are aware that that was the chair specifically mentioned in the bequest.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Undoubtedly it was a private bequest.

Mr. Patrick: Look at the buildings which the agricultural students are occupying as compared with the others.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not the fault of the University authorities.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I think it was W. E. Gladstone who said that the currency problem had produced more maniacs than disappointed love. The question of currency is one that is occupying the attention of thoughtful men, not only in Australia, but in every other country. There has been a definite swing in favour of some change in our monetary policy. Just how far this affects the State Parliament, I have not been able to impress upon those who have discussed the matter with me. I have pointed out that, except in an abstract way, the question will probably never be discussed in the State Parliament again. It is a matter for the Federal arena. As the Federal Government, who would be mainly responsible for activities such as these, have done something in the way of starting an investigation into the whole problem, I think the people of Western Australia should be satisfied to await the findings of the Royal Commission and see what they have to place before us. I want to refer briefly to the question of bulk handling and the necessity for the provision at a very early date of terminal facilities at various ports. There seems no desire on the part of the Government to proceed at other than a snail's pace with the provision of those facilities. It is well known that quite a long time will be required to erect adequate terminal facilities at ports such as Fremantle and Geraldton, and if those facilities are going to be of the orthodox type—concrete silos—and I presume they will be, it is likely to be a year or two before they are provided. In the meantime, the lack of those facilities is absolutely preventing the wheatgrowers of the State from taking advantage of the bulk handling facilities which are being provided throughout the country districts because of the increased handling necessary at the ports. Unless we are going to get a start with the terminal facilities at an early date, I venture to say that still another harvest will go by and our farmers will not be able to get the full benefit of the expenditure that is being made in the country areas. I notice that during recent weeks arrangements have been made by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. with the Midland Railway Company for the provision of bulk handling facilities on that line. I would like to ask the Minister the terms under which the

arrangement has been made with the Midland Railway Company to charge a flat rate of 1s. 6d. per ton surcharge on all bulk wheat carried over the Midland railway. In my opinion that is altogether an unjust charge, and the Government are to blame because they set a bad example to a privately-owned company by imposing a surcharge of 9d. per ton on bulk wheat carried over the State railways. Bulk wheat carried over the Midland railway will have to go to a port, either Fremantle or Geraldton, and in process of reaching that port, it will have to traverse a section of Government railway. I want to know whether the wheatgrower on the Midland line is to be slugged for the 1s. 6d. and the 9d.; is he going to be charged 2s. 3d. per ton? If he is, the value of the bulk handling facilities will be largely reduced.

Mr. Sleeman: How do you like private enterprise now?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Private enterprise would never have charged the 1s. 6d. per ton had the Government not set a bad example at the behest of the Commissioner of Railways and charged the extra 9d. a ton. Ours is the first Government in the world to charge more freight on bulk wheat than on bagged wheat, and they set the example to the only privately-owned railway system in the State, who immediately followed suit and doubled the rate.

Mr. Fox: Can you give any reason why they should not have made an extra charge?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The reason has been so apparent to the Government of every other country where bulk handling facilities have been installed that it ought to be apparent even to the intelligence of the member for South Fremantle. Will the Government take up this matter and see that the wheatgrowers on the Midland Railway are not slugged for both those charges? To suggest charging both would be an iniquitous proposal. I would hardly think the Minister for Railways would allow the Commissioner to do such a thing, but there seems to be an atmosphere of doubt in the minds of the wheatgrowers on the Midland line, and I and they would appreciate an expression of the view of the Government as to what the position will be.

The Minister for Mines: It would be all right if we allowed the Midland Railway Company to get their 1s. 6d. and we took nothing! We have no say in what they charge.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The Government have no alternative. The Midland Railway Coy. would not allow the installation of bulk handling unless the surcharge had been agreed to.

The Minister for Mines: The Government had no say.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: That is so. But I want an arrangement between the Government and the Midland Railway similar to that which operates regarding the carriage of other goods so that the amount will be spread over the whole distance and both surcharges will not be imposed.

