

ernment oppose it because they reason "We cannot have this up against us at the next general elections." Members may laugh, but these old and tried professional politicians—of whom I regard the hon. member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) as one—cannot refute my statement. If the life of Parliament were extended and the system of elective Ministries adopted, Western Australia would possibly rise from the mire she is in to-day. Every member must realise that it is impossible for the State to continue drifting as it is doing at the present time. If the drift continues, so surely as the sun rises there will come a time when her paper will not be honoured.

Mr. A. Thomson: Nonsense!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I remember when the Labour Government had a deficit of £300,000 or £400,000, there was an awful cry all through the country about the Government rushing us headlong to bankruptcy. We are now practically on the verge of bankruptcy. I can see unification staring us in the face, and unification I regard as a curse. In the eyes of the Commonwealth Parliament I believe Western Australia is only a very small patch, and if unification ever comes about, we shall be regarded only as a blot on the map. Unification will come unless some honest attempt is made from every part of this House to stop the financial drift. Last month there was a shortage of £100,000. I do not know where the money comes from: I wish my bank would allow me the same scope as the Government appear to have. On the subject of elective Ministries I cannot claim to be an authority, although I have my own views. A man who is supposed to know a great deal said to me the other day, "If you appointed Ministers from the floor of the House, you might have your Minister for Mines voting against your Minister for Works." I replied, "Quite right, if the Minister for Mines and a majority of the House thought that the Bill introduced by the Minister for Works was not in the best interests of the country."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Elective Ministers do not vote at all; they only speak.

Mr. Lambert: They are kept in cages.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Is that so? I do not wish to detain the House longer, though I feel that, as a new member. I may not have done justice to my argument. As I go along in this Chamber, I shall endeavour to familiarise myself with political ideas. I desire to congratulate the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) on her victory, and on being the first lady to win a seat in an Australian Parliament. I believe that the lady said it was not good for man to be alone. In moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, the member for West Perth asked for more parks for West Perth, and for more fresh air for West Perth. I wish I could persuade the member for West Perth to influence her married friends to come along with their children into the rural districts, where there is any amount of fresh air, and where there are endless vistas of natural

parks. Too much centralisation is the trouble of this State. I consider that instead of having 50,000 people, as the Premier said, working for the rest of the community, we should have a drift of population from the towns into the rural districts. The development of the South-West, in particular, is going to be one of the finest things that ever happened in this State. But two things must go together in the South-West: a land settlement scheme, and development of the sawmill industry. As for the three State sawmills working there, I say there is room for another dozen sawmills; and I care not whether they are carried on by State enterprise or by private enterprise, providing only that the South-West is developed. I repeat, the solution of the financial difficulty to-day existing is bound up with the development of the great South-West. Nobody knows the South-West. People come along and drive through that country, but they inevitably fail to recognise its great possibilities. When the Premier introduces his railway Bills, I shall expect to see among them at least six railway Bills for the South-West. I want only short lines—15 to 20 miles—to serve the settlers and to develop the South-West. But I want those spur lines to be built almost immediately, if that is possible. Once again, the development of the South-West is a question of vital importance, representing, as it does, the only possible solution of Western Australia's financial problem.

On motion by Mr. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 10th August, 1921.

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

QUESTION—BOULDER AMBULANCE TRANSPORT.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the frequent occurrence of serious accidents on the Boulder mines, will the Minister endeavour to secure the

provision of suitable ambulance transport accommodation?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (for the Minister for Railways) replied: Inquiries are being made, and if the existing provision for transport of injured men from the mines to the hospital be found inadequate, endeavours will be made to secure better arrangements.

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY MATTERS.

Appointment of Engineers.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Corboy) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Were any engineers and/or assistant engineers appointed in the Railways during the last financial years. 2, If so, what expense was involved including salaries of appointees, clerical staffs, and expenses, if any? 3, Were such appointments refused by the late Mr. Light, late Engineer for Existing Lines, on the ground that they were not necessary, or for any other reason?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, No. Certain re-arrangements of the engineering staff were made as indicated in paragraph 13 of the Commissioner of Railways' report for the quarter ended 31st March, with the object of utilising their services to greater advantage and securing closer supervision. As a matter of fact the engineering staff has been reduced in numbers. 2, No additional expense was involved. 3, No. The late Mr. Light was in accord with the principles which have been carried out.

Mileage and Staff Percentages.

Mr. CHESSON (for Mr. Corboy) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the total mileage on the railways been increased or decreased during the last 12 months, and by what percentage? 2, Has the wages staff been increased or decreased during the last 12 months, and by what percentage? 3, Has the salaries staff been increased or decreased during the last 12 months, and by what percentage?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, The train mileage increased from 4,851,000 in 1919-20 to 4,918,000 in 1920-21, an increase of 1.38 per cent. Approximately 225,000 train miles were not run owing to the strike in January, 1921. 2, The wages staff on the 30th June, 1920, numbered 6,553 persons, and on the same date in 1921, 6,896 persons, an increase of 5.23 per cent. 3, The salaried staff on the 30th June, 1920, numbered 1,116 persons, and on the same date in 1921, 1,187 persons, an increase of 6.36 per cent.

QUESTION—RABBITS ON CROWN LANDS.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Do the Government approve

of the statement of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits, contained in a letter dated 3rd March, 1921, that "the Government recognise no responsibility whatever for the destruction of rabbits on Crown lands"? 2, As the main breeding grounds for rabbits in this State are Crown lands and reserves, will the Government review the policy laid down by the Chief Inspector, in the direction of accepting for their lands the same responsibilities that the law imposes on private land-owners, in the same localities? 3, If not, will the Government relax the enforcement of the existing law against settlers whose properties are adjacent to Crown lands to the extent that it is not observed by the Government?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, The Government could not accept responsibility for the destruction of rabbits on Crown lands, but have done a considerable amount of destruction on the worst breeding places, such as salt lakes, etc., and will continue to do this. 2, It is difficult to state whether the main breeding places are on Crown lands, or land alienated, in process of alienation, or leasehold. As stated in No. 1, the Government accept no responsibility. 3, No. To do so would not be in the best interests of the settlers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion* by Mr. A. Thomson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Piesse (Toodyay) on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.38]: Owing to the regrettable absence through illness of our Leader, the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison), it has fallen to my lot to speak on the Address-in-reply on behalf of the Country Party. We feel it is rather unfortunate that we should have at least three of our members on the sick list and more particularly that our Leader should not be present to-day. I sincerely trust that he will be back in the Chamber very soon.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: He is well represented.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That may be so, but I should have liked him to be present this afternoon. I regret also that the Premier is not here. I congratulate him, however, on the honour which has been conferred upon him by His Majesty the King, when he gave him the title of "Sir James." No matter how much we may differ from him on matters from time to time, we must all recognise that in connection with land settlement, and as a firm believer in the future of Western Australia, the Premier stands second to none in the State.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not so long ago since your Party thought otherwise and censured the Premier throughout the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You opposed him throughout the State even recently.

Hon. P. Collier: This is a good twist.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There is no twist about it.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no twist about you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am perfectly sincere in my congratulations to the Premier, and I would also like to take the opportunity of congratulating the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) on being the first lady to fill a position in the legislature of Western Australia and, incidentally, of the Commonwealth. I have no doubt it will be beneficial to this House to have a woman's point of view placed before members, and for that reason I desire to congratulate her on her advent to Parliament. I am sure the experience Mrs. Cowan will gain here, and the benefit which her presence will afford members of this Chamber, will be of advantage to the State. The Leader of the Opposition, when speaking last Thursday, devoted an hour to a criticism of the Country Party. He occupied approximately 10 pages of "Hansard" with that criticism. Members of the Country Party at all times welcome criticism.

Mr. Johnston: It shows how important we are.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We feel that we can congratulate ourselves, for it is cause for pride that the Leader of the Opposition should consider it worth his while to devote a whole hour to a criticism of the actions of the Country Party, who, besides sitting on the cross benches, are incidentally supporting the Government. The Leader of the Opposition was quite clear in his statements and proved to his own satisfaction that the Country Party are dominated by outside control, that an outside executive dictates to our Party as to what we should do, and he quoted extensively to prove to his own satisfaction that he was correct. So far as I am personally concerned I would be prepared to let it stay at that; that is to say, if the Leader of the Opposition were the only one to be satisfied. We know that for political reasons, and with a general desire to mislead this country, he went to considerable lengths to show that we were under outside domination.

Hon. P. Collier: I have no desire to mislead this country.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I repeat that the Leader of the Opposition deliberately attempted to mislead the people of this State.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order; I object to the hon. member's statement that I deliberately attempted to mislead people.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Kataning must not accuse any member of deliberately trying to mislead anyone.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will withdraw the word "deliberately." The Leader of the Opposition, however, did attempt to lead this House to believe that we were dominated by

an outside executive. That statement has appeared in the daily newspapers, and, coming from the Leader of the Opposition, people would naturally assume that a statement made in this House was correct.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Everyone knows that it is true, so it makes no difference.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If members are satisfied to accept such statements, the country would like to know what is the position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They know it all right.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will prove to the satisfaction of the House—

Hon. P. Collier: To your own satisfaction.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will prove it to the satisfaction of the House and to any unbiased person that the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition are incorrect. I was accused the other evening of being a parrot for making that assertion, but, as you know, Mr. Speaker, the rules of the House would not permit me to say what I should like to in reply to that statement. I had to be polite and use only the terms the rules of the House would permit, for which reason I simply stated that the assertions by the Leader of the Opposition were incorrect. Had it not been for other considerations, I would have left the Leader of the Opposition to enjoy his flights of imagination.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He quoted from the "Primary Producer."

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will quote from that paper as well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have two or three copies here.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will prove to the satisfaction of the House and of the country that the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition are absolutely incorrect. In fact before I finish I will show how much he knew about the matter. He said—

It was a remarkable feature after the elections to find a considerable section of the members on the Government side of the House who gave adherence to the primary producers' party, and who were unable to say whether they were going to support the Government or the Opposition until they had received instructions from an outside body.

Then he went on—

Let me see what the position is. I well remember an occasion when members of the party met in this building and, after discussing matters for an hour or two, they trooped down in solemn array and, I suppose, marched to the Westralian Farmers' building, the place where this outside caucus meets.

If the rest of the hon. member's statement is as correct as that is, it shows how much knowledge he has of the case; because this party has never yet had a meeting at the Westralian Farmers' building.

Hon. P. Collier: I said I supposed they went there.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It was purely a matter of supposition.

Mr. Munsie: Where did you go, if not there?

Mr. A. THOMSON: It shows how true his statements are. "The place where this outside caucus meets." We have no caucus. This party is free and untrammelled in its deliberations in this House. The hon. member went on—

The object of the visit was to decide with the executive upon their future relationship with the Government and, in fact, to receive definite instructions as to whether or not they were to remain in support of the Government.

No more misleading statement was ever made in the House, and the hon. member knew it when he made that statement.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order. The hon. member has accused me of making a mis-statement, knowing it was a mis-statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. A. THOMSON: What particular statement have I to withdraw?

Hon. P. Collier: That I knowingly made a mis-statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Well, I will withdraw the statement that he knew it was misleading.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will withdraw without reservation.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I make no reservation. I have pleasure in withdrawing the statement that the hon. member knew he was making a mis-statement. Is that sufficient? The hon. member then went on—

There was not one candidate standing in the interests of the primary producers' party at the general elections who was able to tell the electors whether or not he would support the Government after the election.

Mr. Munsie: That is true enough.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We did not know until after the elections who the Government were going to be. Hon. members opposite were optimistic and convinced that they were going to govern. Did the hon. member's party know whether they were going to support the Government or to be in opposition? At any rate, they could not say whether or not they would sit on the Government side.

Hon. P. Collier: You will make a good speech if you quote much more of mine.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Since that speech will go out to the country, I must repudiate the statements contained therein which I can prove to be incorrect. I am not going to allow the hon. member to say we are under the domination of an outside body.

Mr. Munsie: It will be said again before the debate is over.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No doubt we shall hear a good deal of parrot repetition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What did Mr. Willmott say at Bunbury?

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Willmott ought to know, for he was leader of the party long before the hon. member.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Never mind, I have been a member of this party for over three years. By precept, by practice, and by principle I am a member of this party.

Hon. P. Collier: There is more joy in heaven over one sinner—

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition went on to say that we had to get our instructions from the executive after the elections. If the hon. member were to search the constitution of the Country Party from beginning to end, he could not find one clause intimating that the members of this party have ever been dominated by anybody else, or received instructions as to how to act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who made the official statement after the elections, Mr. Monger or Mr. Harrison?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will deal with Mr. Monger presently. At the risk of wearying the House, I am justified in defining our position. The Leader of the Opposition read the resolution, and read also the report as to what happened after the joint conference between the two parties. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has said that he will quote from the "Primary Producer." Of course he will, just as the Leader of the Opposition quoted from it. But when the Leader of the Opposition quoted from that organ he left out an important statement, and quoted only that which suited him. Half a lie is difficult to contradict. I propose to give the House—

Hon. P. Collier: The full lie.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If that is the hon. member's attitude, namely, to lie to the House, I have no desire to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the inference; that I told half a lie?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order. The hon. member deliberately says that I told half a lie. I presume that the charge of having told even half a lie is an objectionable allegation to make against a member.

The SPEAKER: I heard the Leader of the Opposition direct some remark towards the member for Katanning, and I heard the hon. member answer "Yes." I do not know whether that is what the member for Boulder is referring to.

Hon. P. Collier: I asked the hon. member, did he infer that I told half a lie, and he said "Yes."

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am sorry that I should be causing the Leader of the Opposition to feel so much hurt. However, he quite enjoyed himself the other evening when he endeavoured to scarify the members sitting on these cross-benches.

Mr. Teesdale: He fairly revelled in it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, absolutely revelled in it. What are the true facts?

The member for North-East Fremantle said he would quote from the "Primary Producer." I also will quote from the "Primary Producer," which is —

Hon. P. Collier: The official organ.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Not necessarily so, but it is more so now than it used to be. It is on a better footing than it was.

The Minister for Works: It doesn't tell half lies now.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition dealt extensively with this point: he said—

At the annual conference of the branch delegates of the Primary Producers' Association held in Perth in August last, the question of relationship of the Country Party to other parliamentary parties, after the then ensuing general elections, was considered, and it was determined that this matter should be left to be decided by a joint conference of the executive of the association and the Country Party subsequent to the elections.

Then he quoted this—

The joint conference was held to-day, when the matter was fully discussed and the following resolution adopted unanimously.

Without giving away secrets, I may say that some of the members of the Country Party had never previously met. We had come to our decision before we "trooped down," as the hon. member said, which was purely a flight of the imagination. We did not do anything of the sort.

Hon. T. Walker: How did you get down?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We walked.

Hon. T. Walker: Precisely what a trooper does.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We did not go down in a body.

Hon. P. Collier: No, you straggled down, one after another.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As a matter of fact, we met and decided that we should co-operate, but not with any particular Government. I will read the resolution, which is practically the decision we came to before we met the executive. We have amongst us representatives of the Country Party who would resign their seats in Parliament rather than be dictated to by any outside organisation.

Hon. P. Collier: Then you defy the conference.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member ought to talk about defying the conference! We have an annual conference, held in Perth. It is composed of representatives from every farming community. Last year 553 delegates represented varied interests, not only the agricultural interests but the mining interests, and the interests of horticulture.

Mr. Angelo: And also the pastoralists.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, and the mining industry as well.

Mr. Johnston: We are becoming very strong on the goldfields.

Mr. A. THOMSON: This is the resolution upon which the Leader of the Opposition laid such stress and in respect of which he would lead the country to believe that members on the cross benches had to go to the executive, take off their caps, and say, "Please Sirs, what shall we do?" What actually occurred was this: we as a party had met and decided what we would do. We said to the executive, "Gentlemen, we have discussed the matter; this is what we propose to do." The executive unanimously adopted our proposals.

Hon. P. Collier: If the executive had not done so, who would have prevailed?

Mr. Latham: The party, of course.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I stated a few moments ago that the Country Party have never been dictated to or dominated by the executive of the Primary Producers' Association.

The Minister for Agriculture: We would do what your organisation is going to do at West Sydney next week.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The resolution reads—

In the interests of stable government, we are of opinion that the Country Party should co-operate—

I would here impress upon the Leader of the Opposition that the resolution does not state "co-operate with the Government."

Hon. P. Collier: You have no time for the Government, in fact.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The resolution continues—

with all parties on the Government side of the House in the duty of government—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What difference does that make?

Mr. Latham: It cuts out gentlemen on your side of the House.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are not pledged to co-operate with the present Government. That is the point.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not so long as the Government carry out your platform.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are not pledged to co-operate with the present Government any more than we are pledged to co-operate with the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) or the Leader of the Opposition. The resolution continues—

relying on the administration so formed, as far as possible to give effect to the general policy outlined in the objects and platform of the Country Party.

