

nomination of Governors were left to the State Governments it is possible that all future appointments would be political ones. As the leading article in this morning's paper points out only a little while ago one of the Premiers tried to make a position for himself at Washington—a position both unnecessary and uncalled for. Fortunately, he failed. I would recommend every member to read that leading article. It indicates the dangers that will confront us if the memorial meets with success. I have moved the amendment because I realise that a matter of great importance is involved. Let me give some reasons for my surprise at the Premier having signed the memorial. A few weeks ago he returned from the seat of Empire after having met statesmen, financiers and men of high standing. In England he was well received; he obtained a good deal of information and he had a good time. Those privileged to hear the Premier's utterances in the Prince of Wales Theatre on his return are not likely to forget it. It was one of the finest addresses I had heard. From him, therefore, I did expect something better than his bowing to such a request by subscribing his name to the petition. It is beyond me how he could see what he saw, hear what he heard, and be received as he was received in the Old Country, and then almost immediately after his return to the State could concur in the advocacy of such a radical change. Maybe it was within the Premier's province to act as he did, but on a matter of such importance he should first have consulted Cabinet and the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled, and given them an opportunity to express their views.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 20th August, 1925.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. WILSON (Collie) [4.35]: I shall not detain the House very long. Were it not for a little episode this week, I would not have spoken. In common with other members of the House I attended the Legislative Council to hear the Governor's Speech. I heard it and I believe the Governor was there. In fact I did not see him, but I found out afterwards that he was hidden from sight by some uniformed person occupying the seat of the Chairman of Committees. Whether the Governor ever nodded to me or to the back of that particular gentleman, I do not know. The time has arrived when we should have some manners displayed and we should see that no officer of the Legislative Council stands in front of His Excellency. In fact I think a change of programme would be very acceptable in this House, because I think the Governor should open Parliament in the House of the people—the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Panton: Hear, hear!

MR. WILSON: It is not too late in the day to make the attempt.

Mr. Maley: We will have it over again.

MR. WILSON: It is one of those things that everyone appreciates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We will have to get better furniture here.

MR. WILSON: I wish to congratulate the State upon the appointment of such a distinguished soldier and gentleman as Sir William Campion to the position of Governor of this State. I also wish to congratulate ourselves upon having so worthy a Lieutenant-Governor as Sir Robert McMillan. At the same time I endorse the action taken by the Premier in conjunction with Premiers in the Eastern States relative

to the appointment of future Governors from Australians.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We do not quite agree with you.

Mr. WILSON: Let me have a show! I did not interrupt you very much! We have men in this State who, with all due respect to the present occupant of the office, could carry out the duties wisely and well. I am glad that the Premier has joined with the other Premiers in this respect. In the "West Australian" of the 19th August is a statement indicating that our Premier has forwarded a memorial to that effect. It states—

The Western Australian Government have decided to agree with the request made by the Premier of New South Wales (Mr. Lang) that representations be made to the Imperial Government that in future only Australians should be appointed to the positions of State Governors. The Premier (Mr. Collier) made that announcement last night.

Of course that debars me as a Scotsman from taking the job. I am convinced, however, that we have Australians who could fill the position honourably and well, men who have done yeoman service, and I think the time has arrived when Australians should look after their own country. I congratulate the Government on the excellent progress they have made in connection with the finances. When I remind hon. members that the deficit has been reduced from £229,000 to £58,000, they will see what good progress has been made. While it may be true that the foundations were laid by other people, the carrying out of the good work was left to the present Government. They have done that work well. I congratulate the State upon nearly turning the corner.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Don't pat your own backs.

Mr. WILSON: In the Governor's Speech I find reference to what has been done for returned soldiers in connection with the Mental Home. I am one of those who believe we cannot do too much for those people. They are afflicted in more ways than one and it is up to the Government to help the people who bore the heat and burden of the fight in France. It is not too late in the day to make their lot easier, and I am pleased to note that the Government are trying to do something for these men. There has been and still is a considerable sum of money held in various parts of the State in connection with the War Patriotic Fund. A Royal Commission was appointed two or three years

ago to inquire into this matter and the suggestion was made that these sums should be pooled and placed under the control of a trust directed by three trustees, one of whom would be appointed by the soldiers, one by public, and one by the Government. I believe that the Government intend to introduce a Bill to give effect to that recommendation. If that is done it will enable the money to be put to its proper use. I hope that will be done this year. Referring to forestry matters, I was pleased to hear the interesting address delivered by the member for Forrest (Miss Holman). I congratulate her on her election to Parliament and I believe she will be a worthy representative of her father who did so well in this House. Practically half the electors in my constituency comprise timber workers. In addition to the Collie mines I have 15 or 16 mills extending from Nannup to Wilga, Collie, and Greenbushes. I agree with Miss Holman's remarks when she referred to some of the conditions under which the men are working as being unsatisfactory. I know some of their conditions are fairly good, while others are fairly bad. Of course we do not get all bad employers or all good employees, and so it is well that all the conditions are mixed. I think more control should be taken over the provision of accommodation for workers in connection with this industry, and I suggest that some measure should be introduced for that purpose. As to migration, I am more than pleased to congratulate the Premier on the good work he accomplished in the Old Land. He made a better agreement with the Imperial authorities than was previously given to us. Of course we saw the faults of the old agreement and they have been rectified to a considerable extent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are referring to Mr. Bruce's agreement?

Mr. WILSON: If the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) arranges anything, we must look out that we are not taken down.

The Premier: Not so good an agreement now, is it?

Mr. WILSON: I am always sceptical of Johnny Australians and he is one of them.

Mr. Mann: Are you sceptical about his three-quarters of a million?

Mr. WILSON: Practically; because we don't get it in hard cash. Even if he does give us £750,000 he ought to give more in view of the good work done by Western Australia on behalf of the returned soldiers

when they were disbanded. The returned soldiers should get a few more three-quarters of a million from the Federal Government and the time has come when we should be prepared to cut down some of the settler-soldiers' losses and the Federal Treasury should pay for it. Three-quarters of a million is not enough.

Mr. Mann: It is not a bad start.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. I believe Sir James Mitchell moved in this matter when he was Premier, but I believe that if there was some more kick from our Federal representatives the ball would be set rolling faster. I suggest a better kick.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But £1,200,000 is not too bad.

Mr. WILSON: A good deal more should be done for the soldier settlers. When I was speaking on one occasion the Leader of the Opposition interjected about some land that had been purchased as having been a good bargain.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So it was.

Mr. WILSON: Some of the land purchased represented outrageous bargains, and some of the people who sold the land should not be allowed outside for two or three years. They did it deliberately and the Leader of the Opposition knows it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not. You speak for yourself.

Mr. WILSON: You do. They sold it to unsuspecting returned soldiers when they came back. Plenty of farms were sold at enhanced prices to the diggers, and they had no hope of pulling through. A good many of the men have been forced off the land because of the exorbitant prices paid for it. Exorbitant prices had to be charged them because too much was paid by the Lands Department for the land. Some men who sold their land to the Government gave a fair deal, but some of them did not. I am in favour of group settlement, and I am in favour of immigration. From the mere fact of anyone criticising a scheme, it should not be imputed that he is opposed to the scheme. No big scheme was ever launched without a good many blunders having been committed. Britain blundered through the war and, though she won the war, she lost financially. We shall win through with the group settlement scheme,

but we shall lose financially. The gain, however, will be socially. What if group settlement cost four or five millions and we had to write off half the money? If the Commonwealth could spend seven hundred millions for the purpose of slaying men in France, surely to God the Commonwealth could spend seventy millions to establish men to till the soil! The Federal Government should see that something is done; they should help the State to bring group settlement to a successful issue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are helping.

Mr. WILSON: Sometimes they are not too helpful.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, they have never been so good as they are now.

Mr. WILSON: There has been a good deal of comment regarding the personnel of the group settlement commission. I was somewhat amused at the remarks of the member for Perth (Mr. Mann). He said in effect that the members of the commission were prejudiced because they were wheat farmers. On the commission were men who have spent practically 20 years in the South-West.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not farming.

Mr. WILSON: Well, they were there and saw how to clear land, and it ill-became the member for Perth to criticise the personnel of the Commission. The hon. member a few years ago was appointed to a Royal Commission as a timber expert and he had never worked amongst timber in his life.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have only to put in an hour and a half on timber to learn about it.

Mr. WILSON: The member for Perth claimed that the members of the commission were prejudiced because they were wheat farmers. Was he prejudiced on the Forests Commission because he was not a timber worker? No. I believe he gave an honest report in conformity with the evidence taken, and I am equally prepared to say that the group settlement commission were as honest in their conclusions. They did excellent work. Complaint has been made that they did not call too many witnesses. When a Royal Commission sits it is possible to get any number of witnesses, but many of them only cover the same

ground. There are 127 group settlements, and almost the same tale is told in each locality. It is useless to examine 20 men if half a dozen can supply all the evidence. I am given to understand that a good deal of the evidence was put up to the commission by the department, who adduced the best evidence possible. The evidence covers 6,000 odd questions and answers, most of which I have read. Apart from that I have visited a good many groups. I have not too much knowledge of farming, but I speak from a certain acquaintance with the conditions in both Gippsland and in the South-West. I was 20 years in Gippsland and I have been 20 years in the South-West.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Underground.