Mr. Sleeman: Did not the manager give that evidence before the Royal Commission?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes; he said it would cost him more than the Government charged. But he has to pay all sorts of taxation which the Government do not have to pay.

The Minister for Mines: There is no railway company in the world that gets the same consideration from the Government as the Midland Railway Co.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: And there is no railway in the world that has been set such a horrible example as this company has been set by the Government.

Mr. Thorn: Quite right, and the Government hand over their trains late and the company have to make up the lost time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I wish to refer briefly to some of the pests with which the agricultural community have to contend.

The Minister for Agriculture: Very obvious now.

The Minister for Mines: To wit the Lord Mayor, the manager of the Midland Railway Coy.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: During recent years the fox menace has become a real trial to the farming community—

Mr. Sleeman: We have one here.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: —including the sheep growers and lamb producers. Quite recently the bonus for the destruction of the pest has been reduced from 5s. to 2s. 6d.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know that the Vermin Advisory Board recommended its abolition.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Nothing of the sort. We will have the papers produced.

The Minister for Agriculture: You move for their production. I wish you would.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The Vermin Advisory Board has not met for many months.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will show you their recommendation.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: There is a great deal of supposition about that recommendation. If there was one, was it for a drop from 5s. to 4s. or from 5s. to 2s. 6d., the figure at which it was fixed?

The Minister for Agriculture: From 5s. to total abolition.

Mr. Doney: When was the recommendation submitted?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can get that information by question.

The Minister for Agriculture: I wish you would move for the production of the papers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I will do that tomorrow if I can.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: There was no necessity for a reduction, and none should have been made. The fund for the provision of bonuses for the destruction of dingoes, foxes and eagles is provided by a vermin rate. Most of the dingoes on which bonuses are paid come from the pastoral areas, and foxes, from the agricultural areas. Notwithstanding that, we find that either the board or the Minister has reduced the rate on foxes, but not on dingoes. The farmers cannot pay a higher rate. They must either get more money from the fund for bonuses on foxes, or the fund must be supplemented in some other way. Fully 55 per cent. of the tax is paid by the farmers, and only 36 per cent. is spent in the farming areas. I shall be surprised if the Minister can tell me that that is a fair and equitable distribution of the money. Within reason we have a right to expect that the amount raised by the farmers would be spent for their benefit, and that the amount raised from the pastoralists would be spent in the interests of the pastoralists. Neither party would raise any objection if there was a small percentage one way or the other. When, however, 55 per cent. of the total tax is provided by the farmers and only 36 per cent. spent in their districts, a re-allocation of the amount of the bonuses becomes necessary. I believe the Minister and others will say that the farmers get the benefit of the poisoning of dingoes in the pastoral areas, and would claim that if the

animals were not poisoned there, they would soon come into the farming areas. I have heard that so often that I wonder anyone has courage to quote it. It does not matter to the farmer at Bencubbin, Bruce Rock or some other similar part of the wheat belt whether dingoes are poisoned at Lasseter's Reef or not.

The Minister for Agriculture: You will be interested in the file when you see it.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I should like to see it. We can then decide whether the Minister or the board is responsible for the reduction. That reduction has been made. I suggest to the Minister that he might bring pressure to bear upon the board, if that organisation is responsible, and have the fox bonus put back to 5s.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know the fund will be bankrupt.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The fund is raised from the farmers and the pastoralists who own over 160 acres of land. It is an altogether inequitable area to fix. Some men may have sheep on less than 160 acres, and others with more than 160 acres may have no sheep. There is no virtue in the area. The rate ought to be collected from every acre, if only a quarter of an acre of land. I shall be only too happy to assist the Minister in that regard, and will do all I can to help him put through an amendment to the Vermin Act, to this end, namely, to provide that all land within the State shall be taxed for the provision of this fund. If that is contrary to the Government policy, it would be fair that the Government should subsidise this fund on the pound for pound basis from revenue. It is conceivable that the Government may be inclined not to tax some other section of the community upon which perhaps they depend more for political support than they do the agricultural community. The farmers have by their own efforts almost exterminated dingoes in the agricultural areas. It is wrong that they should be called upon wholly and solely to contribute to the fund, when the bulk of it is spent in the destruction of dingoes in areas in which they, as farmers, are not particularly concerned. I was very much interested in the statement made by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) in the very admirable speech he made when moving the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. He referred to the prevalence of the Bathurst burr on the goldfields. It is