That is one part of the resolution which the Leader of the Opposition carefully eliminated. He wanted to keep that in the back ground.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Mr. Monger said it had been fully considered at the joint meeting, and not that you went down to the executive with your proposals.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members will have an opportunity to address themselves to the subject later on.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Members of the Opposition are so anxious to convince the public that there is something wrong—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have Monger's statement here.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have a copy of it, too.

Hon. P. Collier: Get it framed.

Mr. A. THOMSON: What Mr. Monger stated was this—

The functions of the executive have been completed and the further actions regarding the association of the Country Party with other Parliamentary sections referred to is now a matter which is entirely in the hands of the Country Party itself—

Hon. P. Collier: You are now in their hands and doing as the conference has told you to do.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Mr. Monger's statement continued—

and in which the executive of the association has no part.

There is an old saying that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones, and it ill becomes members sitting in opposition to accuse any party of being dominated by an outside executive. If there is one section of members in this House so dominated, it is those gentlemen on the Opposition benches. They have been dominated for years by the Trades Hall and by their executives.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Ask your colleagues about your own position.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have sat in this House for some years and have observed members of the Labour Party trooping down the stairs after a party meeting. I have seen members of the executive and the Trades Hall coming down from such a meeting. I throw out this challenge to the Leader of the Opposition: I will place on the Table of the House all the minutes of Country Party meetings held in this House or elsewhere ever since the party's inception for the inspection not only of this House, but of the public at large if he will do the same. We will then see who is dominated by the outside bodies. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to place on the Table of the House the minute book of the Labour Caucus meetings held within the last 10 years. The production of such minutes would show who was dominated by an outside body and who had to take the instructions of an outside body.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If there are any such minutes in existence, I would not mind them being laid on the Table.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The executive of the Primary Producers' Association have no desire to dominate members of the Country Party; yet we have had the spectacle of Trades Hall officials attending meetings and dominating their members within the precincts of this House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Ask the member for Narrogin if he was dominated.

Mr. A. THOMSON: My statement is correct.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is wrong.

Hon. T. Walker: Absolutely false.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then place your minutes on the Table of the House and I will place ours there. It is amusing to note the attitude of these people who live in glass houses, and who have committed so many grievous sins that their chief anxiety is to foist some of them upon other people. The Country Party have never been dominated by an outside body.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Nor have we.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Why, we have only to remember what appeared in the Press a little while ago with regard to the Labour Party in New South Wales.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Or what happened in Timbuctoo.

Mr. Munsie: Well, what happened in New South Wales?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Did not an outside organisation carpet Ministers and tell them they had to do as they were directed?

Mr. Munsie: I say they did not.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I say they did.

Mr. Munsie: I know they did not.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is my word against the hon. member's word. Was the hon. member there?

Mr. Munsie: No; but I have the word of a particular friend who was there. Were you there?

Mr. Davies: A lady friend?

Mr. Munsie: Yes, both.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is quite nice to get the Opposition on their defence.

Mr. Munsie: You are not capable of putting anybody on his defence.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is remarkable that the Leader of the Opposition should have displayed such anxiety to make me withdraw some of the statements I made.

Hon. P. Collier: I made you withdraw the deliberate misstatements you made.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is very nice to have the Opposition on their defence.

Hon. P. Collier: My word, this is your opportunity. You are making out a great case.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And I intend to take advantage of the opportunity. The Leader of the Opposition did not spare the Country Party, but accused them of being under outside domination, having no soul of their own and having to do as they were told. It ill becomes a Leader of the Opposition to accuse us of doing something of which he and his supporters have been guilty for years. Never once has any member of the executive of the Primary Producers' Association attended our meetings and told us what we had to do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, you attend their meetings.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are just as much entitled to attend the meetings of our executive as are members of the Labour Party to attend their Trades Hall meetings.

There was no command about attending our meetings. I have never yet been commanded to attend an executive meeting. It is my privilege and the privilege of all members of the Country Party to attend these conferences. The executive is composed of men appointed at the annual conference, and they are representative of the mining, agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, and, in fact, of all primary industries.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Except the fruit-growers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The fruitgrowers too are represented.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, you have never represented the South-West.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I can prove that we do represent the South-West. Every interest of primary production has members on the executive who attend the monthly meetings. They attend at their own expense; they are not paid organisers, and they give their services in the interests of the primary producers of the State and of the country generally. It is the privilege of members of the Country Party to attend these conferences and take part in the deliberations. Nothing could be further from the truth than the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition that we are dictated to by the organisation. The statement made by the Leader of the Opposition might be repeated, as the Member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) said it would be repeated, but I defy any member to prove that it is correct. On my word of honour as a member of this House, I say that I have never once been dictated to or given instructions by the executive of the organisation. I have been pleased to take part in their deliberations. I am proud to say that in my electorate there are something like 17 branches of the association, and I myself am a member of the association. The Leader of the Opposition stated the other night that I was an apostate, and that men who changed their views were always insincere. I am proud to belong to the Country Party which came into existence to protect the interests of the primary producers of this State.

Hon. P. Collier: It was well established when you got in.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why, you fought the wheat pool.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I did not; I fought to have the interests of the producers protected. That statement by the member for East Fremantle is like a great many more statements which have emanated from the other side of the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Your chief supporter was running a mill down there.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for East Fremantle said that I opposed the wheat pool. That is a deliberate misstatement. It contains not an atom of truth. By referring to "Hansard," I could prove that my statement is correct. I put up a fight in

this House in order that there should be proper representation and I also fought to get the producer a higher price for his product.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You fought everything we introduced, no matter whether it was in the interests of the producer or not.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member seems to be getting somewhat sore. What he has just said is another misstatement. The Leader of the Opposition went on to say—

Monger and the executive had made their requests. Ministers as well as the Premier and highly paid officials in the Government bowed to the authority of this outside executive on all matters.

From my experience of Mr. Monger and his executive I do not think that that statement is correct. Why should they not have a right to go to the Premier or to any highly paid official if their cause is a just one?

The Minister for Works: It depends how they go. If they attempt to dictate it is a different question.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Did they ever attempt to dictate to the Minister for Works?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In regard to what?

The Minister for Works: I intend to tell the House.

Mr. A. THOMSON: On what did they attempt to dictate?

Mr. Munsie: You will get any number of cases, but take the demurrage on wool for one.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I intend to deal with that. I am quite satisfied that, if any just case was put up to the Minister for Railways, a rebate would be allowed. I have sufficient faith in the Minister's conception of fair play to believe that this is so. Why should any section of producers, even the wool growers, be debarred from getting their rights? The Leader of the Opposition knows there are times when it is necessary to bring great pressure to bear on a department in order to get common justice. There is no greater combine in Western Australia than the Railway Department. Even when one can prove a case against them, and one has a just case, they will not give one justice unless pressure is brought to bear upon them. The average individual is not in a position to fight a wealthy department like that. I know of a case in which wilful negligence was proved against the Railway Department, resulting in a loss of food supplies, but the department declined to pay any damages. If the case had been taken to court the department would have appealed. The Leader of the Opposition knows that this is quite correct, for he was Minister for Railways for some years. He also knows that charges have been imposed which on many occasions were unjust.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not know that you can only get justice from the Railway Department by bringing strong pressure to bear upon them.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member does know it, for he was administering the department for years. I always found him just and fair. Indeed I think those at present in office are just and fair. When the matter was placed before the Commissioner in its proper light, and in a way that it had not been placed before him originally, he admitted that he was wrong in the action he took. It was because the arguments placed before him were so convincing that he was satisfied the department had erred; not because of the manner in which the case was laid before him. That was why the rebate on the wool consignments was made. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) by way of interjection asked why the rebate on the wool was given, and suggested that it was done because of the manner in which the executive head of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association placed the matter before the Commissioner. It must be remembered that there was a strike in existence amongst the men who were handling the wool. If the Railway Department had unloaded the wool there would have been a general strike on the railways. When the wool was consigned through the railways to Fremantle, there was no thought of a strike. Wool is carried at special rates, and the Commissioner has to both load and unload it. It is not within the province of the ordinary consignee or consignor to load or unload. The department base their charges on a rate sufficiently high to cover this loading and unloading. On the arrival of the wool at Fremantle it was kept in the trucks, not because the consignees or consignors wished it to remain there, but in order to suit the convenience of the department. The department knew that if any attempt was made to unload the wool into the sheds trouble would ensue. Was it, therefore, a reasonable thing to charge demurrage amounting to £4,157? Mr. Monger was not interested in the wool in any way, therefore the charges made by the Leader of the Opposition fall by the board, as does the interjection of the member for Hannans. I do not care who the man is, and what his political creeds are, if he has a just case to bring against the Railway Department, he should not have to move outside bodies to put the case for him. I can quote another instance which concerned me personally. The department received a jar of spirits of salts, and carried it at the highest rate, that is, the third class rate. The jar was sent at owner's risk, it is true, but it was proved that it was broken by one of the men belonging to the department at Narrogin. The claim against the department was repudiated, on the ground that the consignment was carried at owner's risk.

Mr. Wilson: They do that in all cases.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I ask hon. members if that was just treatment. I regard the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) as a fair-minded man. If he had been in the position the wool growers were in, in connection with

the wool I have been speaking about, would he have expected the Commissioner for Railways to retain the demurrage charges when the wool was kept in the trucks at the convenience of the department?

The Minister for Works: If the consignment had been carried at the highest rate it would have been carried at Commissioner's risk.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with the wool at present. The Leader of the Opposition has made a great song about undue influence. It can, however, be proved that his statements have no foundation in fact. Whoever gave the hon. member the information he seems to possess must have unintentionally misled him. I say without fear of contradiction that if the Leader of the Opposition had been Minister for Railways he would have granted the rebate under the same conditions as the Commissioner did.

Hon. P. Collier: I got the information from the "Primary Producer." It is a very reliable paper.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member put the wrong interpretation upon what appeared there. For obvious reasons he took a different view, but I hope I have been able to prove that he was wrong and was, at all events, unintentionally incorrect in his statements.

Hon. P. Collier: The editor of the paper must share the responsibility with me.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I think I have completely replied to the statements which have come from the Opposition benches, as regards the alleged domination of the Country Party in this Chamber by outside bodies. There is no more free party in Western Australia than the Country Party.

Mr. Davies: We are perfectly free.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member may be as free, but he is certainly not more free than we are. There may be others as free, but none who are more so in the matter of domination from outside. It comes with bad grace from the Leader of the Opposition and others, when they charge this party with having to do as they are told. The Leader of the Opposition knows that he was only preferring these charges for political reasons. We are proud to sit here and to accept our share of responsibility.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If it were not for geographical reasons, you personally would be accepting more responsibility.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not understand the hon. member.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Read the "West Australian."

The Minister for Works: You had better be careful or they will have you set.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Even the "West Australian" may make mistakes. It does not hold that it is infallible.

Hon. P. Collier: Hard luck for you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I still represent the Katanning electorate, and while I do so will voice my views here.

Hon. P. Collier: Poor old Katanning.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is good old Kattanning. No doubt nothing would have given the Leader of the Opposition greater pleasure than to have seen me defeated.

Hon. P. Collier: I was not worrying a bit. A stronger man might have been elected. You will always do me.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not wish to take up the time of the House in continually replying to the accusations that are made by the Leader of the Opposition. It is gratifying to us to think that an organisation, which started a few years ago with only eight representatives in Parliament, to-day has 16. I was returned in 1914, and then had the privilege of sitting on the Opposition benches. As a private member I rather prefer to be sitting in Opposition. A private member has no responsibilities and can voice his opinions. He can criticise without fear of embarrassing the Government, and is in a happier position than when sitting behind the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You should not tell new members that; they may cross the floor.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Judging from the utterances of one or two new members I should say they were an acquisition to the House, and will prove to be fully capable of voicing their own views. Anyhow, they know how to act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You just said they could not do so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I did not say anything of the sort. When I was sitting in Opposition, the unauthorised purchase of the "Kangaroo" was perpetrated by the Government, of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member. I stated in the House at the time that I represented over 2,000 electors, and demanded the right to have some say in the expenditure of the money involved. I contended that before a Bill to ratify an expenditure of that sort was brought down the House should be consulted.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You think that is right, and that you should be consulted? Did you admit the right to be consulted before the Holyoake purchase for £84,000 was made? You did nothing of the sort.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I made that statement at the time, and I repeat it to-day, that the House should be consulted on such questions. Under the constitution of this Chamber we claim to have representation by the people and for the people and to be governed by the people, when in actual fact Cabinet, composed of six men, have during the past six months been running the affairs of State without consulting Parliament. The country is not really governed by the House at all. I do not say there is any remedy for this unfortunate position. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) stated that a system of elective Ministries would remedy the position, but after his remarks on the subject I would not be prepared to advocate it. My electorate is so situated geographically that I would not stand much chance. Our present system means that members sitting on the Government side of the House have very

often to support the Government in their actions and the measures they bring down without approving of them.

Mr. Wilson: Always!

Mr. A. THOMSON: Members sitting opposite know that quite well. I am not going to say that we shall accept everything from the Government as being correct. When the Leader of the Opposition moved to reduce Supply by £50,000, he said one of his objects was to give the Country Party an opportunity of showing that they were in earnest in their desires for economy. The twig had plenty of bird lime upon it. No one knew better than the Leader of the Opposition what the result would have been had his amendment been carried. It would have meant a change in the administration.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How do you know that?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member knows it as well as I do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It all depends on whether the Premier takes it as a motion of want of confidence. The Premier did not say he would do that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is too old a bird to strew that chaff in this House. If the motion of the Leader of the Opposition had been carried, the Premier would have had no option but to tender his resignation to the Governor, on the ground that the Ministry no longer had the confidence of the House. I had the privilege of sitting on the Opposition benches when the then Leader of the Opposition, the late Mr. Frank Wilson, together with the present Minister for Works and the present Premier, declared repeatedly that the Labour Administration was absolutely lacking in business capacity and possessed no business acumen. I think the country believed that, and I will say candidly that, as a member sitting behind the gentleman I have named, I believed it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have found out your mistake since.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In 1916, owing to the result of an election in the North, Mr. Frank Wilson came into power. I will be quite frank and say that the country did look, and the members following Mr. Frank Wilson did look, for some measures of economy. Those members did sincerely believe that at least some effort would be made to stem the financial drift and that the deficit would eventually become a thing of the past. Unfortunately, since 1916 the deficit has increased steadily. However, I will be just and say that there have been extenuating circumstances. There was the War, during which a large percentage of the earning manhood of the State was away at the Front.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That was so in 1915.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Quite correct. To a certain extent the Labour Administration had mitigating circumstances also. My desire is to be perfectly fair. My party recognise that owing to the War, production necessarily decreased to a very considerable ex-

tent. But, still, we did feel that if the men who had been declaring that there was a total lack of business capacity in the Labour Ministers administered the various departments, something would be done to improve the state of the finances.

Mr. Munsie: Did you find that anything was done?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We found that the deficit increased. Ministers contended that the deficit was a legacy left to them by the Labour Administration. I will admit that in part it might be so regarded; but, still, there is no getting away from the fact that every Premier who succeeded the head of the Labour Government undertook to do something to square the finances—Mr. Frank Wilson, Sir Henry Lefroy, Mr. Colebatch, and the present Premier, alike. Up to date, I am bound to own, Mr. "Business Acumen" has not become visible. I consider it is time that Ministers realised their responsibilities in this connection. I do not mean that Ministers have not an appreciation of their responsibilities; what I do mean is that it is time Ministers did something more than they have done in the past. In view of the fact that the country has already tried the administrative capacity of the Labour Party, of the Liberal Party, and of the National Party in succession, I think I may claim that the people are now looking for something to be done by members who occupy the cross benches in this Chamber. The country is looking to us to do our duty. Speaking on the hustings in my electorate, I declared that I accepted no responsibility for the state of the finances, and that the Country Party accepted no such responsibility.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: What nonsense!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want to be quite clear and definite on this point. I do not wish to be misunderstood at all. My contention is that up to the time of the present Administration taking office the Country Party had no share of responsibility for the finances, seeing that the Country Party had not its share of administrative functions. The Country Party had no occasion to shoulder half of the responsibility for the financial position of the State, seeing that the party had not half representation in the Cabinet.

Hon. P. Collier: The Country Party have had a fair share of representation.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We had two Ministers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Three.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We had two; and, in fact, we did not have those two until the dying hours of the last Parliament, when the member for Albany (Hon. J. Scaddan) decided to join the Country Party. Then we had two Ministers, but not until then.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You had three.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We had two. Can the hon. member say who are the three?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Colonial Secretary and Mr. Willmott and Mr. Baxter.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The last two gentlemen whom the deputy Leader of the Opposition has mentioned were Honorary Ministers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That makes no difference.

Mr. A. THOMSON: So far as we know, they had not full administrative power.

Mr. Munsie: Of course they had.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Did not we have questions asked last session from the Opposition side of the Chamber as to what authority the Honorary Ministers had to do certain things?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: As to signing certain papers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes; and the hon. member interjecting was the member who asked the questions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Certainly.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yet the hon. member would lead the House, and incidentally the country, to believe that my party had full representation in the Government and, therefore, full responsibility.