Mr. WILSON: Not all the time. A miner works only eight hours a day, and after work he has time to observe the conditions. If anyone says the rainfall of the South-West is as good as that of Gippsland, he does not know what he is talking about. The table of statistics submitted to the commission was an eye-opener. The rain in the Bacchus Marsh district is more than double that of the South-West. However, I do not wish to pursue that matter further, as I understand there will be an opportunity to discuss the question of group settlement later on. We have had a diatribe by men born in Collie against the fuel produced there. There is a holy Joe in the other House, one of those pious beef buccaners who gets up and talks about what the Collie people should do, what they are doing and what they are fleching from the State, and what they are fleching from the State. I can stand all their personal jibes about Collie coal, but when such statements are published in the Press, they have a harmful effect, and it is time the member for the district took up the cudgels in behalf of the industry and those engaged in it. Four weeks ago I saw in one of the alcoves of the House Mr. Harry Gregory, one-time Minister of the Crown in this State, sitting with four or five other members. As I passed I heard a remark to the effect that we were paying too much for Collie coal. At the time I thought the remark was intended solely for my edification. When I returned that way I asked Mr. Gregory whether he had made the statement that we were paying too much for Collie

coal, and he replied in the affirmative. I said, "You do not know what you are talking about."

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Surely you did not say that.

Mr. WILSON: I did; and if the hon. member for Northam considers that the price is 6s. too high, he does not know what he is talking about, either. Mr. Gregory said the State was paying 6s. a ton too much for Collie coal. I denied the truth of his statement and added, "Anyway, should not the Collie miners receive an increase of wages, the same as the workers in any other trade? Do not forget that you raised your salary from £600 to £1,000." He replied that he did not want the increased salary, and I answered, "No, but you took it." Let me now return to that holy Joe in the Upper House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Anyhow, his wits are as sharp as the end of a butcher's block.

Mr. Maley: The Government ought to buy Irwin coal.

Mr. WILSON: Mr. Holmes, speaking in the Council—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILSON: Then I shall say an hon. member in another place.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not introduce into the debate here anything that transpired in another place.

Mr. WILSON: Does that mean that any man may abuse and vilify a lot of workers and that I am to have no right of replying to him?

Mr. SPEAKER: It means that you cannot discuss what transpires in another place.

Mr. WILSON: I have heard it stated, I do not know whether in another Chamber or elsewhere, that one man said the State was paying 6s. per ton more for Collie coal than it was worth in comparison with Newcastle coal. I shall prove from departmental figures that that statement is absolutely incorrect and malicious. It has also been stated that English capital has control of the coal mines in the Collie district. That is not correct. I have been through the list of shareholders and I find the statement is entirely untrue. Still, I was always of the opinion that we welcomed British or foreign capital, and that we should do nothing to traduce it or frighten it away. One man is said to have remarked that the State was paying 6s. per ton too much for Collie coal

to ensure that the miners should receive a pay they never earned. If any member has ever been down a Collie mine and seen the men at work, he will agree with me that they earn their money. No man works harder than does the Collie miner. The miners are engaged on piecework, and though they earn big wages on the days on which they are employed, their work is intermittent. I guarantee that they do not average four days per week over the whole year. That being so, surely they are entitled to a fair day's wage for the days on which they are employed. Would anyone complain that the Fremantle lumpers earned too much?

Mr. Sleeman: They do not earn too much.

Mr. WILSON: No man would ever contend that they do. If they do receive a fair rate, they do not average many days' work in the week. One thing about the Collie miners is that they do not get a holiday at any time without suffering a deduction from their pay. Yet there are men who would traduce such workers. They talk about bookmakers being in the town. It is true we have three bookmakers there, but we also have 1,500 workmen there, including timber workers, railway men, and colliers. Even if a man does go to Collie on Saturday and see between 20 and 40 men gathered together trying to pick winners, that is not to say the other 1,450 odd men are squandering their money. Nearly every man in Collie owns his little home. That does not indicate improvidence on their part. It shows they are looking after their family affairs and are trying to make their homes comfortable. During the war all kinds of things went up in price. Before 1914 wheat stood at 4s. a bushel, but during the war it went up to 9s. Wool also went up.

Lieut.-Colonel Denton: It has come down, too.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. Beef has gone up and so has sugar. If we compare the price of groceries now with the prices in 1914 we find that it costs 33s. to-day to buy the quantity of groceries we could have bought for £1 in 1914. In view of the fact that all these commodities have gone up, it is only natural that wages should go up, and the wages of Collie miners had to go up as well as those of other people. An oft-repeated sneer is that we are paying 6s. per ton by way of a bonus on Collie coal. I am going to put the boot on the other foot, and to show that Collie coal is subsidising the

Government, and has been subsidising it for the past 10 years. Last night a member spoke about the price of coal charged to the Electricity Supply Department. He was justified in doing that. Some men did not know their work when they drafted the agreement between the Government and the Perth City Council. Although the price of Collie coal went up from 10s. to 24s. a ton, he forgot to mention that the freight had increased from 6s. to 14s. The freight on Collie coal in 1914 to Fremantle was 6s. 6d. a ton, but to-day it is 14s. a ton, or more than double the amount. I suppose the Commissioner of Railways is paid to do his work, and I give him credit for the way he is doing it, but I do not think he is quite fair to the industry.

Mr. Mann: He is doing his work well.

Mr. WILSON: Yes, but if he is unfair in his comment about the Collie coal industry it does us no good. Two years ago he said in his report that it would be noticed that the price of Collie coal between 1907 and 1922 had increased from 9s. 6d. to 19s. per ton, or twice the amount. He allowed his statement to stop at that. On the same page he stated that Newcastle coal had increased nearly 200 per cent., but he made no comment about it.

Mr. Maley: No provision has been made for compensation to farmers for the burning of their crops through Collie coal.

Mr. WILSON: All the crops the hon. member grows would not call for much compensation. The Commissioner's analogy was not fair comment. He also stated that if Collie coal could be obtained 3s. a ton cheaper, it would be very much better for the railways. If he would take £1,000 a year off his salary and convince the railway employees to take 3s. a day less wages, he would save many thousands of pounds to the service. He has not tried that scheme, but he wants the Collie miners to take 3s. a day less so that he may make a better showing with the railways. The railwaymen are entitled to receive a fair day's wage and I do not say they are getting too much, but the Collie miners are also entitled to that, and they are not getting enough. Let me deal with the oft-repeated gibes of the Leader of the Opposition and also those of other members who are attached to his party, that we are paying extra for Collie coal. I have here a statement comparing the consumption of

Collie coal with that of Newcastle coal. The basis employed is 1 ton of Newcastle to 1.38 tons of Collie coal. In 1907 the Chief Mechanical Engineer Mr. Hume, gave the Collie coal figure as being 1.414 tons. He was told by the then Minister for Railways, Mr. Harry Gregory, that this was too high. Mr. Frank Wilson was Premier at the time, and the Leader of the Opposition was a member of his Cabinet. It was then decided that the basis should be 1 ton of Newcastle to 1.342 tons of Collie coal. A Commission was appointed subsequently by the Labour Government. It was called the Woolnough Commission. It made exhaustive tests in order to ascertain the equivalent value of both coals. The basis then arrived at was 1 ton of Newcastle coal to 1.38 tons of Collie coal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The proportion is 1.38 tons of Collie coal to one of Newcastle?

Mr. WILSON: Yes. In 1914 the price of Newcastle coal was 23s. 9d. and of Collie coal 11s. In 1915-16 the price of Newcastle coal had gone up 3s. 2d. a ton to 26s. 11d., but Collie coal remained at 11s.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is that at the pit's mouth?

Mr. WILSON: Yes. I am quoting the standard price that should be paid for standard Collie coal at the pit's mouth, Collie. For Collie coal of a lesser value than 10,000 B.T.U.s. a corresponding reduction is made. I start off by giving a 5s. bonus from the Collie miners to the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Don't do any more of it; it costs too much.

Mr. WILSON: The Commission laid it down that when the selling price of Newcastle coal was 23s. 9d., Collie coal should be sold at 16s. 1d. Instead of that I am starting off at 11s., and giving the Government 5s. 1d. per ton by way of a bonus. The Woolnough Commission said that when Newcastle coal was 23s. 9d. Collie coal was worth 16s. 1d. per ton.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is good coal, anyhow.

Mr. WILSON: In 1915-16 Newcastle coal was selling at 26s. 11d., and Collie coal at 11s. The equitable price of Collie coal should have been 13s. 2½d., and the Collie miners should have been getting 2s. 3½d. per ton more. On that basis they gave to the State a bonus of £13,668 13s. 4d. I suppose the Leader of the Opposition would

be seriously annoyed if I started out to reduce the value of our wheat areas. It is all right to poke a funny gibe at our coal, even if Collie coal is a little inferior.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am not doing that.

Mr. WILSON: But it is the best coal we have.

Mr. Latham: And we ought to use it.

Mr. WILSON: Apart from that the best men I know of are at Collie working in the industry. In 1916-17 the price of Newcastle coal was 28s. 8d., and that of Collie 11s. 6d. We should have got 14s. 7d., but we received 3s. 1d. less than the equivalent value. We thus gave as a bonus to the State £19,890 14s. 9d.

Mr. Richardson: How do you arrive at that bonus?