well known that this pest is probably the worst of its kind in Australia, with the possible exception of wild turnip. What are the Minister for Agriculture and his officers doing to allow that statement to go unchallenged if it is true?

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is true.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: If so, what are the officers of the department doing that it should be true? When I was Minister for Agriculture money was provided every year to grub out every plant of Bathurst burr that could be found in the country.

The Minister for Agriculture: One of the troubles is that this was not done.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The money was made available from the vote for the Department of Agriculture to supplement the payments to miners who were to do this work. I am under the impression that during my term of office I saw a report from a responsible official in the area indicating that the work had been effectively done. The hon. member said that Bathurst burr abounded in the goldfields areas.

Mr. Styants: There are thickets of it.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Will the Minister take action at an early date so that when the first rains reach Kalgoorlie—if they ever come again—every plant that has its head above ground is grubbed before seeding time? A good deal of stock passes through the goldfields to the agricultural areas, and there is the grave danger of the burr being spread by means of that stock. The burr sticks in the legs, the hair and manes of horses. Occasionally sheep come to Kalgoorlie from the other States and pass on into the pastoral areas.

Mr. Styants: That is where it comes from.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes. It is in Kalgoorlie to-day, and we should prevent it from going into those districts where it will do far more harm than it will on the goldfields. It is a matter of great importance, and no stone should be left unturned to bring about the complete eradication of the pest. Another matter of tremendous importance to us is the locust plague. We find it in vast areas in the north-eastern district. It is a peculiar thing that the pest shows itself in most districts in dry seasons. I understand it does not thrive in wet districts. According to reports of road boards in the north-eastern districts

the pest has extended all over their districts this year. I learn that the Government Entomologist attached to the Agricultural Department has been through these districts, made a partial inspection of the infected areas, and put forward certain recommendations. But the Minister should realise that although the entomologist may be capable of expressing an opinion on the question—I believe he is a thoroughly qualified official—nevertheless practical farmers and members of the local road boards are definitely of opinion that more should be done than is being done by the Agricultural Department, through the entomologist, at the present time. I understand they are poisoning strips around the crops to protect the crops. Just imagine half a dozen settlers with about 40,000 acres of abandoned Agricultural Bank properties all around them! Those abandoned properties are the breeding ground of the grasshoppers. What earthly hope have those half dozen farmers of combating the pest?

The Minister for Agriculture: No hope.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: They could not deal with it on their own properties, in view of their crop failures last year. Much less could they deal with it on the 40,000 acres of abandoned Agricultural Bank properties all around them. Moreover, this is not an individual farming matter at all. The State should undertake the responsibility of dealing with the pest, and should use the resources of the State to that end. Unless the plague is arrested, it will devastate hundreds of thousands of acres, or millions of acres, in other parts of Western Australia. The State cannot afford to let the whole countryside be ruined by the pest. We have been told that

A bold peasantry, their country's pride.

When once destroyed can never be supplied.

If the bold peasantry in those agricultural districts is going to be destroyed, many years must pass before it can be supplied again. This brings me back to the statement I made at the outset of my remarks, that all the energies and resources of the State should be applied in an endeavour to make the efforts of our primary producers profitable. When they are made profitable, those abandoned Agricultural Bank properties would again be selected and be utilised to produce the wealth that the State requires so urgently. Unless those properties are going to be utilised, they will naturally be breed-

ing grounds for the various plagues and pests I have enumerated, and for others as well. So I do hope the Government will wake up to their responsibilities in the matter. While I am prepared to give Ministers every credit for doing something at present, I believe the country expects them to do more. This poisoning of a chain around the crops will not be sufficient.