Hon. P. Collier: Does not the hon. member know that Honorary Ministers have full voice in Cabinet?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I contend that the Country Party did not assume full responsibility until the present Cabinet came into power. To-day we have our equal share of responsibility.

Hon. P. Collier: And the position is getting worse as your share increases.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. THOMSON: The party had no say in the selection. I hope no section of the House will take umbrage at the statements I make. The Country Party realise that it is time something was done to stem the financial drift. As a matter of fact, it was the Country Party who first gave an intimation to the Ministers selected from their ranks that a period must be put to the financial drift; and those Ministers conveyed that intimation from the Country Party to the Government as a whole. I want the House and the country to know that we are now taking our full share of responsibility. I repeat, the country, having tried the various other political sections, is to-day looking to this party to do its financial duty by the State. We were the first party to make the Government realise their responsibilities.

Hon. P. Collier: In what way?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Without in any way disclosing party secrets, I may say that we had a party meeting at which it was declared that we were out for economy, and we impressed that circumstance upon the Ministers belonging to our party. The Leader of the Opposition made a good deal of fuss about that resolution which was passed by "the executive," whereas, in fact, the Country Party as a party had first taken steps to impress upon the Government the necessity for taking some action to stem the financial drift. The executive to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred carried that resolution not only by way of backing up the members of the Country Party in Parliament, but as an intimation to Western Australia at large that the executive in question would

stand solidly behind the party's Parliamentary representatives in their efforts to bring about public economy and efficient Government service.

Hon. P. Collier: What are you going to do?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am going to make an appeal to the Leader of the Opposition. That hon. member stated, quite openly, the other evening that he intended to stand behind Ministers and assist them. Very well. I hope to be able to show him—I do not know whether he will follow my advice—the directions in which he may possibly be able to help the Government in such a manner as the party in Opposition have not done hitherto. The Country Party, let me say, are not going to follow either the Leader of the Opposition or the Premier on the question of finance. The Leader of the Opposition has given us an excellent speech. The hon. gentleman showed how the deficit had increased since the time of the Labour Government's leaving office. He pointed out how much more revenue the present Government had, but he carefully omitted any allusion to the increasing expenditure. His efforts were confined to showing how the deficit had increased, and of course the Leader of the Opposition said that had his party remained in power there would have been no deficit. The Premier replied, as I think properly, that in such circumstances the deficit might have reached ten millions. Probably the Premier was right.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The deficit would not have been three millions.

Hon. P. Collier: You have our Treasurer in your ranks as a Minister.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But he is not handling the cash.

Hon. P. Collier: You would not trust him with the cash.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is rather a grievous reflection on the hon. member's old chief, to say that the present Government would not trust him with the cash.

Hon. P. Collier: It was you who said that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No; I did not say that the Minister for Mines could not be trusted with the cash. That was the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition. I meant simply that the member for Albany is not Treasurer; that is all. I would be the last to reflect on the honesty of the Minister for Mines, or on the honesty of any member of this Chamber.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I believe all the members are honest and upright men. I am not going to follow, in this debate, the course which was adopted by the Leader of the Opposition. He occupied quite a considerable time in explaining what wonderful administrative capacity the members of the Labour Administration had shown, what sleepless nights they had spent in endeavouring to save a shilling here and sixpence there.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They showed results.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, they did. They started the deficit.

Mr. O'Loughlen: After five years they had only a deficit of a million. You put it up to five millions.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I did not say that the Labour Government are responsible. I simply made the statement that they started the deficit. When they left office, there was a deficit. The Leader of the Opposition himself has made that statement.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Look at the deficit now.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Unfortunately, the deficit has now reached five millions; but we must bear in mind that the Administrations which followed the Labour Government had to carry the babies which Labour Ministers left, and to nourish those babies.

Hon. P. Collier: And you took in our Treasurer to help you to do it.

Mr. Munsie: Any babies left by the Labour Government are returning profits to the present Government.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Are the Wyndham Meat Works showing a profit?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The present Government built those works.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But the Labour Government started them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about the brickworks?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The result of the establishment of the State brickworks has been the shutting up of private brickworks. No more men have been or are employed as the result of the State setting out to manufacture bricks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No. The result has been to bring down the price of bricks by at least 5s. per thousand in the metropolitan area.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Does the hon. member know that for picked bricks the State brickworks are charging over £7 per thousand?

Mr. Munsie: If it had not been for the State brickworks the cost would have been £10 a thousand.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The cost of the bricks which were required in connection with the Children's Hospital was £7 per thousand, and they were only ordinary picked bricks.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What were other firms charging?

Mr. A. THOMSON: They were charging less, but while this particular job was on there were no other bricks available.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If what you say about the price is true, the private brickworks should not have closed down.

Mr. A. THOMSON: True, we have our State brickworks, and true they are showing a profit, but they closed up the Cardup Brick Company.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is a tribute to State management.

The Minister for Works: Mr. Vincent told me he could not make bricks as cheaply as we were making them, and he offered his works to us.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no desire to enter into a debate with the Minister, who of course knows all about it. I am only giving the facts. I defy the Minister to dispute the statement that I made, that the bricks which were used at the Children's Hospital cost the contractor over £7 per thousand. It is up to the Minister, as well as to hon. members opposite, to dispute that statement.

The Minister for Works: I will deal with it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: These industries were established to act as policemen to keep prices down, so that private owners would not be able to exploit the public. The public, however, have been exploited, even by the State enterprises. I am not going to blame the Minister for Works altogether, but let us take the State sawmills and see what the position is to-day. That enterprise is part and parcel of the timber combine. That, too, was brought into existence ostensibly to act as a policeman.

Hon. P. Collier: It was brought in to enable us to market our karri.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And to-day it is part and parcel of the combine.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Only for export.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And for local sale. The hon. member should talk of something of which he has a knowledge. He does not understand this position. The information was given to me, and I guarantee it to be correct, that the State sawmills quoted a price to a certain gentleman in my district who had tendered for a large building contract. He based his tender on the quotation that he had received, and his tender was the lowest. Before he signed the contract, however, he sent his order to the State sawmills. Did they adhere to their quote? Not much.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose the alteration was due to an increase in wages?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Any private concern would have stood to their contract.

Hon. P. Collier: Why do you not sell them all up?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member knows well that the consent of both Houses of Parliament must be obtained.

Hon. P. Collier: But you have not in the last five years even attempted to get the consent of Parliament.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have not been in the position to ask Parliament to agree to the sale of any of them.

Hon. P. Collier: Your party then.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If your party say the word, then it will have to be done.

Hon. P. Collier: It's all right, Mr. Monger will bring it up.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The position is that while the Leader of the Opposition and hon. members say that bricks are cheaper and all the rest of it, if the amount of money that had been expended on the State enterprises had been devoted to opening up the country, we should, long before this, have had a better return.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The amount is only a flea bite.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is a pretty substantial flea bite.

Hon. P. Collier: The amount spent on the sawmills was spent in opening up and developing the karri country.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We cannot get away from the fact that the State Sawmills are part and parcel of the combine. We only have to ask for a quotation from either the State Sawmills, or from the private concerns, to find that they are precisely the same.

Hon. P. Collier: We have lost control, I admit.

Mr. A. THOMSON: To get back to the finances. I have no intention of following in the footsteps of either the Leader of the Opposition or the Premier. Both those hon. gentlemen went to considerable pains to show us how much money we owed, and how it had accumulated. But when we turn to the Governor's Speech we find that, in spite of increased revenue, we had a deficit last year of £686,000. Then, further on we read that the credit of the State is good. It is satisfactory to know that, and I believe that one of the main reasons why our credit is good is because we have such a vast territory. In my opinion, however, our credit will only remain good so long as the administration of the affairs of the State gives evidence that we are getting 20s. worth of value for every 20s. that we spend. I trust that the Government will adopt that policy. I say advisedly that the mere sacking of two or three hands from the railway service, wages men, will not have the result of effecting economies that we would like to see brought about. The heads of various departments and Ministers who are administering the departments should be made to realise that "economy" is the watchword and "efficiency" is the pass-word, and if they should fail to make good in this respect, they should make room for more competent heads of departments and more determined Ministers.

Hon. P. Collier: That commands my admiration.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I wish to impress on the Government—and I regret that there are only two Ministers in the House—the Minister for Works is taking a good deal of interest in what I am saying—

The Minister for Agriculture: I will go out if you want to come in.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh no! The last in should not be the first out.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is not the attitude Ministers should adopt.

Hon. P. Collier: I think some of the old offenders should go first.

Mr. A. THOMSON: So far as I am concerned, and so far as the party with which I am associated are concerned, I say that unless the Government are determined and persistent in their efforts to make the ex-

penditure and revenue come nearer together, the Country Party may have to seriously consider their position.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a pronouncement on behalf of your party.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have made the statement and I take the responsibility for it.

Hon. P. Collier: You are speaking for the party.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I believe I am speaking for the party, although I have not consulted them. At any rate that is the attitude I am going to adopt. It is the duty of the Government, and the duty of members opposite as well—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will not catch us.

Mr. A. THOMSON: To see that we get full value for the money spent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We do not want the country to go to ruin altogether.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not know that the country will go to ruin. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has a certain amount of administrative capacity. I desire to be just, and I will say that he did give evidence of administrative capacity, and I believe also that the members who composed the Labour Government gave of their best to the State. No man can do more.

Hon. P. Collier: The best might have been very poor.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member likes to admit that it was poor, it is his affair.

Hon. P. Collier: I want to be modest about it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are faced with great problems and it is the duty of every member to support the Government if persistent efforts are made to effect economies. It is the duty of Ministers to tell their responsible officers that if they do not give results, it is time that they went.

The Minister for Works: Will you tell us how you would put them out of the service?

Mr. A. THOMSON: From my knowledge of the Minister for Works, if he had a man under him who was not efficient, he would darned soon get rid of him.

The Minister for Works: I got rid of one man whom they had been trying to get rid of for 35 years.

Mr. Johnston: Did he die of old age?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Minister's interjection shows clearly that something can be done. If Ministers find that their attempts to effect economies are being thwarted by the responsible heads, they should deal with those heads. So far as my own business is concerned, if I cannot get results, I change my men, and it is time that the Government did the same.

Hon. P. Collier: Self-preservation will compel them to move.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I hope it will.

Mr. Pickering: The Government have reduced the service by 206 in three years.

Hon. P. Collier: Most of them died.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Poor old Barwood! After 35 years.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I hope I have made my position clear so far as the finances of the State are concerned.

Hon. T. Walker: But what is your proposal? Economy is a general word. Tell us how you would economise.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We want 20s. worth of value for 20s. worth of expenditure, and if we have work for only 10 men, and one official, we should not employ 20 men and half-a-dozen officials. The Leader of the Opposition made the position quite clear when he said that the Government would have very unpleasant duties to perform, and that he would help them in any endeavour they made to effect economies. I have endeavoured to make my position perfectly clear. Unless the present Administration give this House evidence that they are exercising economies, and endeavouring to bring the income and the expenditure closer in accord than they are doing, then I think they should make room for others who may make a better fist of it than is the case to-day.

Mr. Davies: Are you in favour of elective Ministries?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am rather dubious about that, because I may be biased, particularly after the remarks by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith). If it were decided to take the best brains from both sides of the House in order to form a Ministry, I would welcome the proposal. The point arises, however, would the members of the Opposition come along and work?

Hon. P. Collier: You offer it to us.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We must remember that the Labour members had an opportunity when the National Government was first formed, but they did not care to join in. That was an honest attempt to form—

Mr. O'Loughlen: An honest attempt! Was the treatment of Frank Wilson honest? Was it honest for the Party to meet and to depose him later when he was absent?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is not the position.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Premier and the Minister for Works will endorse it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I cannot allow that statement to go out without challenge. The late Mr. Frank Wilson walked out of the room and refused to submit himself to the will of the meeting.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, as the result of the treatment he received.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The treatment he received was as fair as that accorded to anyone else.

Mr. Simons: They made him walk the plank.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! A member must not speak out of his seat.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We never made Mr. Wilson walk the plank. Mr. Wilson would not submit himself to the meeting, and he left.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He would not submit to the dictation of the Caucus.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition in an interjection earlier suggested that Labour members should be given a trial. If a suggestion arose in this House and a request were made to the Leader of the Opposition asking him to take part in the formation of another Government, would he do it? Would he assist the present Government in the face of the present difficult times by doing that?

Mr. Teesdale: People would drop dead if he did.

Mr. Davies: Would you support such a proposal?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I think so.

Hon. T. Walker: We cannot sell our principles for office.

Mr. A. THOMSON: At any rate, I think I should ask for notice to be given of the question.

The Minister for Agriculture: Could you support such a proposal?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is for the party to decide.

Hon. T. Walker: How can you make an elective Ministry a Constitutional Ministry?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I recognise that there are many difficulties confronting such a step and I think that the member asking the question knows that it is impracticable.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We would have to alter the Constitution to get over the difficulty.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Greater difficulties have been overcome, but I do not know exactly how it could be done in this particular instance.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It could be done by an alteration of the Constitution.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Why did you not do that?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because we did not require to do it at the time.

Mr. A. THOMSON: You had been in office for years and if you believed in the principle, you could have altered the Constitution. When members turn to the Governor's Speech they will see the following pregnant passage—

The industries of Western Australia are passing through a period of crisis resulting from world-wide influences, the outcome of the recent war and the turbulent conditions still prevailing in many countries. The markets for wool, frozen meat, base metals, pearls and pearlshells, sandalwood and other products, are in a condition of collapse, and although this phase is merely a passing one, the greatest care will be necessary to meet the resulting losses and to keep those industries in a state of readiness to resume activities when the markets recover.

Hon. T. Walker: Who wrote that?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That statement appears in the Governor's Speech and it is a serious matter.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a pessimistic paragraph.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It may be pessimistic, but it is true. It is only recently that the position has eased somewhat regarding pearlshell. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) can deal with that position more effectively as he comes from a district affected by the industry, but, in my opinion, it is only very recently that they have been able to get rid of small quantities of the pearlshell. Formerly the pearlshell industry was at a standstill.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: They are getting increased prices.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am delighted to hear it. We know the position regarding the wool industry.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Prices for wool have improved as well.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Does the hon. member think those prices will continue to improve?

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Yes.

The Minister for Works: I think they will, too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I think the hon. members who have interjected must be optimists. I am not so optimistic about the position as is the Minister for Works or the member for North Perth. I am afraid the position is not so good as it might be.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: We had a big sale.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As to the sales, what were the prices? Some of the returns equalled a farthing per lb. That is a wonderful price, is it not? It would not even pay railway freight. The position is not satisfactory, and the outlook is certainly not good. I know certain factors affect the position. The statement has been made that unfortunately we have unemployment in this State. The Leader of the Opposition said that there was a large number of men unemployed, and, as a matter of fact, we know that there was a deputation which recently waited upon the Premier with the request that certain things should be done. I admire the Premier for the reply that he gave to that deputation. The Premier said, "If you want work, go out into the country. There is plenty of work there." In common with the Premier, I believe that there is plenty of work in the country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has changed during the last few weeks.

Mr. A. THOMSON: A party of immigrants came up by Tuesday's train from Albany, numbering 64, and practically everyone of them was placed straight away.

Mr. Heron: At sweating rates.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will deal with the question of sweating rates later on. What does the hon. member mean by sweating rates?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I asked the Secretary of the Labour Bureau if he could find work

for two men and he said that the work was coming in very slowly.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If those men had gone down to the Katanning district, they would have got work there. There is a demand for workers in the country districts.

Mr. Teesdale: There are no picture shows there.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I think that is one of the troubles.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I wanted the positions for men who were willing to go to the country.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As a matter of fact, I think it must be admitted that there is not much evidence of unemployment yet. I hope we never get a genuine unemployment difficulty here.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: You mean the professional unemployed.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As a young man I had the misfortune to participate in Victoria in that financial crash that is known as the "bursting of the land boom." I do not think Western Australia has ever seen, and please God she never will, such a position of affairs as was evidenced throughout that crash.

The Minister for Works: It was pretty bad in 1893.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I think that members on the Opposition side can help those on the Ministerial side, but if they desire to do so, they must adopt tactics different from those they have followed in the past. I make that statement, not in anger, but more in sorrow. I want to show members sitting on the Opposition side of the House where I think they can do some good, which will benefit not only Western Australia, but the working man as well. I know what it is to be unemployed. I have walked the streets of Melbourne and its suburbs looking for work. I do not know anything more heart-breaking or distressing than the task of looking for work when a wife and children depend upon one's efforts. I was not married in those days, but I know the responsibility resting upon my father and his family during that period. At that time married men were accepting 25s. and 30s. a week. In my own case I worked for 5s. a week and tucker and worked from 5 o'clock in the morning till midnight. I hope to God neither my sons nor any children in Western Australia will ever be reduced to those depths in this State. I do not think they will, for we have a great country with very great possibilities. When we find, however, that we have work, and that men are not allowed to take work that is offering, is it any wonder that we have troublous times in Western Australia? I believe that there is capital available to develop the industries of this State, but unfortunately those who have the money are doubtful about investing it here. In some cases work has been started and when everything is going with a swing, the organiser of a union comes along and asks the men what they are getting. On being told, he says that it is not enough and work stops.