Mr. WILSON: Tests were made by the Royal Commission and officers of the Railway Department to ascertain the equivalent values of both coals, and by methods of computation they arrived at the basis I have already referred to. They took into consideration every depot, the amount of coal consumed, and everything was got together. Mr. Hume must be recognised to be a man of wide experience, and his conservative estimate was that Collie coal should stand at 1.414 tons to 1 ton Newcastle. Further, if we take Mr. Hume's computation, we have been paying for the past 10 years too little for Collie coal. If we cannot depend on our Chief Mechanical Engineer to make comparative tests of coal, the sooner we get rid of him the better for the State.

Mr. Richardson: All I want to know is whether the calculation is worked out on a percentage basis of the values paid?

Mr. WILSON: Yes. In 1917-18 the price of Newcastle coal was 32s. 1d., and that of Collie coal 13s. 5d. The latter should have been 17s. 0¾d. We got 3s. 7¾d less than we should have got, thus giving the State in that year a sum of £26,160 17s. 2d. In the following year, 1918-19, Newcastle, still going up, was 35s. 1½d., and Collie, not going up, was 13s. 5d. We should have got 19s. 3¼d., or 5s. 10¼d. per ton more. That year the Collie industry gave the State £44,427 11s. 3d.

The Premier: I hope you are not making out a case for a refund.

Mr. WILSON: No, but I am making a case for the protection of Collie. If the Collie miners knew that they were getting 7s. a ton less than they should be getting, things in Collie would be in Queer Street. When I am told that Collie is getting a bonus, a thing which I know to be totally untrue, I must take up the cudgels. I do not think any other trade would have stood the position as long as the Collie miners have stood it. When we have blather skites in another place getting off their billious eloquence, it is time some reply was made.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If the Collie miners are not well looked after by you, no men are well looked after.

Mr. WILSON: That is what I am here for. I have never lost an opportunity of trying to rectify their low wages, and I shall never miss an occasion to get a rise for myself. I would not be true to myself if I did not. One must be true to oneself in the first instance: and even if I am Scottish, I am true in my affection for the bawbees. In 1919-20 Newcastle coal was 41s. 8d., and Collie 16s. The price of Collie should have been 24s. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. The difference in favour of Collie coal, 8s. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton, represented a bonus to Western Australia of £70,510 6s. 10d. In 1920-21 the corresponding figures were 47s. 5d., 19s., and 28s. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., the difference of 9s. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in favour of Collie representing a saving to the State of £82,890 10s. 10d. For 1921-22 the figures were 46s. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., 19s., and 27s. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., the difference of 8s. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in favour of Collie, representing a bonus of £70,985 16s. 10d. In 1922-23 we have the highest rate of all for Newcastle coal since before the war period, 48s. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., with a price of 19s. for Collie. The price of Collie coal should have been 29s. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., or 10s. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per ton more. This difference represented a bonus of £86,199 8s. In 1923-24 there is a slight reduction of 10d. in the price of Newcastle coal, which went down to 47s. 9d., while Collie remained at 19s. The difference in favour of Collie coal, 9s. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton, represented a saving to the State of £85,050 12s. 4d. For the financial year just closed the price of Newcastle coal was 47s. 5d., Collie again remaining at 19s.; and the difference of 9s. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton in favour of Collie represents a gift to the State of £83,842 16s. 7d. The total amount Collie has given up during those 10 years is £584,547 7s. 11d. During the war timber jumped from £5 10s. per load

to over £10 per load, and I heard no one cry out against the timber people. I do not cry out against the wheat grower getting a fair return. I consider that he is entitled to a fair return. And I say the same of the wool grower. But when people say that in order that there may be cheap freights, the coal miners ought to work for nothing, I begin to take exception. Even if the coal was given for nothing, the Collie coal miners have been told that they are not doing enough.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The present Government say that.

Mr. WILSON: The present Government have been more than fair to my people. However, Collie coal has plenty to fight against in the fact of its quality being inferior to that of the imported article, and we should not deery our own coal. If a man has a grievance, that is no reason why he should attack an industry he knows nothing about, as was done by a member of another place. I guarantee that Collie does not know such men, and does not want to either. While other people talk glibly of coal miners, I venture to declare that our miners in Collie are just as moral and good living, although they do not wear bell-toppers, as some of their critics are. I can stand anything personally, but when it is published that the Government are giving a bonus to Collie, I must stigmatise the statement as totally untrue. If members of the Government will take my advice, they will not give too much heed to the vapourings of some officials.

Mr. Taylor: Do you not think you are paying too much attention to a member of another place?

Mr. WILSON: When an ex-Minister of the Crown, who made the basis, deliberately states that the Government are paying 6s. per ton too much for Collie coal, the fact being that they are paying 9s. per ton too little, it is time that a stand was taken. The gentleman's arithmetic is bad, and he was only talking for the occasion. I am talking for this occasion, so as to put before the House and the country the true position of affairs. I thank hon. members for having listened to such a rigmarole of figures, but I want those figures placed on record so that they can be read and digested at leisure. My only policy is to keep faith with the coal miners. I submit a comparative statement showing the consumption of Newcastle coal

and Collie coal by the Western Australian Government railways:—

BASIS: 1 TON NEWCASTLE = 1.38 COLLIE.

1907 { Chief Mechanical Engineer Hume : 1 ton Newcastle = 1.414 Collie.
Minister for Railways Gregory ... 1 " " " 1.342 " "
1916 { Woonough Commission ... 1 " " " 1.38 " "

Year.	Price New- castle.	Price Collie.	Collie Price on basis of increase in Newcastle.	Consump- tion of Collie.	Newcastle Equiv- alent.	Difference in favour Collie.	Bonus to State.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	tons.	tons.	s. d.	£ s. d.
1914-15	23 0	11 0	13 3	179 443	130 031	2 3	13,668 13 4
1915-16	24 11	11 0	13 7	164 861	119 464	3 1	19,890 14 0
1916-17	28 8	11 6	17 0	173 040	129 021	3 7	24,160 17 2
1917-18	32 1	13 5	17 0	193 046	143 511	5 10	44,427 11 3
1918-19	35 14	13 5	24 0	209 458	151 781	8 0	70,510 6 10
1919-20	41 5	16 0	24 0	242 630	175 318	9 2	82,800 10 10
1920-21	47 8	19 0	27 3	249 011	180 442	8 3	70,985 16 10
1921-22	46 24	19 0	27 3	235 805	170 793	10 6	86,190 8 0
1922-23	48 0	19 0	28 5	238 434	171 328	10 6	85,950 12 4
1923-24	47 0	19 0	28 5	251 364	182 147	9 5	83,842 16 7
1924-25	47 5	19 0	28 5	251 871	182 515	9 2	£584,647 7 11

MR. CLYDESDALE (Canning) [5.29]:

Ever since my first election to this House I have wondered what advantage the Address-in-reply debate can be to the country; but after listening to the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) I am satisfied that the debate has at least afforded an opportunity for proving that the State of Western Australia owes the Collie coal proprietors a very large amount of money. From every other aspect I am bound to say that the Address-in-reply has become an obsolete function. I cannot help thinking that it represents the waste of a good deal of time without benefit accruing to anyone. Perhaps members are under the impression that notice is taken by the Government of their speeches and protests here. To judge from my own experience, and from the results I have obtained, the effect is practically nil.

Mr. Sampson: You are perpetuating the evil.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Probably I am, but nevertheless I cannot help thinking that the time has arrived for the abolition of the Address-in-reply debate. Members

could make their points on the Estimates just the same. Moreover, Ministers are now waiting to bring down Bills, and the time given to the Address-in-reply debate would be better occupied in getting on with those Bills. In common with others, I wish to congratulate the Government on the improved state of the finances. Now that the Labour Party is in power the finances, no doubt, will continue to improve.

Mr. Mann: Can you tell us anything about the carry-over?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Only that you have been carrying over all your life. What impresses me in the debate is the large amount of money required by hon. members for their respective electorates. I listened to a number of country members, and I estimated that the Government would have to find over £10,000,000 to satisfy them.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: What about metropolitan members?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: They are very modest in their requests. Personally I require only a quarter of a million expended in my electorate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The country that wanted nothing would be a good place to get out of.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: The point is that the money required by hon. members is badly needed for the provision of harbour works, railways, docks, trams and other necessary facilities. In my own electorate I want five tram extensions, which, with the rolling stock, would cost £140,000. Then we require two new ferry boats between Barrack-street and Mends-street, at a cost of £15,000. New schools are required at a cost of £10,000, and I want a new bridge at the Causeway at a cost of over £100,000. That makes a total of about £265,000 that I require to have expended in the Canning electorate. The trouble with this State is that we have such enormous areas and so huge an amount of money is required that even if it could all be found we have not sufficient people in the State to pay the interest bill. Therefore the chief salvation of the State will be found in a sound, sane immigration policy. There is no doubt about that. It has been said by members on this side that migration tends to reduce wages. I cannot subscribe to that, although I agree that administrative methods will have to be changed. But take America and Canada: Nobody would think

of arguing that migration had been the means of reducing wages or living conditions in those countries; indeed it is as the result of migration that wages and living conditions there are so high to-day. If we had ten times the population in Western Australia that we have to-day, wages and living conditions would be infinitely better than they are. It is a fallacy to delude ourselves with the idea that migration is popular here to-day. Actually migration is very unpopular in Western Australia. I have studied the question and I propose to give some of the reasons why migration is unpopular. Let me put them under four headings, as follows:—1, Wages are unsatisfactory for those who have to work on the farms; 2, Insufficient provision is made for the relief of unemployment during June, July and August; 3, Settlers are unable to secure land after serving an apprenticeship; 4, Unsatisfactory type of settler from towns in Great Britain. Those four reasons are militating seriously against migration in Western Australia. Take the first one: The Government could greatly improve the conditions in respect of married men. I would suggest that in several places on the wheat belt the Government build workers' homes. Those cottages would tend to keep the married men on the farms, instead of their coming to Perth. If those men had their cottages, they would be able to find employment locally during the winter months, and they would have their wives with them. I am led to believe that in quite a number of areas the Government have reserves of about 640 acres. The proposed cottages could be built on those reserves, and 10 acres given to each of the cottage holders. The price of a worker's cottage containing four rooms and a verandah is £147 on rails, Perth. Then there would be freight, say £10, and erection, say £30, and we have a cottage for £187.