The Minister for Agriculture: We realise that.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I am glad the Minister realises it, but will he give an assurance that the Government will go the whole hog and do something to deal with the pest on a large scale?

The Minister for Agriculture: It is being done now.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: It is not being done. That is the trouble. The Minister may think it is being done, but local advices indicate that it is not being done.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are not in possession of all the facts.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I am in possession of facts furnished to me by the local governing bodies in those areas. They advise that the Minister's officials have been there and have done good work, but not work on a sufficiently wide scale. The last Parliament put through legislation dealing with brands and droving, the main object, apart from tightening up the legislation in general, being to assist in the detection of sheep stealing. I know of one or two instances, where the measure has had a beneficial effect in that regard, as the Minister will be pleased to hear; but, still, not sufficient is being done. As the Minister for Agriculture is also Minister for Police, he may be able to bring some pressure to bear on the Commissioner of Police to induce him to get his constables in country districts to devote greater attention to the nefarious activities of sheep stealers. I know that constables in some of our country towns are not encouraged to get out into the agricultural areas for the purpose of preventing sheep stealing. There is a proneness to remain in the towns. Where we have energetic young constables anxious to apprehend sheep thieves, every facility should be provided for them. Let me give the Minister an instance of what happened recently. A constable in a country district received a notification of a sheep stealing case which occurred 50 odd miles from the local police station. He was sent out to apprehend the sheep stealer.

It took him all day to get to the locality on horseback. When he got there, his horse was knocked up and the man himself was worn out. The constable in question has a motor car, and by means of that could have reached the locality in two hours, and probably would have secured the thief. As it was, the thief got away; the constable spent a week there, knocking up his horse in the process; and the cost to the State, I venture to say, was about twice as much as it would have been had the constable used his own motor car and been paid the official allowance of 6d. per mile applying in such cases. Moreover, he would have been successful in a motor car, whereas he failed on horseback.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Fancy chasing a truck on horseback!

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes, a truck with a start of 50 miles. There is no likelihood of constables in such districts showing much enthusiasm for the apprehension of sheep thieves, if the constable has to proceed on horseback to make the arrest while the sheep thief in a motor truck has a 50-mile start.

Mr. Sampson: The Government are living in the past century.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I would like to draw a comparison between what the Government spend on prosecuting some offenders and what they spend on coping with sheep thieves. A little while ago a man was arrested on a charge of murder, and after several trials was acquitted. The Government arrested him again and charged him, at considerable cost, with having stolen some diamond rings. That does not matter very much. I want to see every wrongdoer prosecuted. But immensely greater benefit would have resulted to the community as a whole had about 10 per cent. of the money spent in those prosecutions been devoted to the arrest and prosecution of sheep thieves. The Minister for Agriculture is also Minister for Education, and in the latter capacity he is to be complimented on the work of his department. However, I also want to draw his attention to the fact that his efforts, and the efforts of the Education Department, are largely nullified by the activities of another department. For many years I have been trying to get the school at Milngavie, in my electorate, removed into the town from an out-of-the-way situation. The school was erected many years ago in what was then purely a rural district. The advent of rail-

way facilities has caused a town to spring up around the railway terminus, some four miles from the site of the present school. For years I have been endeavouring to get the school removed. A central site for the school was offered to the Government at a price of about £20 or £25. The Education Department approved of the site as being all right. The Town Planning Commissioner then came along and said, "I am not going to agree to the erection of a school on that site, which comprises only 2½ acres, whereas a school site ought to have five acres." The present Labour Government, the previous non-Labour Government, and all other Governments that I have known of in Western Australia, the Public Works Department, the Town Planning Commissioner, and every right-thinking man and woman in Western Australia, I believe, considers that a school in a country district should be erected on an area of not less than five acres. We tried to get five acres at Miling, and could not, but were able to secure 2½ acres. Eventually the Town Planning Commissioner was persuaded to give his approval to the erection of the school on that site. What happened then? Someone in the Treasury comes along and frustrates the policy of the present Government and of every other Western Australian Government, saying, "No: I won't find the money for the purchase of five acres." The additional area could have been bought for about £25. Yet someone in the Treasury says, "No, I am not providing £25: I am going to cut the site down to a smaller area."