I will quote one or two cases which have come under my notice.

Mr. McCallum interjected.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will have something to say to you, Mr. McCallum, later on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not address another member by name.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Before tea I was discussing that paragraph in the Governor's Speech which stated that Western Australia is passing through a serious crisis resulting from world-wide influences. I propose to show where, in my opinion, the Opposition might possibly assist us. I want to show that some of the actions of hon. members opposite have resulted in considerable loss to the State. For instance, there is the shearers' strike. I want to show the disastrous effect of the attitude of the leaders of the men, especially when we consider that a few weeks ago those same leaders led a deputation to the Premier, pointing out the existence of serious unemployment. I am informed that there is at Carnarvon a camp of 50 alleged shearers. It is safe to assume that the unions are keeping those men in idleness. I think even hon. members opposite must admit that they might possibly be of some assistance here. We know that the wool position is very serious, that when decontrol came about, the bottom fell out of the market. Unlike some hon. members, I am not optimistic about any improvement in that market, and I very much doubt if the average pastoralist is viewing the future with confidence. Mr. Watts, of the Australian Workers' Union, demanded that £4 10s. and keep should be paid to rouseabouts, and 40s. per hundred and keep to shearers. The pastoralists offered last year's terms, a very generous offer, seeing that the price of wool has dropped by more than half, and that, further, a number of the pastoralists have not yet received a penny for their wool.

Hon. P. Collier: And there is their contribution to the election funds of your party to be made up.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The pastoralists are just as much at liberty to contribute to the funds of a party endeavouring to look after the interests of primary producers as is any section of the community to contribute to the funds of the hon. member's party.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, but not to ask the shearers to pay for it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is beside the point. I say the price offered by the pastoralist was a generous one. The bulk of the men are quite willing to shear at the old rates, but the autoerats down here, who unfortunately are at the head of affairs, have declared that not one sheep shall be shorn until the rates they demand are paid.

Hon. P. Collier: It was the conference of shearers that said it, not the autoerats.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am only repeating the statement of Mr. Watts, the mouthpiece of the union.

Hon. P. Collier: He is the secretary of the union, and he carries out the instructions given to him.

Mr. A. THOMSON: A little while ago the Leader of the Opposition was twitting us with having to carry out instructions.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you not brains enough to understand the difference between instructions to a political party and instructions to the secretary of a union?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member does not seem to like facts, but prefers to soar in the airy realms of his imagination. I have this knowledge—

Hon. P. Collier: Very little knowledge.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That the shearers can make from £8 to £12 per week and their keep. In view of this, it does seem time that the leaders of the Labour movement should realise that we are faced with falling markets and that, therefore, they should be prepared to adopt a reasonable attitude.

Mr. Lambert: Get the farmers to adopt a reasonable attitude about wheat.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I will deal with the wheat question presently.

Hon. P. Collier: Great heavens! how much more are you going to deal with?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have just as much right to voice my opinions here as has the Leader of the Opposition, and he can interject as much as he likes. I wish to deal with another point. We have heard a little in the House, and the time of the House has been occupied by the member for South Fremantle in asking questions relative to the Esplanade Hotel dispute. I want to give the House the true facts of the case. The dispute started on Tuesday, March 1st, at 5 p.m. Two waitresses employed in the hotel came on duty at noon and served lunch. At 4 p.m. it was their duty to serve afternoon tea in the servery, upstairs. At 4.30 p.m. the hall porter went to them for tea for Miss Jones.

Hon. P. Collier: At 4.35 p.m. what happened?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Miss Shelley, the secretary of the waitresses' union, was having tea in the pantry, and the two waitresses were talking to her. The hall porter asked for tea for Miss Jones, and Miss Clune replied, "If Miss Jones wants tea, she can come up and get it." The boy came down and reported the matter. I wonder what the Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Fremantle would say if one of the stewards up here, who are paid to attend upon the requirements of members, was to tell a member to go and do the job himself. I can imagine how quickly the member for South Fremantle and the Leader of the Opposition would report it to you, Sir, and have the steward dismissed.

Hon. P. Collier: Shocking! Poor Miss Jones.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I want to show the attitude which has been adopted. What the

waitress said was, "If Miss Jones wants tea, she can come up and get it." Miss Clune was sent for and, on admitting the charge, was given 24 hours notice to quit. Miss Shelley arrived on the spot.

Hon. P. Collier: At the opportune moment!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you said she was somewhere having tea.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But she came down.

Mr. Lambert: From the clouds.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Miss Shelley came down.

Mr. McCallum: I think they were wrong who wrote that report for you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: You know it is correct.

Mr. McCallum: I know it is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Miss Shelley arrived on the spot and demanded the reinstatement of Miss Clune, which was refused. She replied that she would call out the staff, and that no dinner would be served that evening.

Mr. Wilson: But what has all that to do with the deficit?

Mr. A. THOMSON: It shows that it is going to be a continuous feature if this sort of thing goes on.

Mr. Lambert: I never thought our hon. friend was so much concerned about pubs.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not frequent them so much as does the hon. member. I can assure the hon. member I have no desire to outshine him in that respect. Miss Shelley arrived on the spot.

Hon. P. Collier: Now we are getting to the roots of the financial problem.

Mr. A. THOMSON: After an hour all the staff, numbering about 30, were out in the street, and 50 guests had to leave the hotel and find food elsewhere. Many efforts were made to re-staff the hotel with union labour, but all were unsuccessful owing to the influence of the Trades Hall. And in consequence of the lack of staff, although every detail of the Arbitration Act had been observed, the hotel was empty of guests for months, while at the same time a large number of suitable hands were looking for work.

Hon. P. Collier: The hotel could have borrowed some of the Chinese from the Weld Club.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Many conferences were held, and the condition of settlement was that all the staff were to be reinstated, including the girl who had disobeyed. With the hotel free of guests, there was no work for half the old staff, and when the demand of the disputes committee was not complied with the union set about stopping the Esplanade Hotel supplies. First the Swan Brewery employees refused to deliver beer, next the employees of the Castlemaine Brewery, Fremantle, next Northam, and at present there are very few business places in the metropolitan or suburban area employing labour which can deliver goods to the Esplanade Hotel.

Hon. P. Collier: That shows fine solidarity.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition the other evening told the Premier that he was prepared to assist the Government to place this State on a sound financial footing. The remarks he makes to-day show that he was insincere in that statement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not swallow the piffle you ask me to.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have no hesitation in telling members that my informant is the man who has suffered, the proprietor of the hotel. I claim that this man has suffered grievous injury. This man is carrying on a business licensed by the country and he has dared to do only what members of the Opposition themselves would do to any officer of this House who was guilty of disobedience. Yet those members support the attitude of the union that unless he carries out the instructions of the union, he shall not be permitted to continue his business. Are we living in a free country? We boast of our democracy. Is this democracy?

Mr. Lambert: We had an inkling of your free country in Katanning a little while ago.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, you talk about freedom, and then behave like a lunatic at a public meeting.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The trouble was that when the Leader of the Opposition made one or two misstatements, I had the courage to get up and contradict him. I am not permitted to discuss the matter on this debate, but the Leader of the Opposition has never forgiven me for that. He had an excellent hearing right up to the stage when I interposed and rather spoilt his argument. I simply asked him one question, and by it disproved the whole of his speech.

Hon. P. Collier: Wonderfully clever; you are a genius.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Esplanade Hotel has to pay heavy license fees. It complies with the Factories Act and with the Arbitration Act and is under heavy expense, and yet the proprietor is being prevented from carrying on his lawful business. I would appeal to those gentlemen occupying prominent positions in the Labour movement to use their influence in order not to curtail employment. I honestly believe that they wield a good deal of influence. No one in the Labour movement has greater influence than the member for South Fremantle. He has been associated with the movement for years. Is it not time that he, and the Leader of the Opposition, and other gentlemen, who have occupied prominent positions in the organisation for so long, took account of the financial position of the State and did everything possible to get industries established and keep the wheels of industry going, instead of holding up our industries as they have done repeatedly? If they worked to this end, there would be no fear of an unemployed problem in Western Australia. One of the principal permits is-

sued by the Forestry Department was that given to the Perth Firewood Supply Co., Ltd., which got a ten years permit over a portion of the Mundaring Weir area, which had been ring-barked, with a view to cheapening the metropolitan firewood supply. This briefly, is the history of that company. No sooner was the work of construction started on the company's lines than the Trades Hall organiser, Mr. Butler—

Hon. P. Collier: A good man, too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Probably, but why does he not exercise his influence to keep the wheels of industry going?

Hon. P. Collier: Last week you did not lecture the master bakers to do that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Mr. Butler got among the men and made them demand more money.

Hon. P. Collier: Made them!

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a boss's statement.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition knows very well that if a union makes a demand under present conditions, it is more than the men dare to divide the union.

Mr. Corboy: You do not understand the position.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I happen to know a little bit.

Mr. Corboy: A very little bit.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I probably know more than the member for Yilgarn. I shall not say he has never worked in his life, but I do say that he does not know the conditions under which many members on this side of the House have had to work.

Mr. Corboy: And under which you would make me work.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, the hon. member is one who has always looked for a soft job.

Mr. Corboy: Following in your footsteps.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a nice thing to say of a man who did his bit of the fighting instead of staying behind flag waving as you did.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to draw a red herring across the trail. No sooner was the work of construction started on the company's lines than the Trades Hall organiser got among the men and made them demand more money. The wages then paid were 11s. 6d. per day.

Mr. Corboy: What proof have you that he made them demand more money?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The company, with a view to getting their line finished, made the wages 12s. 6d. a day.

Hon. P. Collier: Too much altogether.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Within four weeks the men were pulled out for 14s. a day.

Hon. P. Collier: They could take a holiday at the Esplanade Hotel for a month on that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Company resisted their claims and the men went out for six weeks. Finally, they went back to work for 13s. 4d. a day. The advance was reflected on fallers, splitters, truckers, loaders, and carters. The company struggled along for nine months

until Christmas, 1920, when they heard that a claim for another advance was to be made before the men would start work in 1921. This was the last straw; the company decided to cut their loss and went into liquidation. Only a few weeks ago, the leaders of these same men interviewed the Premier and asked him to provide work for the unemployed; yet these same gentlemen of the Trades Hall had closed down an industry which was paying 100 men wages of 13s. 4d. to £1 per day, and in the near future the number of employees probably would have been doubled. The industry was being carried on within 22 miles of the city. Not only has its closing down resulted in unemployment, but the people of the metropolitan area have in consequence to pay considerably higher prices for their supplies of firewood, due to the action of these men who themselves are always protesting against the high cost of living.

Mr. McCallum: Who told you that that was the reason for the company closing down?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am telling the House that it was the reason.

Mr. McCallum: You know nothing about it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member presumes to be the only one who knows anything about it.

Mr. McCallum: I know the truth.

Hon. P. Collier: You have told us the boss's tale.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is where the Leader of the Opposition is mistaken. The price of firewood in the metropolitan area has been increased by permission of the Price Fixing Commission from 13s. 6d. in 1919 to 15s. in 1920 and 16s. in 1921.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That, to a very large extent, was owing to the increased railway rates.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The company with a capital of about £12,000 was inaugurated to supply the metropolitan area with firewood. The Forestry Department protected the interests of the consumers by fixing the price at which the firewood should be sold. The company was not to be allowed to exploit the public. In each instance, when increased prices were sought, the company's representatives went to the Prices Regulation Commission and laid their books and costs before that body, which authorised the increases.

Mr. Wilson: Did these men demand more than a living wage?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am dealing with the facts as they exist.

Hon. P. Collier: That comes well from a man who boosted the price of wheat to 9s. a bushel and also boosted up the price of wool. He now complains of a working man getting an extra sixpence.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, I do not, and I shall not allow the Leader of the Opposition to misrepresent me.

Hon. P. Collier: The cost of bread would be lower if the farmer lowered the price of wheat.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not desire to see any man getting less than a living wage, and I am sure that every member on this side of the House is of the same opinion.

Hon. P. Collier: Then what is your tale all about?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I wish to impress upon members sitting in Opposition that they, as leaders of the great Labour movement, have greater responsibilities resting on their shoulders than ever they had before. If the Leader of the Opposition is sincere in his expressed desire to assist the Government to put this State on a sound financial basis, he, and those associated with him, should assist by telling the people it is time to come together.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you tell the farmers to come together and bring down the price of wheat? Did you do that?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The farmers have never received more than parity price for their wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: You ought to preach to men to be content! What rank hypocrisy!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. Collier: So it is, Mr. Speaker, rank hypocrisy.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in accusing the hon. member for Katanning of rank hypocrisy, and I ask him to withdraw the statement.

Mr. Lambert: He could not accuse the hon. member of anything else.

Hon. P. Collier: I withdraw.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition asks whether I am prepared to go out and ask the farmers to accept lower prices for their wheat. The farmers have always accepted world's parity.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The average last year was 7s. 8d. a bushel. Russell made that statement the other day.

Mr. Johnston: For years the farmers sold their wheat for half the world's parity.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I shall deal with the wheat question. In 1916 the local price was 4s. 9d. a bushel, and the average for the whole year for overseas wheat was 4s. 10d. The consumers in 1916 got their wheat at 1d. under cost. In 1917 the local price was 4s. 9d., and the average overseas price was 4s. 11½d.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you had to pay for lumping, and so on, in addition.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In 1918 the local price was 4s. 9d., and the average overseas price 4s. 10¼d.; in 1919 for one month the local price was 4s. 9d., for eight months it was 5s., and for three months 5s. 6d., and the average price received from overseas was 6s. 3d.; in 1920 for the first month the local price was 6s. 6d. and for 11 months 7s. 8d., while the average price for overseas was 11s. I stand by the statements I have made. I know them to be correct because I obtained the information from a source which is absolutely unquestioned.

Hon. P. Collier: What was the source?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is my business.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: You ought to reveal the source.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The information is absolutely correct. If the leader of the Opposition can prove it to be otherwise he is at liberty to do so. I have never yet made a false statement in this House and I stand or fall by what I say. I will now revert to the serious position of our industries. The Labour Party in Australia very rightly take the credit for having established the Commonwealth Bank. I should like to quote some remarks made by Sir Denison Miller.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: It was not this Labour Party; it was another.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If any branch of the Country Party were to take credit for doing something for the Commonwealth, we in this State would share in that credit; so it is that the Labour Party are justified in taking a share of the credit for the establishment of that bank.

Mr. Munsie: The establishment of the bank was opposed by every Liberal in the House.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It has been very beneficial to the country, especially during the times of stress we have been passing through. I have here Sir Denison Miller's views on the question of thrift and borrowing. I hope the member for South Fremantle will take them to heart.

Mr. McCallum: I know them off by heart.

Mr. A. THOMSON: This gentleman is accepted as one of the leading financial authorities in the Commonwealth. He recently received a deputation consisting of a dozen members of the Sydney Employment Campaign Committee, who wished to know why credit was being restricted at such a critical time. Sir Denison Miller replied that new wealth could be created only by labour, that there was no question of working every day or all day to produce it, but that Nature was largely producing it for us; that wealth could not be produced merely by signing notes or debentures; that the wealth of Australia was about two thousand millions, and that if notes were issued for a quarter of that, what would become of their coin if paid out in the shape of wages? They would find, he said, that it would take a bundle of notes to buy a loaf of bread, because ultimately someone had to pay for the notes in cash; the mere printing of notes would not make anyone better off. Sir Denison Miller's remarks coincide with the paragraph on the subject which appears in the Governor's Speech, and he went on to say—

Owing to the enormous imports to Australia at very high prices during the end of last year, funds that the banks had available in London were used up, and it was a good thing for Australia that they were, because until some restriction was put on the paying in England and America of high prices for high-class goods so long would the high cost of living keep up. The restriction having been put on, prices were coming down everywhere. The trouble

arose when, owing to no wool being sold, to wheat not going forward, to no metals being sold in England, we were reduced by many millions of money that we ought to have had in London for the purchase of goods.

Mr. J. M. Scott: Are you prepared to finance £350,000,000 in Australia for production purposes?

Sir Denison Miller: I will do my best.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can he do it?

Mr. A. THOMSON: These remarks show that the only way to get out of our financial difficulties is for us to set to work and produce wealth. Members opposite have an excellent opportunity of making a name for their organisation if they will go along to the extreme section and say, "Come, let us reason together. Is it not time we got together worked together and pulled together?" The Premier has very rightly said that production cannot be encouraged under certain conditions, and that men do not realise their responsibilities when they stop work and leave a train on the siding. He also instanced the Wyndham Meat Works. It is for members opposite to say to these men that it is time to call a halt to this extreme action, and for people to pull together and work. I believe the vast masses of the workers do realise their responsibilities towards the State. If we could get a more stabilised condition in our industries, there would be more work available for the workers.