Mr. Lindsay: The freight would be nearer £50.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: That would depend upon the destination. However, 8s. 6d. per week would pay the interest and sinking fund on such a cottage. I suggest that the Government start with 50 or 60 of those cottages. Even if the scheme were to prove a failure it would entail no loss, for the homes could be sold at a profit.

Mr. Mann: They would be tenanted immediately they were built.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: I am satisfied of that. However, the point is that the cottages would help to keep married men in the country. Now I come to the second reason, namely insufficient provision for the relief of unemployment during June, July, and August. This is not peculiar to Western Australia, where we have mostly primary industries. In Canada the Government have to make special efforts to provide work for the unemployed during the winter. With us the position of the unemployed is becoming worse every year. This year the Government have had to find more work for them than in previous years. Also I know that in this respect an association with which I am connected has had a far more strenuous year than for many years past. A special effort will have to be made to provide work during the winter months, and I suggest that the Government endeavour to spend their relief money in the country rather than in the city: and, further, that they make provision ahead of the actual need for it. When on the wheat belt recently, I was struck by the fact that the majority of the farmers will have to wire-net their properties. If arrangements could be made with the Federal Government to advance money on long terms for wire netting, we could absorb nearly the whole of the unemployed in that work next year.

Mr. Mann: The Federal Government are doing that now.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Eight miles out of Merredin a fortnight ago a body of rabbit trappers informed me that they had caught 800 rabbits. The Government might well consider the advisability of sending some of the unemployed up there to go rabbiting, for rabbit skins are fetching 10d. at the present time. Moreover, unless additional trapping is arranged for, the rabbits are going to inflict a serious loss on the State. Rabbit trapping is not hard work, and quite a number of the unemployed could be absorbed in it on the wheat belt.

Mr. Panton: Every week we are importing hundreds of rabbits to be used in the manufacture of small goods.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: During a hasty car run through the district we saw thousands of them. Now just consider my third reason, which is that would-be settlers are unable to obtain land even after serving an apprentice-

ship. The scheme put up by the Leader of the Opposition was that when the migrants were brought to the State they should be given 12 months' experience and then placed on farms. No one admires more than I do the good work the Leader of the Opposition has done, both on the wheat belt and in the group settlements; but it seems unfair that a number of people who have fulfilled their obligations should be unable to obtain land. However, the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) has dealt exhaustively with that, so I will carry it no further. That brings me to the fourth reason, namely the inexperienced type of settler from Great Britain. This subject has engaged the attention for a long time of those concerned in immigration. I have made inquiries of people who have travelled extensively in Great Britain, and I have come to the conclusion that the type of migrant we require is not available in Great Britain.

Mr. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLYDESDALE: That is not a hasty judgment. I will not say there are not some of them in Great Britain; but the migrant we require is even more badly needed in Great Britain than he is here. That means that when the migration agreement is fixed up, we shall have to take England's unemployed, for Great Britain is not going to give us money under the migration agreement and allow us to go outside Great Britain for our migrants. Of course we do not want to go outside Great Britain for our migrants; but it is a very serious matter for the State to have to take inexperienced men and train them before placing them on the land. When our soldiers returned from the Front, some 400 of them, walking about unemployed, became desperate. Thereupon the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) and I called a meeting of citizens and formed a committee with a view to placing those men on the land. That committee set up an instructional school of industrial training. The 400 soldiers signed up for a six months' course, and were taught all the rough elements of farming. We taught them shoeing, horse-breaking, milking, baking, and everything that was essential to assist a man in becoming a farmer, without going too deeply into the technical part. Before six months were over 200 Australian soldiers satisfied themselves they were not fitted for the land. At the expiration of the six months only 100 soldiers applied for land, the balance drift-

ing into other avocations. These were all people who knew Western Australia well, but only one in four was satisfied to take up farming. That being so, what is going to be the percentage of failures on the part of men who come from the towns and cities of Great Britain, when they are placed in the Great Southern districts and on the groups in heavily timbered country? I have it in mind that before these people are placed on the land we shall be obliged to give them some sort of instruction. I don't mean an elaborate school, one that will cost a lot of money. That is not possible. I have in mind a place like Blackboy, where we could give these men a course of training, with a view to ascertaining whether or not they are suitable for the land. It would be cheaper in the long run to do this than to follow up the present system. A labourer is a man who is usually able to work hard. It would be an easy matter to train him until he was fitted to go on the land. In the case of a baker, a dentist, or some office man, what is it going to cost us to put them on the land? It is far better that we should find out first if he is suitable for the life, than to put him on the land first and find out at some expense that he is not suitable.

Mr. Griffiths: That is the system in Canada.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: I was not aware of that.

Mr. Sleeman: The present system is the cause of a lot of unemployment.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Yes. Men have come to me and I have asked them why they do not go to work on the land, for I thought they were big enough and hefty enough for the life. They have replied that they have tried it but found themselves unsuited for it. One man told me he had been a doctor's assistant, and the other had been a dentist. They said they had tried work on the land but were unfitted for it. I do not wish to be misunderstood. There must always be a percentage of such people.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Two thousand of them paid their way to this country.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Yes. I think the percentage of migrants who have proved successful is fairly good. Judging from information I have received from people from the Old Country, the type of migrant we really require is not available. That being

so, we must fall back upon the type that is likely to swell the unemployed in this State. Alternatively, it will cost the Government a considerable amount of money to clear the land, possibly more than the land is worth. In other words, the land will be over-capitalised.

Mr. Griffiths: Many of the farmers on the wheat belt were city men from the Old Country.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: The wheat belt is quite a different proposition. A percentage of wheat farmers from the Old Country have done very well. There are, however, not too many areas available now that are so easily cleared as the older places were.

Mr. Stubbs: There are a good many.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: And many Australians are waiting to take them up if they are available. I am more concerned about the heavily timbered country. We want to get people with some experience, for we cannot place all experienced men in these parts. I wish to issue a note of warning to the Premier. He has signed the migration agreement. I am a strong advocate of immigration, for I believe this country will never progress as it should unless we get a steady inflow of migration from the Old Country. It is all a matter of administration. But we do not want the wrong type of migrant. I do not suggest that all these people have been of the wrong type, for I think the percentage of good men has been exceptionally high. When the Leader of the Opposition was in England I sent him a cable concerning a particularly patchy lot of migrants whom I referred to as a disgrace to any part of the world. He told me afterwards he had not replied to my cable, because he was of opinion that I had expected we should get all Eurythmics.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I have seen men from every country and have not seen them all good from any country.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: That is often the case in respect to this Chamber. Unless the Premier is very careful the present system will cost the country a large amount of money. I want to say a word or two about tramway extensions in the metropolitan area. Last year the Minister for Railways informed a deputation that he was dubious about further extensions, and would await the result of the competition of the buses.

I did my utmost to induce him to take over the buses immediately they started.

The Minister for Railways: They had started then.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: There were only 15 or 20 on the track.

The Minister for Railways: There were 30 or more.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Even if there had been 30 it would have been good policy on the part of the Government to have controlled the whole business, for then we should not have had the trouble facing us to-day. I am satisfied that bus competition is not going to be a serious menace to the established tramway routes. I have made inquiries from those who ought to know, and they have told me that 300 buses would be required to lift the 5 o'clock tramway traffic. The time has arrived when there should be more tramway extensions. It will probably interest members to know the number of people who travel on some of these routes. The Beaufort-street Inglewood line last year carried 5,685,000 passengers, the Leederville line 4,496,000, the Subiaco line 3,817,000, and the Victoria Park line 2,788,000 passengers. Without going into the merits or demerits of the question as to whether the service pays, I am satisfied that the time has arrived when, if the Government are not prepared to extend it, they should be willing to hand it over to some board and let it have the control. People in the metropolitan area pay for these extensions and pay the fares. What is the use of having public utilities in the hands of the Government if they lock them up for lack of funds? What is the use of the Government moaning about the position if they cannot satisfy the demands of the public? The Government should seriously consider the formation of a Tramway Board and hand the service over to it.

Mr. Lambert: What has the rest of the State to do with tramways in the metropolitan area?

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Nothing at all. They should be controlled by boards and run by them. Judging from my experience when asking for money from the Minister for Railways and the Premier, I do not like my chance of getting tramway extensions. I know the member for Leederville (Mr. Milington) is not too pleased with his chances. I wish also to refer to the Mends-street-Barrack-street ferry service. The same thing

applies there. I do not for a moment believe that it is a function of the Government to run a ferry service a mile across the river.

The Premier: I am willing to receive any reasonable offer for the purchase of the ferries.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: It will not be long before the Premier will get such an offer, but whether he will accept it or not is a different proposition.