Mr. Sleeman: Was it the Under-Treasurer?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Someone should put the acid on the Under-Treasurer, if he is responsible.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Let him come here!

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: We won't let him come here. We don't want him here.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If he is to have all that power, he should be here.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: No State official should be allowed to frustrate the policy of all the Governments ever known in Western Australia, in the manner that obtains at the present time. I have given notice of my intention to move for the production of that file, so I shall not deal with

the matter further at this stage. Another question affecting the Education Department is the provision of monitors in country schools. An existing regulation sets out that unless there is an attendance of 30 children maintained for six months, no monitor will be provided at a school. An utterly impossible task is imposed on the average teacher in our country schools when he is asked to attempt to educate 29 children of ages varying from four to 16 years in the half-dozen classes under his control. Such a task is unfair to the teacher and to the scholars. I am not an expert educationist, but I assert that that is an impossible task. Where there is a reasonable prospect of an average attendance in the vicinity of 30, the services of a monitor should be provided. It is essential that the children in the country districts shall have ample educational facilities. They do not enjoy facilities that are available for the young folk in the metropolitan area, but what facilities are provided should be taken advantage of, and the Government should make provision for the small additional expenditure involved in the salary of a monitor. I ask the Minister to take that matter up with the Director of Education, with a view to having the regulation amended. I do not want an arbitrary number such as 30 to be provided for the average attendance at a school before the provision for a monitor is made. There might be an average attendance of 29 or 28 throughout the year, yet, under existing conditions, no monitor can be provided for the school. In such circumstances, the teacher is not able to provide an adequate educational training for the 29 children under his charge. Such a task is beyond the power of the teacher of ordinary intelligence, such as we have in our country schools. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) advocated a shorter working week. A move in that direction might be practicable in certain activities.

Mr. Hegney: You should practice it tonight.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: If I had a knife with which to practice on the hon. member, I would make a good job of him.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member should not make threats along those lines.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: That is not a threat, Mr. Speaker, but merely a promise. A week of 40 hours might be all right for the employees engaged on the construction of public works, or for employees in factories and in secondary industries, because in those avenues the public always pay in the long run. No doubt the member for North-East Fremantle has given careful consideration to this matter, but I would point out to him that there is another side to the question that the Parliaments of Australia will have to take into very serious consideration before agreeing to the introduction of the shorter working week. I would emphasise the futility of the application of that principle to the agricultural industry. The great majority of our farms are one-man farms, operated, from the standpoint of cultivation, by one team. It is impossible for a farmer to get the best results from that one team and from the machinery he operates generally by that team, if he were to work only 40 hours a week. We have found that the farmer has not been able to make a living by working 80 hours a week during recent years with the price of wheat in the vicinity of 2s. 6d. or 3s. a bushel. Wheat would have to be 5s. a bushel before the farmer could make a living from growing wheat if he were allowed to work his man and his team for 40 hours only per week.

Mr. Marshall: It is a pretty sad commentary on the industry if our primary producers and their workers are to be enslaved for all time.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: It is also a pity that one section of the community should be enslaved in the interests of the rest of the community. This is the first time I have found myself in agreement with the member for Murchison.

Mr. Marshall: He is enslaved because of the rotten system under which we live.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The working of a farm varies very considerably with the individual. On some farms short hours are worked, and on others long hours. I would not like to give an estimate of the time worked by the average farmer, but I know it would be many hours per week in excess of 40. When we suggest introducing a 40-hour week, we must consider the effect it will have on the main rural industry of Australia.