Mr. Wilson: There is plenty of work.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am glad to hear it. There is plenty of work, but will the work be done at prices that will enable the industries concerned to carry on? We know the result that has followed the last award given on the goldfields. I do not suggest that the men were not entitled to higher wages. In the face of falling prices, however, would it not have been better if the men had been prepared to work for a little less than for such conditions as at present exist to be set up? Take the shearing industry as an illustration. A boy acting as a rouseabout can earn £3 10s. a week and his tucker.

Hon. P. Collier: He will own a station in a year or two.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There are also many of our soldiers, who are settled on the land and have gone in wholly for sheep, and who are in a very parlous condition at present. The pastoralists are similarly situated.

Hon. P. Collier: Especially after the lean years of the war, and the low prices ruling for wool.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not say this in anger, nor am I endeavouring to arouse animosity on the other side of the House. As a man who knows both sides of the question, and as one who has looked for work and been unable to find it, I appeal to members opposite to use their influence in the direction of stabilising our industries and assisting others who are desirous of seeing the State go ahead.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you use your influence with the employers?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes. The majority of employers are prepared to carry on as long as possible.

Hon. P. Collier: The employers are always reasonable; the men are not.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Give us cheaper bread and cheaper wheat for the poultry farmers.

Hon. P. Collier: You do not get out to help to keep the poultry farmer by giving him cheaper wheat.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition said he was going to support the continuation of the pool. He hoped the day would not come when the farmer would be thrown back on the private buyers, and when he would have to accept 3s. or 3s. 6d. a bushel for his wheat; he wanted the farmer to be paid a return consistent with the labour required to produce the wheat, and was willing to see a price fixed for local consumption even though it were higher than the world's parity. How inconsistent the Leader of the Opposition is.

Mr. Munsie: I do not think he said that.

Mr. Johnston: A glorious policy, too.

Mr. Latham: A sound one.

Mr. Munsie: The latter portion of your statement is incorrect.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I refer the hon. member to "Hansard."

Mr. Munsie: I have read it.

Mr. Underwood: Theodore's policy.

Mr. Johnston: A good one, too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition is incorrect in saying that I am not prepared to give the consumers cheap bread. I do not think the outside public want anything more than is reasonable and just.

Hon. P. Collier: You are very much concerned about the public getting cheap firewood, but not concerned about their getting cheap bread.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Cheap firewood is as essential as cheap bread.

Hon. P. Collier: You stress the one but not the other.

Mr. A. THOMSON: In one breath the Leader of the Opposition expresses himself in favour of giving the producer a price that will afford him a fair return for his labour.

Mr. Money: He must get that if he is to continue.

Mr. THOMSON: He has not had it in years past. Some members opposite have been farming themselves.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The largest farmers in the House sit on this side.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Let us hear their opinions.

Hon. P. Collier: We have more wheat in the pool from this side of the House than you have from your side.

Mr. Underwood: You have not got a bushel.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am pleased the Leader of the Opposition is in favour of the wheat pool. We are urged to increase our production. The hon. member said we had increased our output of wheat last year. Last year our production was 12,220,280 bushels. It is very essential that the local consumer should have cheap bread, and I do not think the farmers are opposed to that. If, however, the price of wheat is reduced by 1s. a bushel, it means that the State will receive less money from overseas by approximately £600,000. With every shilling reduction we increase the load we have to carry in this State.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: We are not suggesting that the overseas price be reduced, but that the local price should come down.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Is the hon. member in favour of compelling people to sell their wheat locally for a lower price than they can get for it overseas?

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: When they ask the Government to back them up.

Mr. Johnston: Speaking as wheat growers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am afraid the member for North Perth speaks as representative of a metropolitan district. However, I do sincerely hope that all parties in this House, seeing that we are now at the beginning of the first session of a new Parliament, will work together with a view to providing some constructive criticism. We all regret the unfortunate position on the goldfields. Still, I am pleased to say that the Country Party are taking a keen interest in the goldmining industry, as in all other primary industries. So far as the Country Party are concerned, anything the Government may do towards rehabilitating that industry will have the hearty support of members sitting on these cross benches. We pledge our hearty co-operation to members on the Opposition side who are working towards that end. The Government have foreshadowed an amendment of taxation legislation which will have the effect of relieving the mining prospector of his present heavy imposts. I sincerely hope the Government will take into consideration the adoption of something like an average, as voiced by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith). While the Country Party fully recognise how unfortunate the present position is, I fear that we shall not induce the Treasurer to agree to such an amendment of the Act.

The Minister for Mines: We ought to have a tax to murder some of the Shylocks who are killing investment in mining.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I quite agree with the Minister for Mines. Those who are making large profits out of mining should be taxed. Unfortunately, however, the great majority of investors in mining have not seen much return from their money.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some investors have got a lot without investing anything.

Hon. P. Collier: The man who gave the member for Katanning the information about the Esplanade Hotel could also give the hon. member some information on that point.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Next, I want to deal with soldier settlement. The Government are to be commended on the excellent work they have done in this respect. The system of group settlement inaugurated by the Premier will, I believe, meet with much success. No doubt very largely the question of success or failure depends on the members of the group themselves. The system is, in fact, not new. Thirty years ago, when the Melbourne land boom burst, the cry there was, "What can we do with our people? What shall we do to find our people employment?" Victoria then adopted the policy which has been carried out by the present Premier of this State ever since he has occupied a position of responsibility. The Victorians said, "We must put the people on the land," and so they established in various parts of Victoria village settlement schemes. Several of them, unfortunately, proved failures.

Hon. P. Collier: They were all failures.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No.

Hon. P. Collier: Tell me one that survived.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Some of them managed to struggle through.

Member: Leongatha survived.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The average man who goes upon the land without capital is bound to have a struggle, is bound to have to face extremely hard work. During the period I refer to, Victoria was also able to establish the butter industry.

Mr. J. H. Smith: With the help of a bonus.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth Constitution prevents us from granting bonuses in this State. Let me mention, too, that the Victorians have the same hard conditions to contend with in the Gippsland district as we encounter in some of our areas. I am going to give the Government every support as regards their land settlement policy, provided they carry out land settlement on sound business lines; and I do believe the Premier's policy is on right lines. However, there is one difficulty facing our settlers to-day. During the recent election I visited one or two districts besides my own, and in some localities I found that the settlers, following out the Government's advice to "Produce, produce, produce," had produced a commodity which they were unable to sell. I wish to deal with one or two statements made by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) last night. That hon. member said that the Country Party were a selfish party, and that all that the party considered was the wheat pool, never taking into consideration a fruit pool, and never having endeavoured to establish such a pool.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You attempted it once, and made a mess of it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The statement shows that the member for Nelson is not conversant

with things that happen in his own electorate.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I was speaking of practical assistance, not of mere talk.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member gave us a lot of talk last night, but no practical suggestions. He asserted that the Country Party considered nothing except wheat.

Mr. Underwood: It is correct, too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: For the information of the House, and incidentally for that of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), let me say that a fruit conference was held in Perth on the 15th and 16th June last, a conference at which 46 branches of the Primary Producers' Association were represented. Thirty-three motions were dealt with at that conference. The first section comprised fruit export in relation to conditions of shipping, refrigerating space. The tapping of markets in Europe, Singapore, and Java. The second section embraced direct selling from co-operative agencies in fruit-growing districts to co-operative stores and agencies in the Wheat Belt. The third section included improvement of marketing conditions in the metropolitan and goldfields areas. The fourth section referred to treatment and disposal of surplus fruit by means of dehydration plants and jam and canning factories. Fifthly, there was the subject of fruit cases and containers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Read the resolution about the markets.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for Nelson said that nothing had been done by the Government, and that nothing had been done by the association to which I have the honour of belonging, for the fruit industry. It is a most remarkable thing that the member for Nelson, when standing for election, tacked to his name the words "Independent Country Party."

Hon. P. Collier: He did nothing of the kind.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The statement is untrue.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member has never denied it in the newspapers. It was stated in the Press that he stood as an Independent Country Party man.

Mr. Underwood: Why worry about the Press?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The newspapers stated afterwards that the hon. member had been elected as an Independent Country Party candidate. If my information is correct, the hon. member in any particular district where there was likely to be a considerable number of Country Party votes invariably indicated that his sympathies were with the Country Party.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is not true.

Hon. P. Collier: This is worthy of the member for Katanning.

Mr. A. THOMSON: On the other hand, in Labour centres the hon. member, it is said, always declared that his sympathies were with the Labour Party.

Hon. P. Collier: Those are the electioneering tactics of the member for Katanning.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is curious to find the member for Nelson declaring in this.

Chamber that the Country Party are selfish inasmuch as they have not considered the interests of fruit-growing, or even those of tin mining.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I still say it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As a matter of fact, our party included representatives of the mining industry.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you hold a tin-mining conference?

Mr. A. THOMSON: No. Unfortunately we have lost tin-mining for the time being.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you hold a potato growing conference?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for Nelson stated last night that the Country Party have done nothing for the fruit growers.

Hon. P. Collier: Why did not you go down to the Nelson electorate and assist the late Honorary Minister?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Because I was not asked to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: The late Honorary Minister knew something. You would have done as well as you did at Geraldton.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition ought to be very pleased with what I did at Geraldton.

Hon. P. Collier: We got our majority at Geraldton through you.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have just been waiting for that remark. I view of such a result, why does not the Leader of the Opposition invite me to a few other electorates?

Hon. P. Collier: We shall be very glad to have you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I arranged to assist the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson), and that hon. member did not do too badly. Replying to the member for Nelson, I say that at this fruit conference—

Mr. J. H. Smith: You have never done anything practical; that is what I say. I know there has been a lot of talk.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Let the hon. member beware of making interjections for which he will be sorry a moment or two later. From Balingup, a portion of the hon. member's district, there were four delegates to this fruit conference; from Greenbushes there was one; from Bayun Brook there were two; and from Blackwood there were three—a total of 10 delegates from the Nelson electorate to this fruit conference.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You do not suggest, do you, that the hon. member does not know his district?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member does not know his district better than his statements of last night indicate, then I am afraid I must say that he does not know his district very well. He definitely and clearly stated that the Country Party had done nothing for the fruit growers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What have they done, apart from this conference?

Mr. A. THOMSON: For the information of the member for Nelson let me state that, as the result of that fruit conference, the

Westralian Farmers, Ltd., have despatched a special officer to Eastern countries with a view to establishing market systems there. This shows that the conference has had some tangible result. Further, the conference will result in the establishment of a system of co-operative trading between fruit-growing districts and the Wheat Belt—something tangible again.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Was not that tried years ago?

Mr. A. THOMSON: As a matter of fact, we have a fruit marketing committee in existence.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes; but the 44 branches of the old Farmers' and Settlers' Association were the principal factors in that conference. Moreover, Mr. A. J. Monger, the President of the Primary Producers' Association, presided over that special fruit conference, which was also attended by Mr. Harrison, the Leader of the Country Party. As our organisation called the conference and were the means of organising it, they may at least claim credit for having done something to stabilise the fruit industry. A very strong committee has been formed to improve marketing conditions in the metropolitan and goldfields areas, and some tangible result may be expected as the outcome of the committee's deliberations.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I hope so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Next, I come to a phase of the settlement of our returned soldiers and others upon the land. All the Government have done so far is to place people upon the land, without making any effort to provide means whereby those settlers can market their products. I am not going to boost any particular person; I am not out to boost private individuals; but I think the State may well take a lesson from what is being done by one private person. I refer to Mr. De Garis, who has acquired what is known as the Kendenup Estate. As private individuals, those interested in that property have guaranteed to take from the people who are resident on their blocks the products of their industry over a period of years. Here is a list of the prices they are prepared to pay for the products from the estate:—

Apricots £10 per ton, peaches £10 per ton; pears £9 per ton; figs £18 per ton; cherries 6d. per lb., tomatoes £12 per ton.

Hon. P. Collier: We have read all about these prices a dozen times.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The list also sets out the following prices:—

Oaten hay £2 15s. per ton in stack, almonds (shelled) 1s. 6d. per lb., almonds (unshelled) 10d. per lb.; potatoes, £10 per ton, onions £5 per ton, maize 4s. 6d. per bushel, oats 2s. 3d. per bushel.

Hon. P. Collier: And tripe 2d. a lb.

Mr. A. THOMSON: You have got a pretty big share of that. Other prices

which Mr. De Garis guarantees are as follows:—

Peas 2½d. per lb., beans 2d. per lb., walnuts 1s. 3d. per lb., olives £7 per ton, plums £7 per ton, apples (export) 8s. per case, apples for drying £10 per ton.

Mr. Underwood: That is only a land agent's advertisement.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: This is when the millenium comes.

Mr. Mann: There is nothing extraordinary about those prices.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so, but the unfortunate position is that succeeding Governments have advised the people to go on the land and produce. They have told them to go into the swamp areas and produce potatoes and onions. Only last year there was a serious glut.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If it had not been for the member for Sussex and the member for Bunbury, your party would not have done much in connection with relieving that position, and the member for Bunbury is not a member of your party.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The member for Sussex is. However, we know that the trouble has been that not only have the unfortunate growers been victimised in that they have not received the price for their commodities, but the consumer has not received those products at reasonable prices. The time has come when something should be done, and the Primary Producers' Association, despite what the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) has said, has done more to organise the fruit industry than any other individual inside or outside Parliament.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Patersons are doing more than the members of your association put together, both for the industry and for the growers.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is not correct.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It is true.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That statement is on a par with others which the member for Nelson has made in connection with this matter. He said that the Country Party had done nothing—and I have proved that the Country Party has called meetings and called conferences—

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is all they have done.

Mr. Underwood: They have called a meeting at any rate.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The members of our party and our organisation have inaugurated a system from which good results will be obtained. The Premier stated that he was in favour of a vigorous immigration policy. So am I. I think the time is opportune and there is only one way in which we can reduce our deficit; that is by increased production and the promotion of a flow of our own kith and kin into this State. What is the attitude of those sitting in opposition to the present Government? Here is a telegram from Melbourne

published in the "West Australian" of July 30:—

The return to Great Britain by the Orient liner "Ormonde" of people who have emigrated to Australia was referred to in a letter from the Australian Labour Party in Perth, Western Australia, which was read at the Trades Hall Council last night. It was stated that a letter had been sent to the British Labour Party pointing out that the outlook as far as employment was concerned was not very encouraging in Western Australia.

I am pleased to say that in the Premier we have a gentleman who has faith in the future of this State. If we were to trust to the members of the Opposition, who will sponsor a letter such as the one I have referred to, damning the prospects of people coming here, I say advisedly we would be putting our faith in those who are little Western Australians, in men who have no faith or belief in the future of their own country. It is time that those gentlemen reconsidered their decision. I am pleased also that the Government are doing all that is possible to foster country industries. For that reason I was very pleased to note that the Premier advised the men who waited upon him and asked for employment, to go into the country where there was plenty of work. I am not altogether in favour of some of the proposed actions of the Government. The Premier has said that we must produce and get back to a permanent solution of our financial difficulties. When we realise that 160,000 people—I think that was the figure mentioned by the Premier—are living in the metropolitan area, it will be seen that very few of them are producing anything which will bring in any money from outside the State. The great bulk of the commodities produced in the metropolitan area is for home consumption. I do not wish to be misunderstood on this point, and I will make it perfectly clear that I desire to see as many secondary industries as possible established in our midst in order that we may stop our money from going to the Eastern States. I want to see those 60,000 men who are working for us in the Eastern States engaged in occupations within Western Australia. At the same time, I am not in favour of the Government, in view of the present shortage of cash, spending some £36,000 in connection with the metropolitan tramways. I do not want to be parochial in this matter.

The Minister for Mines: We would not accuse you of that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is a matter of indifference to me where the trams go in Perth. I do not hold a brief for any particular part of the metropolitan-suburban area. In view of the present state of our finances, is it wise to proceed with the tramway extensions as proposed, a proposal which is not in accordance with the production policy of the Government? While the proposed extension

of the tramways to Como will afford facilities to those desiring to go to the beach, when members realise that the line will pass some miles of country where there are no houses, it should suggest itself to the House that the extension is inadvisable at the present time.

Mr. Mann: It will enable the workers to get cheap land.

Mr. Pickering: Prices are going up already.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We heard the Leader of the Opposition and other members say that we should utilise the unoccupied spaces throughout the State in order to increase production and serve to augment the railway revenue. Why should not the same argument apply to metropolitan lands? From Midland Junction to Fremantle there are thousands of acres of land on which people could go and make a home. In the present state of the finances, every penny that can be legitimately spared should be spent on something to create wealth in our country districts. I believe the Government should reconsider their decision in connection with tramway matters and not spend that money in the metropolitan area at all. I do not say that in any parochial spirit at all, and have no desire to prevent the metropolitan area from having its just dues. My opposition to this proposal is on account of the present high price of money and the shortage of cash within the State. The money proposed to be spent in connection with tramway extensions could be better spent in building railways to serve those people in the back country who, owing to the distance of their holdings from the existing railways, have been unable to create that wealth which is essential in the interests of the State.