The Premier: I will favourably consider a reasonable offer.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: I am pleased to hear that. I have got something at last. If the Government do not hand over the service to the local authority they will certainly have to build two new boats. The "Duchess" has outlived her usefulness, and the oil launch that is used is so small that children travelling to school have to climb on top in order to find accommodation. South Perth, like other metropolitan areas, is progressing. Either the Government should hand the control over to the local authority, or provide a sum of at least £15,000 for new steamers. I have said I consider the time devoted to the Address-in-reply debate is absolutely wasted.

Mr. Sampson: How can you say that? You have made some most valuable remarks.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Our remarks should be made without wasting two or three weeks of the time of the House.

Mr. Lambert: We would not be doing anything else.

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Yes, we should. It does not say much that is creditable for members if we would be doing nothing else. The custom should be abolished. I have put forward a few suggestions, but what notice is taken by the Government of nine-tenths of the speeches that are made on this occasion? Members are probably under the impression that their speeches will be broadcasted, and that the unsuspecting public will swallow everything that is said as being something out of the ordinary. Half the time only one Minister is present in the Chamber, and he is probably thinking about something entirely different. The Premier is very likely racking his brain to think of something to say in reply to our speeches.

The Premier: How I am to do so without saying anything!

Mr. CLYDESDALE: Yes! No one can do that better than the Premier. He should consider the advisability of cutting out the Address-in-reply debate, so that we may get on with the business of the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.58]: After listening for the past two weeks to hon. members voicing the numerous needs and requirements of the districts they represent, I am somewhat concerned over the task facing the Government of finding the money that will be required to give effect to even a fair proportion of the needs that members have given expression to during the debate. Works are required up the country and down the country. There are water supplies throughout the wheat area that will involve an expenditure, I suppose, of several hundreds of thousands of pounds. There is the hills water supply for the metropolitan area, on which last year was expended about half a million pounds, and for which an additional half million will be required this year. There are 320 miles of railways, which have been authorised by Parliament, but have not yet been commenced, the estimated cost of which is about £1,360,000. There are harbour improvements, notably at Geraldton, which cost £110,000 last year, and will cost about a similar sum this year; and at Fremantle where there is an annual expenditure running into many thousands of pounds; and at Bunbury where works and improvements are also required. There is the sewerage for Perth, notably in West Perth and Subiaco, on which a good deal of money was expended last year, and for which a similar amount will be required this year. The Railway Department is asking for a very large sum of money for rolling stock, which is said to be very necessary. Again, we have large and costly extensions to the power house at East Perth, which will mean a considerable amount of money during the next two or three years. As the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) has stated, the position regarding tramway extensions and greater facilities for districts already served by tramways cannot remain as it is much longer. It does appear, after a fair trial during the past 12 months, that the motor buses do not meet the requirements of the people. The Government, it seems to me, were wise last year in refraining from tramway extensions, pending an opportunity of judging how the motor buses would meet the traffic. I am convinced that in the future, when the city has grown and its population is largely increased, we shall pass through the same experience

here as has been gone through in the large cities of the Old World: the traffic will be handled almost entirely by motor buses. But it appears that at present we have not in Perth the population which would justify a regular and reasonably frequent motor bus service.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We want the roads, too.

The PREMIER: That is so. It is surprising, however, to find in London and in Paris, and also in other large continental cities, the whole of the people catered for day by day almost entirely by motor transport. I do believe that motor transport will be the mode of conveyance of the future, although we have not yet reached that stage in Perth. Similarly, large sums of money are required for drainage in the South-West, to enable the group settlements to advance. By means of drainage, lands which to-day are useless will be rendered available for settlement. I do not indicate these points in any complaining spirit. As the Leader of the Opposition interjected a few minutes ago, it is a fortunate thing for the State that we do need money in the directions indicated. Were it not otherwise, we should be faced with a very serious situation, and the outlook would be far from bright. The fact that the people who are engaged in our industries, both primary and secondary, in the country and in the city, need railway facilities, water supplies, and tramway extensions, and all the other utilities I have referred to, is indicative of a healthy, vigorous growth in the community generally. Of course it is not easy to find, nor would it be wise for any Government to find, in one year all the money necessary for those developments. There would be no difficulty in the State borrowing almost unlimited funds in London for works of this description; but I have always contended, and I still contend, that there is a limit to the burden of interest charges that can be placed upon the community; unless side by side with heavy expenditure of loan funds, we so increase our population that we have a correspondingly greater number of people to meet the increasing interest bill. The more I revolve the question in my mind, the more I am convinced that that is the crucial point. We can safely go ahead borrowing money and expending it on thoroughly necessary works all over the State, if at the same time we keep on increasing our population to help us to

meet the interest bill. While in London I had the opportunity of meeting those who have been for years, and are still, the State's financial advisers there. I had several conferences with the directors of the Westminster Bank, the institution which finances this State in London between the issues of loans. In the course of conversation with the directors, and with the general manager and the assistant general manager, who were kind enough to meet me, I gave some idea of the work on which this country has embarked, and what the policy and intentions are for the future. I was glad to be able to say that in regard to those matters I spoke not only for the Government but the whole of the members of this House. I explained that there was no dividing line between parties here in regard to the need for development on the lines I have mentioned. After I had stated the case from that aspect, I was assured by the directors that there would be no difficulty whatever in our obtaining overdrafts or advances for practically any amount that we might require. As the Opposition Leader knows, the State has frequently run its overdraft at the Westminster Bank into a large figure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes; over two millions.

The PREMIER: In point of fact, only a fortnight ago our overdraft was something over two millions. The bank have always given us accommodation at very reasonable rates. Indeed, it has been a better policy for the Government to run an overdraft with the bank than to place a loan on the money market.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The arrangement has saved us £30,000 a year.

The PREMIER: It has. Just prior to my reaching London the bank rate of interest went up from 4 per cent. to 5. This meant that we had the benefit of two millions of money, or as we required it up to two millions, or even more, for 4 per cent., whereas, had we gone on the market, we would have been compelled to pay probably 5½ per cent. The arrangement, as hon. members will realise, involved a saving of 1½ per cent. on two millions sterling. Moreover, if we had placed a loan of £2,000,000, we would have been paying interest on the whole amount from the date of flotation, although possibly we might not spend the money for 12 months. In the case of the accommodation provided by the bank, we merely draw upon it as required, and pay

interest as we draw. So late as six months ago the rate of interest was high in the local market. It was 6 per cent. when I left here. While in Australia 6 per cent. had to be paid for money obtained at £98 10s., the State was obtaining money in London from the Westminster Bank at 4 per cent. Ever since we have had responsible government, the same man has handled our loans—Lord Glendyne, formerly Mr. Nivison. That gentleman handled the first Western Australian loan, raised in the year when responsible government was granted to us. It was a very small sum. I discussed the position very fully with that gentleman on many occasions. He assured me that there would be no difficulty whatever in our obtaining all the money we required for the necessary developmental work upon which the State is engaged. We are limited only, I should say, to the amount that we can reasonably expend each year, having regard to the payment of interest. From the London American loan floated a couple of weeks ago—some in London, the major portion in America—we have received £2,000,000. Out of our allocation of that loan we have paid off our overdraft at the Westminster Bank, and so we have a clean sheet to go ahead again, up to another £2,000,000. The price realised for that loan was fairly good—£99 10s. at 5 per cent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is, in London.

The PREMIER: Yes. The price for the portion raised in London was slightly better than that for the portion raised in America. As hon. members know, the loan was raised by London financiers in conjunction with American bankers. I was not anxious, and I suppose nobody in Australia was anxious, to go on the American market for money. It was only on the advice—I may say the confidential advice—of the financial authorities in London that this course was taken. I am not giving away any secret when I say that there was great difference of opinion among London financial authorities as to the wisdom of the course adopted by the Imperial Government in returning to the gold standard. An influential section of the Press expressed the opinion that the British Government were making a mistake in taking that action. It was feared then—and I think in some quarters it is still feared—that the return to the gold standard might result in heavy exports of gold from England, a movement which would create difficulties there. So

far the return to the gold standard has not operated in that direction.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The danger curtailed the power of lending, of course.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Sampson: Was there any obligation to wipe out the overdraft at the Westminster Bank, seeing it was at a lower rate of interest than the loan?

The PREMIER: We cannot go on indefinitely trespassing, I may say, on the generosity of the Westminster Bank.

Mr. Davy: The overdraft would be on demand.

The PREMIER: Yes. The bank have never pressed us, but still it is expected that we shall take advantage of the opportunity when money can be obtained at reasonable rates. Having regard to all the circumstances, an overdraft of two millions sterling is very substantial; it lasted a whole 12 months. Seeing that we had £2,000,000 of the London-American loan available, as part of the loan raised by the Commonwealth Government for the use of the States, it was a wise thing to accept the money that was offering and pay off the overdraft. Now we are free to avail ourselves of the position at the Westminster Bank until the time is suitable for us to go upon the money market again.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: Dealing with our London borrowings, it is gratifying to know that the Commonwealth loan has been raised on terms more favourable than we have been able to borrow at either in London or Australia for some years past. As I have already indicated, with interest at 5 per cent. and the price at £99 10s., the conditions, taking all circumstances into consideration, were very favourable. My advices from London are that the terms are not likely to be worse than these in the future, and there is a possibility of them being better. It is quite likely that we shall have to go on the market before the expiration of the present year. Speaking of loan expenditure, the amounts we have borrowed annually and expended of late years have been fairly considerable. For the year just closed the loan expenditure amounted to £4,160,000. That was slightly less than the expenditure for the previous year. As has been so often stated in this House, it is not so much the amount of money borrowed as the direction in which the money is spent that counts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the whole thing.