Mr. Warner: And everything centres on that industry.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Why should we further ruin and deplete the avenues of profit from that industry by saying the farmer shall not work more than 40 hours a week? In their struggle during recent years to make a living, the farmers have largely ruined their health; they have made older men of themselves and older women of their wives; they have worn out their horses and plant; now they are asking for assistance to renew their stock, and the Commonwealth Government have provided funds for the rehabilitation of the industry. If we are to take full advantage of that expenditure, the only way is to assist in making the return from their operations reasonably profitable. If they cannot do it under existing conditions, after they have had, perforce, to work themselves and their employees, their horses and teams, more than 40 hours a week, they simply can not make a living off the land if they are confined to the 40-hour week.

Mr. Marshall: They are not making a living by working 80 hours a week and they could not do so if they worked 100 hours a week. The present system is rotten.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I listened with deep regret to the charges that were levelled against the Government by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) on Thursday last. It was a very great disappointment to me that such serious charges could be levelled against any Government in my native State. I was amazed at some of the statements made by the hon. member and I suggest to the Government that if they desire to retrieve their reputation they and their predecessors had, the first thing they should do would be to initiate some investigation to prove to the public whether those charges are true or false. I do not desire to say one word more about the matter, except to assert that the honour of the Parliament of this State demands that some investigation shall be made. I wish to refer to one statement made by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) who said that the pensions of public servants who had been retired just prior to the 1st January, 1936, had been fixed on their salaries as at the date of retirement. The Government of which I was a member introduced the Financial Emergency Act, and I can assure members that a lot of trouble was taken to see to it that no injustice was imposed on civil servants and others

coming under that legislation. I wish to read a small passage from the original Financial Emergency Act to indicate to the member for South Fremantle that if some civil servant friend of his has had his pension fixed on that basis he has had an injustice perpetrated on him. Clause 8 of the Act of 1931 deals with superannuation and retiring allowances and carries a proviso, part of which reads as follows:—

Provided that where any officer retires or otherwise leaves the service during the operation of this Act, and is entitled on such retirement or leaving to a superannuation or retiring allowance, such allowance shall be calculated in accordance with the Act or regulation under which it is granted, save and except that such allowance shall not be calculated in any event at an amount lower than the amount of such allowance if it had been calculated as on the 30th day of June, 1931.

So if any civil servant has retired and had his pension based on the amount he was receiving on the 30th December last, he has had an injustice perpetrated on him, and I venture to say the Government will readily see to it that it is put right.

On motion by Mr. Brockman, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 3rd September, 1936.

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

QUESTION—CAVE HOUSE, ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Premier: 1, In order to encourage and provide for visitors

to the Cave districts of the South-West, will he call for tenders for the leasing of Yallingup, the conditions to provide for increased and suitable accommodation? 2, If so, when will tenders be called?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Premier) replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by (1).

QUESTION—PERTH TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Education: 1, Have the Government given any further consideration to the question of providing additional accommodation at the Perth Technical College? 2, If so, what decision, if any, has been arrived at?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, No decision has yet been arrived at.

QUESTION—RAILWAY DRAUGHTSMEN.

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Have applications for two draughtsmen for carriage and wagon building at a salary of £500 a year been called by the Western Australian Government Railways? 2, Is he satisfied of the necessity to make such appointments? 3, Is it intended to receive applications for the positions from outside Western Australia? 4, Has it been the practice to promote employees from the engine or car shop into the draughtsmen's office to fill any vacancies in the staff caused by promotion or otherwise? 5, If so, is it intended to depart from this practice in the present instance? 6, If no person at present in the employ of the department is qualified to fill the positions, will he consider the claims of persons holding diplomas of engineering from the University of Western Australia in preference to the applications of persons not residing in Western Australia?

The DEPUTY PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, With the object of building up the depleted locomotive drawing office staff, applications were recently called in both Australia and England for three positions as under:—One assistant engineer (locomotive designing), salary range £432-£457; one assistant engineer (locomotive designing), salary range £382-£407; one assistant engineer (carriage designing), salary range £382-£407. 2, The