The Minister for Mines: Notwithstanding your protest, your utterances are parochial. Apart from that, however, you deny them the right to have these trams, but would you allow them to have control over their local requirements in connection with the trams?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I consider that the local people should have control over these facilities. That was the policy of the late Mr. Wilson and of the present Premier, namely, to hand over to the local governing bodies the control of trams, water supply and other matters of a similar character. I think the local people would be able to control these activities much better than is the position to-day. At any rate I think they would control them much more economically.

Mr. J. Thomson: Much more so than under the present Administration.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I congratulate the Minister for Agriculture upon the improvements he has made in connection with his department. He has shown that in his opinion the Agricultural Department is one that should be in the hands of a practical man. That is a lesson which should be learnt by other departments. There are one or two other matters upon which I desire to touch briefly. During the last Parliament, I en-

deavoured to prevail upon the Government to alter their policy in connection with the Agricultural Bank. I could not convince the Premier that I was correct, nor could I convince the House. In my opinion, however, the Government would be wise if they gave serious consideration to a suggestion to work more on the lines which the Government of New South Wales have adopted. They have combined the work of the Agricultural Bank with the Government Savings Bank there. That move was brought about by the Labour Government in New South Wales, and I congratulate Mr. Storey, the Premier of that State, upon bringing forward such an excellent measure. The Government of New South Wales have combined the operations of their State Savings Bank, their Workers' Homes Department, and their Rural Bank. The last mentioned institution is similar to the Agricultural Bank here. I would like to see some provision made whereby our settlers who are clients of the Agricultural Bank might have the opportunity, should they so desire, to use the bank in the same way as would be the case with an ordinary bank. If the Government adopted my suggestion, I believe the policy would be as broad and liberal as that obtaining in connection with our bank in Western Australia at the present time. In speaking on this subject, I am voicing my own opinions. In connection with the bank in New South Wales, the legislation enables the institution to acquire leasehold or otherwise deal in land and to lend money and so forth. I will not labour the whole question at this stage. The main point is that cash deposits up to various amounts may be made. Under present conditions our bank is purely developmental. We carry a man who has no cash until his farm is of value, when the Agricultural Bank sends him to a private bank. A large number of farmers are still desirous of remaining with the Agricultural Bank. Why should not the State derive some benefit from the securities it has created?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are not looking at it from a State point of view.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, I am. I would limit the amount of advance to £2,000, as it is to-day. Plenty of farmers are on the Agricultural Bank to the extent of only £1,000, although their securities are worth from £1,500 to £2,000. Why should not the Agricultural Bank allow them to have a small cash balance to pay for super, and in order that they may pay cash at the stores instead of having to carry on on credit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Industries Assistance Board does that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We want something better than that. I trust the Leader of the Opposition will give this his consideration. In my opinion the Rural Bank of New South Wales is the best possible for the assistance of the farmer. It has had a good trial. It represents a distinct advance on our legislation.

Mr. Money: It would require more capital.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Not very much more, because it does not advance more than £2,000. We do the same.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: For development work.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes. Quite a number of the clients of such a bank will be in credit, and therefore we shall have the use of their money.

Mr. McCallum: Branches of the bank would be required in every centre.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The same as in the case of the Savings Bank. It is not against the policy of economy. It will mean that a lot of people, instead of paying into private banks, will pay their cash into the Savings Bank, as some do to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would you make it apply to all sections of the community?

Mr. Money: It is practically a State bank.

Mr. McCallum: That is really what the Rural Bank of New South Wales is.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is for primary producers, or persons carrying on industries immediately associated with rural pursuits.

Mr. Money: It would mean an extra staff in every centre.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I differ from the hon. member. However, I commend my suggestion to the serious consideration of the House and of the Government. I regret that the Government have not given any intimation of an intention to amend the Act controlling the hire-purchase of machinery. I think that should be altered. Under the present hire agreement the seller has the right to seize the machine at any time, if the payments are not kept up. If I have a mortgage on a property, and if I have been repaid half the mortgage when the payments cease, all that I can claim under foreclosure is what is still owing to me. I cannot take the property and say "You shall have nothing." But, in connection with the purchase of machinery, the purchaser may have paid three-fourths the value of the machine and, if for some reason he falls behind in his payments, the machinery agent has the right to seize the machine. It is not fair. I urge the Government to take that into serious consideration. I should like to have touched upon several other matters, but I am afraid that, owing to the numerous interjections, I have been over long already. I intend to give the Government every assistance I can. We as a party may take credit for having impressed upon the Government the necessity for economies in all directions and efficiency in the State services. In this we have been ably backed up by the executive of our association; not that they considered we wanted backing, but because they desired to impress upon people in the country districts the fact that even they must be prepared to make sacrifices if the Government should consider it essential to cut off services. I am prepared to stand behind the Government in this regard. I have had protests from various portions of my electorate against certain actions of the Railway Department. In reply I have said that the Commissioner

of Railways considered it to be in the interests of economy, and that in consequence I was not going to interfere in the matter.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But the Commissioner may exercise too much economy in the country.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We have to treat the metropolitan area and country districts on an equal footing, and so long as a fair deal is given all round we will not complain.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have cut out 100 trains per week in my electorate.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Some people have only one train per week. However, I want to appeal to hon. members opposite to seriously consider the request I have made that they should use their influence to impress upon the organisations to which they belong that the State is up against it, and that it will be neither in the interests of the State nor of the workers to hold up industry.

Mr. Wilson: First put your own house in order.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have always done that. The hon. member knows that those who are working in the coal mining industry are making £9 per week.

Mr. Wilson: Where is that? You do not know what you are talking about now.

Mr. A. THOMSON: At all events, they are making 30s. per shift.

Mr. Wilson: And some of them working two days per week.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is a most amazing thing to me that successive Governments, using on the railways 75 per cent. of the output of Collie coal, have not established a State coal mine. I think we would get very much better results from such a mine than we are getting to-day. I am prepared to assist hon. members opposite if they will assist us and see if we cannot unite to do the very best for this great State, which in my opinion is second to none in the Commonwealth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.55]: I do not intend to keep the House at any great length, but I must compliment the deputy Leader of the Country Party on the solid advice he has given to members on this side. In a few words, he said "advise the men to work for less wages as early as possible, and in all probability a reduction in the cost of goods will follow."

Mr. A. Thomson: That is incorrect.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That really was the gist of half-an-hour's speech.

Mr. A. Thomson: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That's what it was: "Work for less wages, but do not consider the amount you have to pay for the goods you consume."

Mr. A. Thomson: I did not say it.

Hon. P. Collier: You did say it in regard to miners.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was pleased to hear the Premier thank the Leader of the Opposition for his proffered help. In 1917 the Leader of the Opposition, on the public

platform at Boulder, said that no matter what Government were in power he and his party, in view of the troublous times, would endeavour to render that Government every help and consideration. I think it can be said there never has been a Government in Western Australia which has had less criticism than the Government in office since 1917. The Opposition, knowing the difficulties which the Government have had to face, have shown a unanimous desire to assist the Government in carrying on the affairs of the State. The Premier will admit that, and even his predecessors will admit it. To-day we still realise what the Government are up against. But we say there should be a better effort on the part of the Government and their supporters to straighten up the finances. I have every sympathy with the Government, because I was a member of a Government which had the Country Party behind them. We have every sympathy with the Government, because we know the Government have to do exactly what the Country Party tells them.

Mr. Latham: Did you do that?

Mr. Pickering: No man can serve two masters.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, for instance you cannot serve Monger and the Government. We assisted the farmer in every way; as a matter of fact everything that is being done for the farmer to-day was done by the Labour Government. We did everything possible in the interests of the State. We believed in fair play for all, whereas the Country Party believes in fair play for the wheat farmer, but for nobody else.

Mr. Latham: That is wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not wrong. I indicated just now, by way of interjection, what occurred last year with regard to potatoes. The only two members on that side of the House who raised their voices on that occasion to protect the interests of the potato growers were the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money). Did they have the assistance of the Country Party? No.

Mr. Latham: They were part of the Country Party.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The very men who should have rendered them assistance failed to go to their assistance. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) has endeavoured to show that the Country Party members are not under the control of the executive of the Primary Producers' Association. I say without fear of contradiction that during the last 16 years the Labour Party have never met in caucus with the executive of the Labour Party.

Mr. A. Thomson: Will you lay the minutes of your meetings on the Table?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I say that we have never met in caucus with the executive of the Labour Party.

Mr. A. Thomson: Will you lay your minutes on the Table?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, if there are any.

Mr. Johnston: In my experience no one but elected Labour members met in caucus.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so; it was never otherwise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The conference of the Country Party, however, issued instructions that the executive and their members must meet together. There was no need for the member for Katanning to get up with such bombast and offer to lay the minutes of their meetings on the Table. A report of their proceedings has been made public through the "Primary Producer."

Mr. A. Thomson: Certainly, we have nothing to hide.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then why contradict the statement when it has appeared in the official journal of the party? Now let us weigh the hon. member's statement. He said, "The position was that, after the election, we met up here as a party; we went from here down the street and said to the executive 'You must do so and so,' and the executive fell into line with us."

Mr. Johnston: No, we came to a decision and the executive came to a similar decision.

Hon. P. Collier: What would have happened if they had not come to a similar decision?

Mr. A. Thomson: There was no need to consider that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Leader of the Country Party, up to that time, was the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison).

Mr. A. Thomson: He still is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Press went to Mr. Harrison for a statement, just as the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier were asked for statements. But Mr. Harrison was not in a position to give a statement, and late in the afternoon the Press had to go to Mr. Monger for a statement.

Mr. A. Thomson: Did they get it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes.

Mr. A. Thomson: Then read out the reference to it occurring later in the afternoon.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The report reads—

In the afternoon the parliamentarians met the executive of the Primary Producers' Association and subsequently the president of the association, Mr. A. J. Monger, made the following statement.

Hon. P. Collier: Not Harrison, but Monger.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So the position is this: that Mr. Monger was the leader of the Country Party at that time. The election was over, but Mr. Harrison had not been reaffirmed in the position of leader. Here is the position in a nutshell. The Minister for Mines, when on the hustings, said one of the reasons why he should be returned to Parliament was this, that though Mr. Monger was an estimable private citizen, it was opposed to the traditions of the British race and foreign to Australian sentiment, to accept as a dictator one who was outside the walls of Parliament, and who usurped the power

without braving the responsibility. That was the position taken up by Mr. Scaddan at an election meeting in Victoria Park. Mr. Monger, in making his statement to the Press, said—

The joint conference of the executive and the country Party was held to-day and the matter was fully considered. That refers to the attitude the Country Party should adopt so far as the Ministry were concerned.

Mr. Johnston: The decision was unanimous.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. Monger's statement continues—

and the following motion was carried unanimously after full consideration.

Consequently, the country members did not go to the executive and say, "We have come to a decision; these are our proposals."

Mr. A. Thomson: The last conference decided that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This has nothing to do with the last conference. I suppose they considered who should be Premier, because there were rumours floating around at that time. Perhaps the member for Katanning knows something about that. The decision at which they arrived could apply to any party in this House. It was—

That in the interests of stable government we are of opinion that the Country Party should co-operate with all parties on the Government side of the House in the duty of government, relying on the administration so formed, as far as possible, to give effect to the general policy outlined in the objects and platform of the Country Party.

Mr. A. Thomson: Then what is all this fuss about?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am coming to that point. If they had inserted the words "Labour Party" it would have applied equally to us. It makes no difference to us who are in office, so long as they carry out the objects of our platform. If there is any meaning at all in the decision, it is this, that once the Ministry fails to carry out the objects and platform of the Country Party, out they go.

Hon. P. Collier: That is it exactly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Katanning has issued a threat to-night.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, he did so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The threat was that if the Government refused to carry out what they want, out they go.

Mr. A. Thomson: I did not say anything of the sort; that is a mis-statement.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member speaking not on his own behalf but on behalf of the party, said they would demand from the Government that there must be economy, and if the Government did not carry it out, so far as the Country Party were concerned, out the Government would go.

Mr. A. Thomson: I stand to that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are 35 members on the Government side and 15 of them belong to the Country Party.

Mr. Johnston: Sixteen.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, there is one fewer than in the last Parliament. The Country Party have gone back one; the country is losing faith in them.

The Minister for Agriculture: You have not gone much further forward.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the opinion of the other 20 members? Are they going to be dictated to by Monger and company? They comprise Independents, Nationalists, Liberals, National Labourites, and in fact are a mixed lot. But are they going to be dictated by Monger and company? I trust that the people of this State will realise that Parliament is the place where decisions should be carried into effect, and not some place outside of Parliament. Now what is the difference, so far as the Labour Party are concerned? We have a congress every three years.

Mr. A. Thomson: With closed doors.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not at all.

Mr. A. Thomson: Yes, with closed doors.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not with closed doors. We have a conference the same as the Country Party to draw up a platform.

Mr. O'Loughlin: A closed mouth for a few minutes would be a pleasant change.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We submit that platform to the electors.

Mr. A. Thomson: So do we.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The platform of the Labour Party becomes the platform of the electors, and not of the Labour Party only. It goes beyond the Labour Party, because every member is returned on that platform. Further, that platform stands for three years.

Mr. A. Thomson: So does ours.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Our platform cannot be altered during the life of the Parliament. That does not apply to the hon. member's platform.

Mr. A. Thomson: Yes, it does.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Two years ago the Country Party agreed to a land tax, and last year they knocked it out.

Mr. A. Thomson: That does not alter the fact.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They were realising the necessity for such a land tax, in order to reduce the railway rates.

Mr. A. Thomson: I never did.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member has never been a Country Party man. He was always a Tory.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is why you attack me so severely.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, I am only attacking you on account of your position as spokesman for the Country Party. This shows that men returned by the Country Party do not know where they are from one 12 months to the next.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is merely a statement.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is true. They managed last year to bluff one or two members to join them, and no doubt those members have since found cause to be sorry. Of course they do not admit it. I know of one or two members whom they tried to bluff in also, but who would not be bluffed. I am pleased to know they are in this House to-night and that they stuck true to their colours and would not join a party which, in my opinion, has been disastrous to this State and to its finances.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is why you attack it so much.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We want to find out the exact position. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), in speaking last night, said, "These parties are a curse." The hon. member saw a chance of getting in without being a party man for the time being. He realised that there was dissension among the Country Party. I want to tell the member for Nelson that he did not get into Parliament because his electors were tired of the Government, or because his electors did not want the Labour Party in power. He got into Parliament because the Minister, who was contesting the seat at that time, did not carry out the dictates of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. Mr. Willmott, speaking at Bunbury on the 21st July, said—

He was aware that during the last seven years he had made many enemies by absolutely refusing to represent the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., in Parliament. That body was a trading concern and it was against his principles to represent any trading concern in Parliament. It was unthinkable that members of Parliament should pull the political strings in favour of one trading concern to the detriment of the private trader.

We have made statements to that effect in this House in regard to members of the Country Party repeatedly, and they have always been denied.

Mr. Pickering: And rightly so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have been told that such statements were half-lies.

Hon. P. Collier: Their late leader now bears out what we have been saying.

Mr. Pickering: I cannot help that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not stand here as an advocate for Mr. Willmott, but I like to see fair play, irrespective of who is concerned. They endeavoured to throw Mr. Willmott out through the selection ballot in the first instance. They picked a man to run him and there was an objection lodged, because at that time this wondrous Country Party had a branch of 11 members to choose their candidate. The leader, and by this I mean the real leader, was appealed to, and he held an inquiry into the matter. He was informed that there were actually 21 members. One does not expect 21 residents in the Nelson electorate to say who should represent the electors in Parliament. In consequence it was decided that there should be no selection ballot, with the result that the candidate

who had been chosen did not stand for nomination as he saw he had no chance. Mr. Willmott stood as a Country Party member representing the Government. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., then sent an officer to the district who was to carry out certain orders. He went from farmer to farmer, telling them that Mr. Willmott must go, and the result was that Mr. Willmott went. A friend of mine who was with me at Bridgetown at the time, when I asked him what happened then, said that they waited on the management of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and reported that this was not fair play, that this was one of the candidates chosen by the Country Party, and yet because the Country Party was at variance he was being passed over. The management said that if this was true, that officer must go, and my friend told me he did go, to Bunbury to assist Mr. Reading. That is how they treated Mr. Willmott. Yet we find hon. members who have been coming here during the past three years saying they are not compelled to carry out the dictates of this executive.