The PREMIER: It is the crux of our borrowing policy. Of that total, considerably more than half was spent in assistance to settlers. The amount was £2,259,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: About the same as in the two previous years.

The PREMIER: The amount has not varied much during those three years. Of that amount spent in assistance to settlers, £1,103,000 was spent in connection with the groups, £257,000 in connection with the Agricultural Bank, £597,000 on soldier settlers, and £192,000 in assistance to settlers, making up the total I have already given. So long as we continue to expend our loan moneys in this direction it is a wise policy, for the money will come back to us through many avenues. No doubt the improved financial position of the State is due to the wise expenditure of loan moneys in past years. We have every reason to be satisfied regarding the actual position of the finances. Particularly is this apparent if we have regard to the fact that three years ago we had a deficit of £732,000. That deficit has been reduced substantially each year since. Three years ago the deficit was reduced by £326,000, leaving it at £405,000. For the year before last the deficit was reduced to £229,000, which was a further reduction on that of the previous year of £176,000. Again, last year the deficit was reduced to £58,000, a reduction on that of the previous year of £170,000. Hon. members will agree that it is a very substantial achievement within the space of three years to reduce the deficit from £732,000 to practically squaring the ledger.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is a wonderful result.

The PREMIER: It has been suggested in some quarters that the Government claim the credit for having done something extraordinary this year but I quote the figures for the three years in order to show that there has been a large reduction each year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We are concerned only with the benefit to the country.

The PREMIER: That is so. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition is not concerned as to who gets the credit, and neither am I.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So long as the country benefits, that is all that matters.

The PREMIER: It should be gratifying to the people generally to know that in the space of three years we have practically got away from the nightmare deficit that has been with us for 12 or 13 years until to-day we can stand with a ledger practically squared.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The great thing is that it has not been done by means of any temporary expedient, but that result has been gained on the basis of permanent advantage.

The PREMIER: That is so. The actual reduction in the deficit has been £674,000 in three years and that has been due largely to the fact that we have borrowed courageously and spent money wisely. Speaking of taxation, it is interesting to note that while we have achieved this result we have been able to reduce taxation somewhat. Last year $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was taken off the surcharge on income taxes and the other $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. will disappear this year. That means that in the space of two years we shall have effected a reduction in the income tax of the whole of the surcharge amounting to 15 per cent. That brings me to the question of the land tax and its bearing upon the reduction in railway rates. It has been contended in some quarters that the Government have been rather smart. By some it has been stated that we have been more than smart and have not been quite honest in our attitude regarding railway freight reductions in conformity with the promise I gave when the increased land tax was passed last year. There was no deception last year. The tax was passed only on the last day of the session, which was, I believe, Christmas Eve, and it was well within the knowledge of every member of this House and of every individual in the State who followed the matter closely, that the reduced railway rates could not take effect for the whole year. Surely the merest junior in finance should know that it is not possible to make a reduction in railway rates retrospective.

Mr. Latham: But the reduction could have started on the 1st January.

The PREMIER: I shall come to that. The only reasonable and practicable way had to be followed. While an increase in the tax would apply to the whole amount collected for the year it has to be recognised that half the year had passed before it was possible to apply any reduction in the railway rates. Until we closed down at Christ-

mas it was not known whether or not the tax would be agreed to. Subsequently the question of reductions in railway freights had to receive the consideration of the Commissioner of Railways and later of the Government.

The Minister for Railways: And the Commissioner of Taxation had to consider it as well to fix the amount.

The PREMIER: That is so. Hon. members will realise, then, that two or three months would be a reasonable time for the matter to receive the necessary attention and therefore the reduced railway charges could not have been applied before at least two or three months of the year had passed. The real crux of the question is that the reduced rates will apply now during the years to come. But whatever Government had introduced those rates and the taxation, it followed inevitably that the increased taxation would apply for the whole year, whereas the decreased railway rates could apply for a portion of that year only. Every hon. member realises that that is so. Some hon. members may think it would have been possible to have brought in the reduced railway rates earlier in the year. That is the most that any member could have reasonably expected would be done. Taking into consideration all the circumstances, however, I do not think there is any cause for complaint. It is suggested that the amount received owing to the increase in the tax is greater than was stated by the Government. We estimated it at £45,000, and that was the amount that was to be allowed in reduction of railway rates. Neither I nor any other member of the Government was responsible for fixing the amount. It was impossible to calculate what it would be. I did what anyone else would do; I asked the Commissioner of Taxation what the amount would be that was involved in the increased taxation. I did not go any further than to ask him what the amount would be. The Commissioner of Taxation placed it at £45,000. Then the Commissioner of Railways was asked to suggest reductions in freights equivalent to £45,000.

Mr. Sampson: Did that include the exemptions?

The PREMIER: It included the amount received because of the increase in the tax, and that was the promise that was made. The revenue received last year may seem to have been in excess of the £45,000, and therefore by those who do not understand

the situation it might be considered that the Government were not giving the relief to the full amount of the increased taxation we received. Those people forget, however, that revaluations are going on all the time. The revaluations involve increases each year. Members know that, especially country members. Under the revaluation, in some instances the amount has been raised two or three times. It was never promised nor even understood that increases on account of the revaluation should be reflected in the reduction of railway freights. The promise that was actually made has been carried out in its entirety.

Mr. Latham: You have received about £62,000 extra from land tax.

The PREMIER: Not by the increased rate. The hon. member is taking the increases due to revaluation. The amount that has come to the Treasury as the result of the increased rate of tax is stated by the Taxation Commissioner to be £45,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell interjected.

Mr. Davy: You would not like to put on a tax of 4d. in the pound.

The PREMIER: In some instances it would not be too heavy. It reaches even 8d. in some of the other States. With the possible exception of Victoria, we have, or we had prior to the increase, the lowest land taxation in the Commonwealth.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The highest! There is none at all in New South Wales.

The PREMIER: Of the States that have such a tax, ours, before the increase, was the lowest in Australia. Surely it cannot be contended that 2d. in the pound is an excessive rate of tax!

Mr. Latham: But it is an unfair tax.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is the fairest tax of all.

The PREMIER: I have all the economists with me when I say it is the fairest tax that can be conceived. Only last night the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) gave us figures showing that owners of city properties had found the values of those properties doubled in the course of two years. That means an unearned increment given to those landlords, not by reason of any value added by them to their properties, but because of the activities of the whole community. That being so, the land tax is popularly considered to be the fairest tax imaginable.

Mr. Taylor: And it produces more revenue in cities than anywhere else.

The PREMIER: That is so. Members of the Country Party, when speaking at their conference and elsewhere, jump to the conclusion that a land tax is a tax on the owners of large areas of land, that only the men who own broad acres will have to pay the tax. But we know that, it being a tax, not on the area, but on the value of the land, the owner of a small frontage block in the centre of the city would pay more in taxation than would the owner of thousands of acres in a country district. For many years past the collections of land tax have been about fifty-fifty as between city and country.

Mr. Latham: But owners in the agricultural areas did not have to pay both land tax and income tax.

The PREMIER: In that they were extremely fortunate. It is argued, too, that no benefit has been obtained by the reduced railway freights.

Mr. Latham: No benefit for the individual.

The PREMIER: When we consider that the total earnings of the railways for the year were £3,360,000, it is realised that it cannot be expected that every individual user of the railways should derive considerable benefit by a reduction of railway freights equalling £45,000. It could not be done. One figure must have some relation to the other. Before every person who uses the railways could derive an appreciable benefit from a reduction of the rate, the total amount of the reduction would require to run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. Yet we have had dissatisfaction expressed in some quarters because not everybody in the country has benefited materially by the reduction in railway rates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would have been fairer not to have imposed the additional land tax.

The PREMIER: I was not able to give them the benefit of any very substantial reduction in railway freights, for the reason that members of another place were not prepared to give me the amount in land tax that I desired. So it is the members of another place, who would not give me the higher tax, who are responsible for the fact that farmers and others have not received

an appreciable benefit from the reduction in railway freights.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell interjected.

The PREMIER: There can be no doubt that in this State successive Governments have done remarkably well by the people. In some forms, of course, our taxation has been high as compared with similar taxes in other States.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That has been due to Federation.

The PREMIER: Yes, and also to the fact that the State Government are doing so many things for the people which are not done by the Governments of other States, where boards and trusts are created for the purpose. It has been repeatedly pointed out when comparisons are made between Western Australia and the other States in regard to taxation and the public debt and the debt per head of population, that all such comparisons are entirely baseless, because in all the other States there are boards and trusts and other bodies who have separate borrowing powers and who carry on public utilities and other concerns that in Western Australia are handled by the State Government. That brings me to the point raised by the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) when he suggested that many of our utilities might properly be made subject to the control of boards and trusts. Personally I am entirely with him there.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So am I.

The PREMIER: To-day the Government are operating concerns that are by no means of State-wide importance or influence, matters affecting exclusively the local people and which should be controlled by the local people, concerns such as the city water supply, and tramway service, and electricity, and ferries. What on earth has such a trivial service as the ferries between Perth and South Perth to do with the State Government? Incidentally I ask this as one who was a member of the Government who acquired all these things.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I wanted to hand them over, but could not get the local authority to agree.