Mr. Johnston: What about the second preference votes of Mr. Ryan of Bridgetown, which votes put Mr. Willmott in? They were the votes from your party.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was brought about by the influence exercised by the party to which the hon. member belongs, because this gentleman would not act unfairly or unjustly to other sections of the community. In this way they got rid of Mr. Willmott. They then thought they would get rid of Mr. Baxter. Mr. Baxter made a mistake; he was said to have sold wheat to New South Wales at a lower price than could have been obtained for it overseas. A conference was held on the subject, and a few weeks after we find in the "Primary Producer" the following statement:—

That conference took place five months ago, and to-day the gladiator in charge of the Western Australian wheat scheme, the man who had all that conference behind him, the man who was going to fight to a finish, hasn't as much fight in him as an infuriated tortoise. He doesn't even talk fight in these days, but assumes an attitude of masterly silence and inactivity. Even the combined intelligence of his man Friday (Mr. Keys) cannot coax Mr. Baxter from his inert and morose lassitude on the subject of that New South Wales wheat sale, which meant nearly a million pounds to Western Australia (according to his computation). The contrast between the roaring lion of five months ago and the meekly lamb of to-day is so striking that even those who so approvingly listened to the specious declarations of their champions must surely be wondering why this inertia should have set in.

Mr. Latham: That is the opinion of one man.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is the official organ of the Country Party.

Mr. Latham: It is written by one man.

Mr. Pickering: It must be an inspired article.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Has the Country Party been very quiet over this wheat deal? What has gone wrong with them? They were going to play old Harry two years ago, and talked of raising an army to go to New South Wales and demanding 9s. a bushel, if not more, for their wheat. Mr. Baxter is accused of selling wheat at a lower price than the overseas price. The Premier ought to lay on the Table of the House the file dealing with this wheat purchase, and let us know what has been done since.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are prepared to do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Will you do it tomorrow?

The Minister for Agriculture: Subject to my chief.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We should see these papers before the Estimates are dealt with. Something else was going on while Mr. Baxter was being attacked in this way. It was not the wheat they were so much concerned about this time; they wanted certain representation on the Australian Wheat Board. On the 21st January last we find from the "Primary Producer" the following:—

The executive of the Primary Producers' Association, early after the conference, decided that Mr. McGibbon should be the nominee of the wheat growers of the State, and the intimation was conveyed to Mr. Baxter.

Hon. P. Collier: That was the executive. Mr. Baxter was to go, and Mr. Baxter went.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The information was conveyed to Mr. Baxter, who took up an honest and a correct attitude in the matter. He caused an advertisement to be inserted in the "Government Gazette" and the "Primary Producer" calling for nominations from all the farmers in the State for a representative on the Australian wheat board. He desired that there should be no person on the wheat board who had dealings in wheat with the Government. He said that no acquiring agent, employee or official of a wheat acquiring agent, could be a candidate. Consequently, the "Primary Producer" and other people attacked Mr. Baxter. On the 18th February we find the following:—

The Minister defends the clause which prohibits a wheat acquiring agent or any employee, etc., from nominating. He forgets that so greatly does he rely upon the advice of wheat acquiring agents that he himself selected as his special adviser on the State Wheat Board, Mr. Keys, a gentleman who was "loaned" by Messrs. Dreyfus and Coy. When does Mr. Baxter propose to brush Mr. Keys' brains with gutta serena and return him to Messrs. Dreyfus and Co. in a state of absolute forgetfulness of all that has happened since he became the Minister's right hand man.

Although they had a grudge against the Minister for not making the appointment direct, they could not let the officials alone, and tried

to cast the blame on him. The "Primary Producer" on the 26th February, stated—

Remember the fight is between the Association and the Minister, and so far as members are concerned what the Association says "must go."

Mr. Latham: The man who wrote that had not the authority of the executive to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, yes, he had their authority.

Mr. Latham: You know more about it than I do.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is the official organ of the Country Party, and it is from this source that hon. members receive their instructions.

Mr. Latham: I have not received any so far.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope the hon. member will always be in that frame of mind. He has not been here long enough yet to know what may happen later. A ballot was taken, and 1,313 wheat growers voted for Mr. McGibbon and 1,706 against him. Therefore, he did not possess the confidence of the wheat growers. Although the Minister had the confidence of the wheat growers, he had to go because the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., or the "Primary Producer" told him to go. Hon. members must go if the executive say they shall go. This applies to every member of the Country Party to-day.

Mr. Pickering: That is not true.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If every member of the Country Party does not do what the executive tell him he will be served at the next election in the same way that Mr. Willmott was served. I hope they will realise that at an early date. After the numbers had been counted eight times Mr. McGibbon was elected by a majority of 194. That is why the Minister's career was ended. The executive of the Country Party said that those who did not carry out the instructions of the association must go.

The Minister for Agriculture: He got a majority verdict.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It took eight counts to get it.

The Minister for Agriculture: It does not matter how many it took.

Hon. P. Collier: Was that sufficient justification for sacking Mr. Baxter?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I asked a question in regard to this matter the other day, and in my opinion the Minister gave a very lame excuse for the position. I maintain that every honest man is of opinion that Mr. McGibbon should never have had his nomination accepted.

Mr. Pickering: That is a reflection on the Government.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have already said it is now the decision of the Country Party that if the Government do not carry out that which the Country Party require, they must go.

The Premier: You are quite wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am quite right. The member for Katanning said so to-night. He said "We as a party, before discussing the matter with the executive, decided that there should be economy, and only when we started did the Government commence to effect economies."

The Premier: That is quite wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The orders were issued and they were obeyed at once. I asked the Minister for Agriculture the following question—

If the directors or shareholders have power to appoint and dismiss an auditor on behalf of the company, is not the person who holds the position of auditor an official of the company?

The Minister for Agriculture: The directors have power to dismiss.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If a person occupies a position from which he can be dismissed, then he must be an official of the company with which he holds such position.

Mr. Johnston: I think only the shareholders have that power.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The company through their directors were our wheat acquiring agents. In my question I went on to ask—

If so, what was the reason for accepting Mr. S. J. McGibbon's nomination as candidate as representative on the Australian Wheat Board?

The Minister for Agriculture replied—

An auditor is not deemed to be an officer of a company within the meaning and intention of the regulations gazetted 21st January, 1921.

Now, the regulation gazetted said—

No person is qualified to become a candidate who at the time of nomination is (a) a Government wheat acquiring agent, or a director, officer, or employee of any company or person being such agent. . . .

The Westralian Farmers Ltd. were the wheat acquiring agents for the Government of this State. Mr. McGibbon was the auditor of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., as the answers to my questions show.

Mr. Pickering: An auditor is not an employee.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. McGibbon was appointed, and was paid his salary, by the company. He was liable to dismissal by the company at any time.

Mr. Johnston: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, either by the shareholders or by the directors. The shareholders are the company.

Mr. Pickering: They could not dismiss Mr. McGibbon until after the expiration of his term of auditorship.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A company can at any time dismiss any man they pay. If Mr. McGibbon, as representative of the wheat growers on the Australian Wheat Board, did anything whatever against the

interests of the wheat acquiring agents, the Westralian Farmers Ltd., he would have been dismissed so far as his employment by the Westralian Farmers as auditor was concerned. That would be only human nature, and is a thing which applies to every person in the same way as it applies to the Westralian Farmers. The Government had no right, after advertising in the terms they did, to accept Mr. McGibbon's nomination. No doubt, Mr. McGibbon might be a good man; but still the Government had no right to accept his nomination.

The Premier: We have a legal opinion on the subject.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: One can obtain a legal opinion in support of any proposition. The action of the Minister has been criticised in the "Primary Producer." All the executive of the Primary Producers' Association were aware of the wording of the advertisement. They knew it was so worded in order that the wheat-acquiring agents might have nothing whatever to do with the representation of the farmers on the Australian Wheat Board.

The Minister for Agriculture: But the Government did not elect Mr. McGibbon.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I say the Government had no right to receive his nomination. Further, I have a good deal of doubt even that the farmers elected Mr. McGibbon.

Mr. Pickering: The ballot was openly conducted by the Chief Electoral Officer; it was not a secret ballot.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Now a few words regarding the State trading concerns. I am very pleased that the Premier has at last in this Chamber placed before the public of Western Australia the true position as to those concerns. It is the first time that has ever been done. For two or three years now we have been endeavouring to obtain for the people full information regarding the State trading concerns. As the Premier has said, there is throughout Western Australia an impression that those concerns are responsible for a large part of the deficit, if not for the whole of it. The Premier put the matter plainly last night, and I thank him for having done so, because I believe his words will be the means of removing many false impressions from the mind of the public. He told us that last year the State trading concerns made a small profit—£7,784. Since the alteration of the system applying to the State trading concerns, the amounts of profit from those concerns have been: amount transferred in 1917, after recoup of interest, etc., £47,000; in 1918 the amount was £72,500; in 1919 it was £124,134—

The Premier: All from the steamers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In 1920 it was £24,887; in 1921 it was £7,784; or a total of £276,305. That is how the State trading concerns have affected Western Australia's finances. They have assisted the Consolidated Revenue of this State during the last five years to the extent of £276,305.

Mr. Money: Without having paid local rates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have not had any local rates to pay. In any case, that matter has nothing to do with the Consolidated Revenue. There is another point I wish to bring home to hon. members once more with regard to the State trading concerns. Take the State sawmills balance-sheet laid on the Table. I mention that, because I have the figures in my mind. Last year the sawmills made a profit of nearly £16,000. Had the sawmills been owned by a private company, however, the profit would have been over £30,000, because interest has to be paid to the State before a State trading concern can declare a profit, while a private company pays interest after the profit has been declared. The position of a private company, therefore, appears far more favourable than that of a State trading concern under similar conditions. Private companies distribute their gross profits to depreciation and reserve and dividends. I am not taking in depreciation here; I am assuming that the State sawmills have paid a dividend of £16,000. But before that dividend is declared at all, the State enterprise must pay interest to the State. Under those conditions I say that the profit of £16,000 really represents a dividend of over £30,000 for the year. However, I am very pleased that the Premier, after a deal of pressure from this side, has at last been induced to make acknowledgment of the fact that the State trading concerns have not been a drag on the finances of the State.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; but the Premier has not previously admitted it so clearly as he did last night. No doubt the false impression on the public mind will now be removed. I disagree with the Premier on one point. The hon. gentleman said that it would be more advantageous, and that more employment would be afforded, if the money invested in the State trading concerns had been devoted to the building of railways or the clearing of land. There I differ from the Premier entirely.

The Premier: Well, you are wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Take the capital represented by the State Implement Works, which would build only a short length of railway. Immediately the building of the railway has been completed, the employment ceases; but the employment afforded by the State Implement Works continues year after year. Moreover, we were expending this money on the State Implement Works for the manufacture of machinery here which previously had been bought from the Eastern States.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Others would have done it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But they did not do it previously. In 1907 or 1908 I had the honour of being on a select committee appointed by this House, of which the late Mr. Henry Daglish was chairman; and that com-

mittee took evidence from manufacturers and importers regarding Western Australian industries. Those industries were affected by Commonwealth legislation. The Commonwealth had neglected Western Australia in the matter of industries. We had evidence on oath from some of these manufacturers and importers that the only party who could begin manufacturing agricultural implements in Western Australia would be the Government; because the manufacturers in the Eastern States were sending their surplus stock here—dumping it here. Commonwealth legislation has now been directed against the dumping system from abroad, and Great Britain has legislated against dumping from Europe. The object of dumping is to kill any private manufacture that is started. The evidence given us tended to show that the only possibility of establishing in this State the industry of manufacturing agricultural implements lay with the Government. As to secondary industries generally, I cannot believe that we are going to get a large number of them established in Western Australia by private enterprise. There is no company possessed of large capital which would, in my opinion, establish a secondary industry here. Such a company will establish itself in Melbourne or Sydney, as being more centrally situated, and better adapted for distribution. From Melbourne or Sydney a company can command the whole of Australia, and Tasmania and New Zealand.

Mr. Pickering: We have started a cement factory, and then there are the Hume pipe works.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Those are comparatively small undertakings. I am speaking of manufacturing industries, and I contend that we shall not have many of them established in Western Australia by private enterprise. I now repeat what I stated here last year, that we have in this State a large number of boys and girls desirous of learning trades. If private enterprise will not open industries in this State which will afford the necessary opportunities to our boys and girls, then the Government must do it; there is no help for it. Let me go back to the year 1907. In that year the present Premier, then Minister for Agriculture, introduced an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act providing that any person desirous of purchasing agricultural implements manufactured in Western Australia—I am dealing now with that phase of manufacture more particularly—could be granted a loan from the Agricultural Bank to pay for such implements. That provision was inserted in the amending Act as an inducement to private enterprise to establish the industry in Western Australia. As a result, there was not one solitary implement factory established here—none whatever up to 1912 or 1913, when the State works were started.

Mr. Mann: There was not sufficient farming development then to warrant it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, there was. Let us make no mistake about that. Implements were coming in to the value of over £100,000 a year. Legislation was introduced by the present Premier as far back as 1907 with a view to the encouragement of such manufactures in Western Australia. The proffered assistance was not availed of. But something else happened. Eastern States manufacturers brought implement parts here, and assembled them here, with a view to claiming that the implements were of Western Australian manufacture. However, that did not go down.

Mr. Pickering: Purser and Heaton and Metters established themselves here.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Metters were not making any agricultural implements.

Mr. Money: There have been none manufactured here by private enterprise since the State Implement Works started.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Thanks to the establishment of the State Implement Works, thousands upon thousands of pounds have been spent here in wages that would otherwise have been sent to Victoria.

Mr. McCallum: Or to America.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Or to America. We must have secondary industries in this State if we desire any large increase of population. The Premier stated last night that all our wheat land was gone. I was surprised to hear that.

Mr. Latham: He did not know what he was talking about.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the Premier does not know what he is speaking about in connection with Western Australian lands, there is no other man who does.

Mr. Mann: He was speaking of first-class land.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He said that the wheat land was gone, unless they were prepared to go out east, where there was some danger.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Premier would say so again.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That means that so far as wheat growing is concerned, it will not bring in much more population.

Mr. Latham: We heard that tale in 1910.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know whether that is so or not, but at that time the present Premier said that there were millions of acres. The member for York may interject as much as he likes but I would take the Premier's word every time before I would take his.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I believe the Premier knows more about it than the member for York. That being the position then, some endeavour must be made to increase the industries of this State so as to bring in a larger population.

Mr. Money: Why not assist them, as you assist butter factories?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because we cannot do it.

Mr. Money: Why not?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because we cannot give bonuses to industries. I do not agree with the system of giving money at the present time.

Mr. Pickering: Money is being lent to secondary industries in the State.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Only to a few mines and such like. I hope the Premier will give this matter further consideration. Only last night when I had returned home from the House a boy came to my house to see if I knew where he could be placed. There are no avenues open for the absorption of our boys and girls. In factories they make the same excuse, that all the positions are filled up and there are no vacancies. The plain fact is that there are no positions available for our boys who are growing up and thinking about their future livelihood. I have boys day after day coming to me and asking if I know where they can find an opening to commence a trade. It must be remembered that every boy is not cut out for farming.

Mr. Lambert: And every boy is not made for our racecourses.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is the duty of the State to see that provision is made whereby our boys and girls can learn trades and so make sure of their future livelihood. If private enterprise is not here to do it, the State will have to make the opportunities.

Mr. Money: It will be for the State to give encouragement and confidence to private enterprise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no need for that because when the State gives the encouragement, private enterprise stays as long as the State assistance lasts and then closes up. Take an instance in the late Lord Forrest's time. When he was Premier an offer was made of £1,000 if a firm would open a jam factory. The jam factory was duly established and they made a quantity of fig jam. The firm received the £1,000 bonus and as soon as they got it they closed down the factory.

Member: They showed a good profit.

Mr. McCallum: What about the case of Monteaths?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is another case; as soon as Government orders stopped they closed down their foundry. They would not look for private orders. When they started, they constructed small pipes at Fremantle which they were turning out for £7 per ton, and the Government were paying them £10 per ton to encourage them to continue manufacturing.

Mr. Money: What is the reason for the position then?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: You can give any reason you like.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The population is not big enough.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: At any rate, it emphasises the position that it is the Government's duty to see that provision is

made so that our boys and girls can provide for the future.

The Premier: The girls are all right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am pleased that at last the Premier has made a full confession to the public that the State trading concerns during the last few years have not been a drag upon Consolidated Revenue but have shown a profit.

Mr. Pickering: He also said he would sell them if he had the chance.

Mr. Lambert: Would you support the sale of them?

Mr. Pickering: Yes, certainly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was rather disappointed to hear the Premier say, when speaking about land settlement in the South-West, that 20,000 people could be settled in eight years. I was hoping that that result would have been achieved in two or three years. It is the duty of this House to increase the population of the State if we can find the money. Like my Leader I think our own people should have first chance but I am not one of those, as yet, who will not say there is a large quantity of land available for our own people, as well as for those coming from overseas. The more land and the more settlement we can get from overseas the better it will be, for the settlement of land will provide more work for those in the city. Without increased population we cannot provide extra work throughout the State.