The PREMIER: I am seriously considering whether I shall not introduce legislation enabling us to create boards and trusts to control all those undertakings that are of purely local concern. To-day Ministers' time and the time of Government officials is taken up with concerns regarding which Ministers should not be troubled at all. Pub-

lie utilities that are of State-wide interest should be controlled by the State, whilst those of purely local concern could best be managed by the people directly and immediately interested in them.

The Minister for Railways: Railway rolling stock is starved because of some of those utilities.

The PREMIER: That is so. For years past the railways, a State-wide public utility, have been more or less starved in the provision of rolling stock because so much money is required for electric current or some other local concern. Now I am asked to provide two new boats for the ferry service to South Perth at a cost of about £20,000. I say seriously to the member for Canning that if he can induce the South Perth Road Board to make a suitable offer for the old "Duchess" and what is remaining of the ferry service, I shall be glad to consider it, rather than spend £20,000 in providing new boats for the residents of South Perth.

Mr. Davy: Can you make it a condition that members of Parliament shall be carried free on the ferries?

The PREMIER: We might draft a clause preserving all our existing rights. Turning to the migration agreement that has been signed between the Commonwealth and the State, we should all be glad to know that it is a considerable improvement on the old one. I say that without any reflection whatever upon those who negotiated the old agreement, which was the first of its kind.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not a bad one either.

The PREMIER: No, it was not. However, it was the first of its kind to be completed in the British Empire and, naturally, time has served to show where it can be improved. If it comes to that, we here are engaged every session improving upon the legislation we passed in years gone by. One of the best points in the new agreement is that under it we shall be able to expend considerable sums in directions that were not possible under the old agreement. It is broad enough to enable us to enjoy the benefit of it in regard to railway construction and road construction and water supply and drainage; in fact there is no limit really, except the judgment and discretion of the Home Government and the Commonwealth Government as to how far it might not be applied to the expenditure of money on public works.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you think you could work in a jetty under it?

The PREMIER: Yes, even the Beadon jetty; it might be possible. If we are able to do that and so obtain money at one per cent. for five years and one-third of the interest for the next five years, we shall be able to proceed with a considerable amount of development work that otherwise with our limited population, and a rate of interest of $5\frac{1}{2}$ or 6 per cent., we should not be able to undertake.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We must not neglect land settlement in order to construct public works.

The PREMIER: Certainly not. But if we should be able to carry on the land settlement we desire and also construct roads, jetties, railways, and other things coming under the agreement, so much the better. I do not believe that we should be justified in neglecting land settlement for the purpose of building the works I have mentioned.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If we did so our last state would be worse than the first.

The PREMIER: Yes; but there are railways that ought to be built. People are making pressing requests for new railways, even apart from those already authorised by Parliament. If we should be able to take advantage of the agreement, not only with regard to land settlement directly and also with regard to these works, it would be a very good thing for the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Take all the money you can get at 1 per cent. and take it at once.

The PREMIER: It would enable us justifiably to increase our loan expenditure, because while we have been expending loan money at the rate of about four millions a year and accepting the whole of the burden of interest at a rate of 5 or $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not on all loans.

The PREMIER: Even prior to the scheme we were expending three and $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions a year carrying a rate of 5 or $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. If we can get money under the agreement at 1 per cent. and one-third of the rate for an additional five years, we shall be justified in increasing our annual loan expenditure. The extent of our loan expenditure is measured only by the capacity of the people to pay the

interest charges upon it. So, if we get relief in this way, it will enable us to increase our loan expenditure, and we should therefore be able to carry out a great deal of land settlement and development that will be of benefit in all the years to come.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We made money by using 5 per cent. money. Surely we can make more by using 1 per cent. money.

The PREMIER: Yes. Our public utilities as a whole are paying their way on 5 per cent. money, and because of that we have lately been able to balance the ledger. Coming now to migration and group settlement in the South-West, my view is that the State should go ahead with that scheme. There will be losses undoubtedly. It was never expected to be otherwise. Although there have been great difficulties in connection with the scheme and although there will be considerable losses, I believe the experience of the last 70 or 80 years has been such as to convince us that the development of the heavily timbered portion of the State is beyond the capacity of individuals. That brings us to the question of allowing that territory to remain in its virgin state or to bring it under cultivation and development by community effort. While we can foresee heavy losses, we should regard them in the light, not of a five or a 10-year period, but of losses to be spread over many generations. Once an area of country is cleared and brought into cultivation, an asset is created not for a year or for five years, but for all time, something that will be an asset to the people 50 or 100 years hence, and an ever increasing asset.

Mr. Stubbs: It will obviate the necessity of sending a million pounds a year out of the State for dairy products alone.

The PREMIER: If we come to the conclusion that we are going to lose a million, two millions or three millions, we have to look to the future and spread that loss over a long period of years. Dealt with in that way, it will mean per head of population only a comparatively small sum. We shall be able to stand that. Then we have to set the direct losses against the increased trade and production that will arise from the work of development carried on when we are no longer sending large sums of money to the Eastern States, keeping employed many thousands of their citizens to supply our needs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At least 100,000 people.

The PREMIER: The indirect gain to the State by finding employment for our own people and producing the commodities we require will, I think, far out-weigh any direct losses that may be incurred. So I think the scheme must go on. We are engaged in a very big task trying to develop this huge territory with 370,000 people. With the aid of this agreement and the introduction of people from overseas, and with money at a remarkably cheap rate, I think the future of the State is assured and we should avail ourselves of the opportunity while it is with us.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, full steam ahead is the only thing for us.

The PREMIER: I think so. As I have said on previous occasions, we should have no craven fears of being great. We should do, as Emerson advised, hitch our wagon to a star. It is only by comparisons that one is able to judge countries, and to make comparisons one must travel. I have returned from my trip abroad imbued with a feeling that we are the luckiest people in the world. We have one of the finest countries in the wide world, and if people in other parts were only blessed as we are, with the climate, the soil and the possibilities for the production of wealth that we have in Western Australia, they would consider themselves the most fortunate people on earth.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They would not be shivering at a little expenditure.

The PREMIER: No. We have nothing at all to fear. There is undoubtedly a tremendous future ahead of this State. Not any of us to-day, even if possessed of imagination, can visualise what this State or Australia will be in 40 or 50 years' time. It is only by courage and the development of our country, rich as it is, that we can go ahead. That is the position as I view it, and that will be the attitude of the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There will be no unemployed when you get to work.

The PREMIER: That is so. I have said before and I repeat it, that I am firmly convinced that bringing people into the country is not going to create unemployment, so long as we wisely handle the resources at hand.

Mr. Taylor: That is the point.

The PREMIER: I have some figures on soldier settlement that should interest members. The Commonwealth agreed to provide the capital for soldier settlement, and the total amount we have borrowed for this purpose is £5,663,300. A small additional amount has been provided by the State for land purchase paid by bonds. The number of soldiers settled on State lands at the end of last month was 5,326. The Commonwealth agreed to allow a rebate of interest of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for five years equal, as the Leader of the Opposition stated, to $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. over that period.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: About 6 per cent. to cover losses.

The PREMIER: Under this scheme the State has collected from the Commonwealth £436,430, and the whole of this rebate has been credited to a special trust account at the Treasury. From this trust account the payments have been made. Allowances to soldiers on account of interest reductions amount to £208,919, and losses actually ascertained and bank funds recouped total £83,772, leaving a balance in the fund of £143,738.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have another £400,000 to come from the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER: We have something more to come.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amount altogether was £300,000.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth recently proposed a reduction of State indebtedness on account of the soldier settlement scheme of £5,000,000 covering all the States. Of that our proportion will be £796,000. This is a matter that the Minister for Lands has been inquiring into in Melbourne during the present week. The additional relief given by the Commonwealth will represent a saving in interest to this State of £50,000 per annum.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is splendid.

The PREMIER: Now I come to a matter referred to by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the Treasury figures.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I will let you off that after what you have just told us.

The PREMIER: I assure the hon. member that he is mistaken in the belief that a sum of money representing reimbursements that should properly have been credited to the year before last was really paid into the accounts of last year. There has not been

any money at all that was properly due to the accounts of the previous year paid into the accounts of the year that has just closed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then how the deuce did you get that large amount of reimbursements?

The PREMIER: I could not follow the hon. member's figures. When he was speaking I was not aware of any figures that would justify his contention. I am assured by the Treasury officials that every penny which should have been credited to the year in which the hon. member left office was so credited, and that nothing was taken into last year's accounts that properly belonged to the previous year. It is an ever-increasing amount, as the hon. member knows. Last year exactly the same principle was followed as in the previous year with regard to recoups of interest. This is where the Opposition Leader seems to believe the money has got into the wrong year. However, I repeat, precisely the same principle was followed. The total departmental revenue for last year was £854,000. In the previous year it was £708,000. There was an increase last year of £145,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How did you get the £208,000 additional this year?

The PREMIER: It is not £208,000; it is £145,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is it reimbursements?

The PREMIER: Yes, under the Treasury figures.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amount is £208,000 according to the figures I have.

The PREMIER: The figures I have make the amount £145,000. The increase was 50 per cent., and I think the Opposition Leader has always contended that the amount should vary from 50 to 60 per cent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did you charge interest on works under construction?

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, you should.

The PREMIER: It was not charged in the previous year either.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You should charge it.