Member: The city people should be sent out to the country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A lot of the people in the cities would be no good if they went out into the country.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is no use getting up and saying that the country should amalgamate and work against the city. In every part of the world large numbers of people are to be found crowded in the cities. The position is no different in Western Australia than it is in America, in Europe or elsewhere. In some cases there are large towns in which the population is concentrated, while there are also large numbers spread throughout the country districts. In Western Australia we have a small population and one really large town. The consequence is that the concentration of population in the city is shown more clearly in Western Australia than in other parts. I for one do not contend that immigration is against the interests of Western Australia. On the contrary, I believe that immigration will prove beneficial for Western Australia. During the last few years we were in office the Labour Government brought in about 20,000 people and there was never more employment than during the time when our population was increasing at that rate. The advent of the new comers was never felt. It should be emphasised, however, that we cannot encourage an increase in the population of Western Australia by offering a man and his wife 25s. a week.

Mr. Mann: That is not done.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is done.

Mr. Pickering: You should prove that statement.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Even for a man alone you will not encourage him to come here with an offer of 25s. a week.

Mr. Teesdale: He gets his keep as well.

Mr. McCallum: The member for Sussex should ask the member for Fremantle about the matter, for he has the proof.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know many of them because I have come across these cases. Of course things are changed now in England, and if we desire to encourage British immigrants to come here we must pay them better. The member for Claremont can inform the House as to the position of the British farmer. At the present time the farm labourer in Great Britain can get far more in England than he can get here.

Mr. Mann: He does not get a farm presented to him in England.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am talking about the wages question. If he does not get more than he is offered at the present time he will not emigrate to Western Australia, and if he came here on those wages he could not get a farm.

Mr. Mann: Men are coming here to be educated in farming.

Mr. Teesdale: You do not want men who are coming here to be educated in farming to receive full wages, while they are getting bushed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is the difficulty we have to contend with in Western Australia. We should realise the position that we are not going to get farm labourers. I am confident that had the Premier not made stringent arrangements with the Commonwealth, we would have been flooded with town people from England.

Mr. Teesdale: Why do you want them paid full wages when you admit we cannot get competent farmers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: At the same time a man must live and keep his wife and children when they come here.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no man who would be more ready to concede full wages than the member for Roebourne.

Mr. Teesdale: That is, if the men are competent.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Do you think that 25s. is enough?

Mr. Latham: You will not be able to educate people in farming unless you make some such provision.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: All these people are not fools. In the past some of them were, but they are not fools now.

Mr. Lambert: You speak with feeling.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do. I have gone through this experience myself. There is no good beating about the bush for it must be conceded that every advantage is taken of the new comer to pay him the lowest wages possible.

Hon. P. Collier. It is the old tale; he is only a new chum.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Since 1912-13 there have been improvements because in those days we used to see advertisements running somewhat to the following effect: "Wanted, immigrant, good ploughman, first class man, 10s. per week."

Mr. Mann: Those conditions do not exist to-day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is certainly 25s. to-day and that is some improvement, although it is not enough. I raise this question because these impressions gained by the people who come out here are passed on to the old country, where they quickly get about. I have seen some men in Fremantle who came out under the overseas settlement scheme and who have gone back to England because they found they could do better in England than was possible here.

Hon. P. Collier: And they make that fact known there too.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is useless to say that we will spend money on an immigration policy unless those who are here will use every possible endeavour to do the fair thing to these people who come out from England and try to make them satisfied.

The Premier: Hear, hear; that is right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If that were done, there is no doubt that Western Australia will gain from immigration in future. The Premier also said something about strikes, and proceeded to show that the strikes had been to a large extent, responsible for the position in which he is placed to-day. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) also referred to-night to strikes and said that there was a growing tendency to make the conduct of affairs in Western Australia, not only so far as the Government were concerned but also in connection with private individuals, far more difficult. No body of men dislikes strikes more than trade unionists themselves. Only on very rare occasions do men decide to strike if the employers are at all reasonable. It is only in the extreme cases where strikes take place. Throughout the whole world there has been no end to strikes during the past two years, and I think I am right in saying that Western Australia has been more free from strikes than any other part of the British Empire.

Mr. Wilson: More free than any other part of the world.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have had them in India by the dozen. They have had them in England, in South Africa, in Canada, and also in various other States of the Commonwealth. When I was in England with my hon. friend the member for Roebourne, we were almost afraid to go a short journey on the railway for fear that we should not be able to get back. Some comments have been made here in regard to industrial troubles. I give place to no man in regard to loyalty and the upholding of law and order. I quoted just now from the appeal made to the people of Victoria Park to vote for Mr. Scaddan, who would uphold the Constitution. But there is a proper way

of upholding the Constitution. When the Government armed the police at Fremantle and in Kalgoorlie, they did it in contravention of the law.

Hon. P. Collier: The law did not permit them to do so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. The Police Act provides for the making of regulations for the arming of the police. No regulation was made permitting the police to carry firearms; so to furnish the police with firearms at the time of the Kalgoorlie trouble was a violation of the law. We should do this sort of thing with a great deal of care, because in times of excitement somebody may kick over the traces, and once a start is made with the shooting, God help the position! At one time we were all frightened of a gun. However things have changed, and there are now thousands of men in Western Australia who have learnt to make certain damaging articles which are not put in a gun. And there is a possibility that when the police start shooting, the other side may start also. Whilst it does not matter much if an hotel is pulled down, it does mean something if there is loss of life. It is not wise to put firearms into the hands of men, some of them not even members of the police force. I do not believe in the use of firearms on either side. You cannot retrieve a life once it is gone.

Mr. Boyland: Yet they killed one man in Kalgoorlie before the police came on the scene.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And they killed a man in Fremantle after the police got to work. This arming of the police is a measure to be resorted to only with judgment and care. I give place to no man in loyalty and in respect for law and order, but I say the very greatest care should be exercised in arming the police at a time of civil disturbance which could be got over without either loss of life or serious damage. I was very much surprised to-night at the praise lavished on the Premier by the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson). The Premier's land settlement policy was everything that was good.

Mr. A. Thomson: I did not say that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: All right, I will not tie the hon. member down to that; but the whole position in regard to the Premier was good, and no other man had so much at heart the future of the State. If I had wished to say that, I could have said it quite free from any hypocrisy, because I have at all times praised the Premier's land policy. But such a statement cannot be accepted from the Acting Leader of the Country Party as freely as it might be accepted from this side of the House.

Mr. A. Thomson: Can you show me in "Hansard"—

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: You were speaking on behalf of your party. The man who has been cried sky-high to-night as the saviour of the State, the only man with faith in the future of the State, the one man for land

settlement, is the very man whom that party, when the late Hon. Frank Wilson formed his Government, said must not be appointed either Minister for Lands or Minister for Agriculture.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, the party stipulated that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier to-day is a little god with them because he has given them all that they want. Let him refuse them to-morrow, and they will readily cut his throat. They would kill him at once. They have already threatened him to-night with what they intend to do. In regard to land settlement, the Premier and I have worked together and done some good for the State. I was very much surprised to learn that the Premier intends to put only 20,000 settlers in the South-West during the next eight years. I was much struck also with the Premier's appeal to the House in regard to the settlement of the South-West. He urged that the House should again take into consideration matters affecting the Forestry Act. I say that no public official should ever have the power to dictate the land settlement policy of the Government. If any official has that power now, it must be taken from him. No Government official should have the right to say to the Government, "You shall open only this land or that land." It is the duty of the Government to say what the land settlement policy shall be, and Parliament has no right to take away that power from the representatives of the electors. When the Bill went through, I pointed out the difficulty likely to arise and said we should not put such power into the hands of one man. If no select committee be appointed to deal with this matter, I hope the Premier will introduce legislation to restore the power to the hands of the Executive of the State, the representatives of the people, the leaders of a majority of members of this House. The authority must be in their hands to say whether or not land shall be opened for settlement. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) in a letter to the Press, said that his friend, the Conservator of Forests, had had a lot of trouble owing to the land settlement policy of the Premier. If we are to grow nothing but trees in the South-West, what will become of our land settlement policy?

Mr. J. Thomson: What about the Esperance land?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier said that he is throwing open a large area of Esperance land for people on the goldfields. No man should have the power to dictate the land settlement policy of the Government.

Mr. Money: There is plenty of land without timber, sufficient for land settlement for the next 20 years.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier, in dealing with the finances last night, put up a very good case from his point of view. He showed that as between 1916 and 1921 we were now a little better off because we have got a larger return from our business

undertakings. He implied that I had given a tip to the Leader of the Opposition. I wish the Leader of the Opposition had mentioned it to me beforehand, for I would have told him he was quoting the wrong figures. The Premier jumped the figures of the Leader of the Opposition. In 1916 the whole of the trading concerns shown in the Estimates were put in the column headed "Business Undertakings." The revenue received from trading concerns was all put in under "Revenue from business undertakings." And so, too, the expenditure. But to-day it is not so, and to make a comparison between the revenue of 1916 and that of 1921 it is necessary to deduct the trading concerns from the business undertakings. The Leader of the Opposition said the Premier had received £1,850,000 more than in 1916. The Premier acknowledged that. What is the position? The revenue received in 1921 amounted to £6,789,565. For the information of hon. members I may add that there was about £186,000 which the Premier got from trading concerns for little or no expenditure. In 1916, after deducting trading concerns the revenue was £4,778,731. Instead of having an excess revenue of £1,850,000 the Premier had an excess revenue of £2,010,834. That was the difference in revenue as between 1916 and 1921. The expenditure in 1921 was £7,474,387, and after deducting the trading concerns in 1916 it was £5,089,862, or an excess expenditure of £2,384,525. "But," says the Premier, "look at the large amount of increase in interest and sinking fund I have to pay; look at the large amount of wages increase since 1916."

The Premier: About a million.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I find that the excess in interest was £565,145. The Premier stated that the increase in pay over 1916 represents £1,033,000. I suppose that means over all the men employed in the Government.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Many of those men are not paid out of Consolidated Revenue at all, but I am content to take the whole lot. This means that the total expenditure was £1,598,145 out of £2,010,834. After meeting all this expenditure for interest and increased wages, the Premier had the advantage of £412,689 more revenue than we had in 1916, and yet he finished with a deficit £326,599 more than we had in 1916, or a total excess of £739,288 after meeting all these increased charges.

The Premier: You are forgetting the £400,000 recoup.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Recoups were exactly the same in 1916 in comparison.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It makes no difference; we pay the money out at the beginning of the year and get it back at the end of the year. So far as revenue is concerned, after meeting the increased wages

and the increased interest and sinking fund, the Premier still had half a million of revenue extra, and yet he increased the deficit by £326,000, or a total of over three-quarters of a million.

The Premier: You are juggling with the figures.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, they are correct. Anyone can check them in the returns. No wonder the Premier accepted the total of £1,850,000 which the Leader of the Opposition quoted. In fact, the Premier jumped at those figures in order to make the present position appear better in comparison with that of 1916. I ask members again to study the 1916 figures when we lost £24,000 on trading concerns; that is, the expenditure exceeded the receipts by that amount and in addition, we had to pay interest and sinking fund for which the Premier at present is recouped, whereas we were not. If the Premier turns up the Auditor General's report for 1916, he will find that there were outstanding debts due to Consolidated Revenue of over £400,000 at the end of the financial year. Never before or since was such a sum outstanding, and as against this the outstanding claims amounted to only £50,000.

The Premier: Who owed you £400,000?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Auditor General says it was owing to Consolidated Revenue.

The Premier: I know it was not owing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Auditor General showed the items; anyone can see them in the report. If the Government in 1916 had desired to be hard on the farmers, they could have squared the finances and had no deficit at all. The moneys which were owing at that time, which was just after the drought, would have covered the deficit.

Mr. A. Thomson: But you would have ruined a lot of the farmers and would have had no traffic for the railways.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was scarcely any traffic in 1916. On account of the drought the farmers had no wheat.

The Premier: There is at least £500,000 owing to the Government to-day in one way and another.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Auditor General does not show it.

The Premier: We have not called his attention to it.

Hon. P. Collier: It is his business to call our attention to these things. That is just a wild guess.

The Premier: No, it is not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the Premier has any charge to make against the Auditor General, it is his duty to move a motion and suggest a change. We shall have an opportunity to deal with the finances later on. I wish to impress upon the Government the duty which devolves upon them of bringing the revenue and expenditure more closely into line. I was very much surprised to read in the "West Australian" yesterday

that the Premier of Victoria had been endeavouring to show Western Australia up in a far worse position than his own State. He said the debt of Western Australia was £140 per head. Our returns show clearly that it is a shade under £123. I spoke to the Premier about it last night, and he might have spent more time in criticising the statement of the Premier of Victoria than that of the boy Taylor who did not know what he was writing about.

The Premier: That is a very hard thing to say.

Hon. P. Collier: But he is just a liberal Premier trying to score at the election.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He represented Western Australia in a very bad position.

Hon. P. Collier: That does not matter so long as he can win the election.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But it matters to us. Victoria has nothing to crow about. I find that Victoria's expenditure up to 1919 on harbours and rivers, roads and bridges, was 3.27 per cent. of its indebtedness while Western Australia's was 10.82 per cent.; on mines Victoria .58 per cent. and Western Australia 4.62 per cent.; on advances to settlers Victoria one per cent., Western Australia 7.32 per cent.; on public utilities generally, outside of railways, Victoria 6.92 per cent., Western Australia 11.10. This shows conclusively that Western Australia has entered into far more public undertakings directly through the Government than Victoria has done. As a matter of fact at the end of 1919, the Metropolitan Water Works owed over 10 millions of money in addition to what was owing to the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: It is impossible to make any fair comparison with Victoria, because they have so many boards which have incurred millions of expenditure not debited to State expenditure.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I think that the Premier last night, when he had the opportunity, should have contradicted the statement of the Premier of Victoria. The latter not only represented the gross indebtedness of this State as being £17 per head higher than it is, but he failed to take into consideration our net indebtedness. All our public utilities are costing us so much more than are those in Victoria, and the Premier represented us as owing £140 per head instead of less than £123. In conclusion, I would point out that while we may have to preach a very doleful tale here, we do not want outsiders to make it worse. In all our statements here we do endeavour to the utmost to give the true position, but Western Australia will never be truthfully represented in the Eastern States. I think it was the duty of the Premier to take the first opportunity to contradict this public statement made by the Premier of Victoria. Though we are in a bad way and perhaps hard up for money, when we review our loan indebtedness, we are in as good a position if not a better position than any other State in Australia, but this is not to say that

strict economy must not be exercised in the endeavour to reduce our annual deficit. I trust that the Leader of the Country Party will exercise all the force of which he is capable in order to compel the Government to take that line of action which his executive has instructed him to do under their rules and constitution.

On motion by Mr. Boyland, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th August, 1921.

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

SWEARING IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. Piesse (Toodyay) took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTION—LAKESIDE FIREWOOD WORKERS.

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Premier: 1, In view of the possibility of further industrial trouble on the Lakeside woodline, is it his intention to lay on the Table of the House the exact terms and conditions showing the concessions granted by the Government to the Woodline Company on the goldfields consequent upon the settlement of the dispute in 1919? 2, Is he aware that the Lakeside Company is endeavouring to use the terms of such settlement to override an award granted to the engineers by the Industrial Arbitration Court? 3, Will he take steps to ascertain the full particulars of the Lakeside Company's attitude towards such award and take such action as may be expedient to prevent a cessation of work?

The PREMIER replied: 1, It was not so intended, but if the hon. member desires this course to be taken he may table a motion to that effect. 2, It does not appear that

the 1916 agreement, which was subsequently extended in 1919, applies to any other than the members of the Firewood Workers' Union on the woodlines affected. 3, This is a matter between the employers and the employees.

QUESTION—STOCK AT NORTHERN PORTS.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Premier: In view of the high ruling prices of meat and the large number of stock available in the northern ports (some 60,000 to 70,000 in the Port Hedland district alone), can the Government offer any assistance or propose any scheme whereby the stock may be brought to market?

The PREMIER replied: I will make full inquiry into the position.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE RAILWAY AND JETTY.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Premier: What were the reasons for placing on the Estimates last year the sum of £40,000 for the construction of a jetty at Esperance Bay, and some £20,000 towards the construction of the railway when the matter had been in abeyance for years, and when our financial condition is at so low an ebb?

The PREMIER replied: (a) No financial provision was made on last year's Estimates for construction of jetty at Esperance Bay. (b) The resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27th February, 1918—"That in the opinion of this House the first railway to be constructed in pursuance of the programme of railway construction authorised by Parliament should be the Esperance-Northward line," made it incumbent on the Government to proceed with this railway before the construction of others could be considered.

QUESTION—ALBANY RAILWAY ACCIDENT, COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCES.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has any compensation, compassionate, or sustenance allowance been paid by the Government to either or both of the widows of the men who were killed in the railway accident near Albany in November last? 2, If so, what are the particulars relating thereto?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes; compensation was paid to both widows. 2, To the widow of the late Dr. Blackburne the maximum amount authorised under Section 39 of the Railways Act of 1904 was paid, viz., £2,000. In the case of the widow of the late Mr. Fennel the maximum amount under the Employers' Liability Act of 1894 was paid, viz., £591 12s.