The PREMIER: That is a matter of policy or principle. I know the Leader of the Opposition holds the view that interest should be taken into revenue as regards works under construction.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: When the Government are carrying out works for other people.

The PREMIER: I did not adopt that course in the year before last; and the Opposition Leader, although he believed in the policy, did not carry it out except for the first half of the year. I wrote the amount back for the second half of the year; it was not very large. Neither did I take in such interest for the year just closed. The practice suggested by the Opposition Leader has not been in vogue in the past. I think the first time the hon. gentleman adopted it was last year. It is an important point now, because we have embarked on a large policy of works, notably the hills water scheme, in the case of which it might be considered justifiable to take into Consolidated Revenue each year interest on the loan expenditure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We should do it. The taxpayer has to pay the interest.

The PREMIER: Quite possibly I shall do it this year. The collection of interest by the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board, and the Soldier Settlement Scheme during the past three years was as follows:—for 1922-23, £523,000; for 1923-24, £591,000, an increase of £67,000; and for last year, £664,000, or an increase of £73,000 over the preceding year. The figures for group settlement for 1922-23 were nil, because in that year the scheme had not got going; for 1923-24 they were £46,000, and for 1924-25, £102,000, or an increase of £55,000 over the previous year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Will you give me a return if I ask you for one?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then I will show you where you are wrong.

The PREMIER: I have not been able to discover it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are making such a decent speech to-night that I will let you off.

The PREMIER: Very well. It is unfortunate that whilst many of our primary industries have developed very rapidly in recent years, the great industry of gold mining, which has done so much for the State in the past, has been in difficulties. The Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the whole industry has made a report which I regard as one of the most important and

most valuable documents any Royal Commission has ever presented to this State. What the effect of it will be is hard to foresee, because the power to take action does not lie in the hands of the Government. The effect will depend almost entirely upon the view taken by the directors and shareholders in the Old Country. I do believe that if substantial effect is given to the Royal Commission's recommendations, the result will be greatly to prolong the life of the mines. The Royal Commissioner pointed out that unless something is done on the lines indicated by him, a very few years will see the industry entirely extinguished. I had the opportunity of meeting those concerned while I was in the Old Country, and I discussed the whole situation with them; and I believe they will pay great attention to the Royal Commissioner's recommendations. A few points have been raised by members in the way of complaint or grievance. One raised by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) was as to the fees charged at the Technical School. The fees originally charged to students at the Technical School and the School of Mines were abolished some 10 or 12 years back, but were re-imposed two or three years ago, when the State finances were not in a favourable condition. The total amount collected is not large, although the sum paid by each student may be considerable to him, having regard to the position of many of the students. The total amount collected last year was £2,800, and the fees charged to students over 21 years of age varied from £1 to £2 10s. per quarter. That was for professional classes. I believe there is also a registration fee of 5s. per annum. At the time the fees were re-imposed, it was considered that a number of adults were taking advantage of the Technical School merely as a hobby, and not with any real desire to learn a trade or a profession which might aid them in earning a livelihood. When motor cars became freely used, many persons went to the Technical School in order to obtain a knowledge of how to handle a car and effect minor repairs.

Mr. Hughes: Many people attend just for the sake of the education.

The PREMIER: I should not think many students would attend the University except with the object of learning a profession to follow through life. I do not know

to what extent the Technical School and the School of Mines were used for other purposes, though I have personal knowledge of some men well advanced in years, in fact old men, who attend the School of Mines to study geology merely as a hobby, and who were there possibly to the exclusion of younger students who were more deserving.

Mr. Teesdale: That is the point.

The PREMIER: I believe that is the reason why fees were re-imposed. I know of a civil servant in receipt of £700 a year who used to attend the Technical School in order to learn how to handle a motor car and effect repairs. I do not know whether such cases were numerous.

Mr. Hughes: But the director's report calls attention to the fact that there has been a falling off in the attendance.

The PREMIER: It is a strange and rather disappointing feature that when fees were charged in the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie prior to 1912, that institution was better attended than it was after the fees were abolished by the then Labour Government. On inquiring I was informed by the staff of the school that the youths, or their parents, did not take so much interest in the tuition when they got it for nothing. However, that may have been only a temporary phase.

Mr. Hughes: I went to the Boulder Technical School then, and I can state that the work done at those schools now is vastly superior.

The PREMIER: I believe that is so, especially in the case of the Perth Technical School. However, there is a good deal of point in the hon. member's contention that those who can afford to attend the University in the day-time should not have an advantage over those who, because they have to earn their living during the day, attend the Technical School in the evening. Another point raised by the hon. member had reference to the Workers' Homes Board. There has been an amount of accumulated profits from the operations of the board paid into Consolidated Revenue—£7,500. Those are profits which have accumulated during the years the board have been in operation. Probably the amount might have been better utilised in the erection of additional homes. When the finances permit, as I hope they will shortly, the question of handing over the amount to

the board will be favourably considered. The £7,500, however, is the accumulation of profits since about 1912. The reason why the building of workers' homes was discontinued was the high cost of money. It started with the war, and since then the board have had available to them for the erection of new homes only such sums as came in from repayments. Last year the amount was, roughly, £50,000—about £4,000 per month. That would suffice for the erection of about 72 houses per year. I realise that now when money is getting cheaper, it is essential to do something to provide homes for the people of this country, both in the country towns and in the metropolitan area. Although scores of houses have been going up, they are not such as would answer the purposes of the workers. The erection of houses in aristocratic suburbs, such as the one I live in, is not of very much benefit to the average worker; and I will see if it is not possible to make available to the board a sum of money this year, so that they may assist in a greater degree the building of workers' homes. There is also the question of increasing the amount allowed, which at present is £550. Borrowed for a period of 30 years, that amount represents repayments at the rate of about £3 16s. 6d. per month. If the amount were increased to £750, the monthly repayment would be £5 5s., which I suppose is not greater than the rent paid by the average person to a private landlord.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We should try to build houses more cheaply, to get the material more cheaply and to have the work done more cheaply.

The PREMIER: I do not know how it could be done.

Mr. Davy: Build wooden houses.

The PREMIER: I believe the proposal of the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) for the erection of comparatively cheap houses in the country towns is the solution.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But that has been going on for some years.

The PREMIER: I know the hon. member inaugurated the policy of building houses in the country towns.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And that is going on now, is it not?

The PREMIER: I think so. This difficulty has had an effect on the unemployment difficulty in the city. People will not make their homes in the country if there is no housing accommodation for them. If we could provide them with reasonably comfort-

able homes at a low cost, together with a small plot of ground from which they could supplement their earnings, there would be a greater inducement to the people to go into the country rather than to drift back to the city as soon as their casual work was finished.

Mr. Teesdale: You ought to extend that to one or two of the towns up North.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Mr. Heron: It is bad to have all the work in Perth.

The PREMIER: It is bad to have it concentrated in the cities.

Mr. Heron: People have to come from the country to the city to get a job.

The PREMIER: Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and other large towns have become bloated at the expense of the country districts. I would like to see the same thing extended to our industries. I should like to see industries opened up in the country districts and not concentrated in a small area such as the city itself. People are better off in the country and are more likely there to produce work that will benefit the State than be returning to the towns and depending on work that may be made available for them.

Mr. Sampson: The workers' homes scheme would help a good deal.

The PREMIER: Yes. Coming to the question of unemployment, it is unfortunately true that there has been a considerable number of men out of work during the past month or two. That is no new experience either here or in any of the other States or, in fact, in any other part of the world.

Mr. Taylor: Especially at this time of the year.

The PREMIER: We have seasonal occupations and work in some avenues eases off in June, July, and August. During those months men find their way into the cities and thus we have this trouble year after year. The fact that there has been a greater number this year than for some time past is due, in my opinion, to two causes. First of all, within the last 12 months more than 2,000 men of foreign birth or extraction have arrived in the State. Apparently it is a fact that none of these men is out of work.

Mr. Teesdale: Is that a fact?

The PREMIER: Yes. These men are mostly southern Europeans from Italy,

Greece, Roumania, and Albania. If they can come from Europe and find employment as they have done during the past 12 months, it seems to follow that a large number of our own people are out of work in consequence. I do not know why. Whether it is that some sections of the community are giving preference to these men as against our own people, I am not in a position to say, but they do seem to be able to get work soon after they arrive here. Hon. members will probably have seen the report by the organiser of the Ugly Men's Association who said that when travelling through the country he found a considerable number of our people unemployed, but that these foreigners were all working.

Mr. Taylor: That would appear to explode the theory that new arrivals in the country are not adaptable to our conditions.

The PREMIER: At any rate, that is the position. It has tended to intensify the conditions regarding unemployment this year. Then again, a fair number of the migrants have come from the group settlements. They have become dissatisfied and have left, or left the groups because they were unsuitable. These men have swelled the ranks of the unemployed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course, others take their places on the groups.

The PREMIER: Yes, from the Old Country. If such people leave the groups they must go on the labour market, because they have nowhere else to go.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But as a fact you do replace them on the groups.

The PREMIER: But not with our own people. All this has tended to increase the numbers of our unemployed. That brings me to the point raised by the member for Canning, who said that a considerable proportion of the migrants were unsuitable for settlement on the land.

Mr. Teesdale: Are no Australians filling the vacancies on the groups?

The PREMIER: Practically none. Some hon. members have advocated establishing a training farm or school here for the migrants. I do not see how that could assist us at all. In the first place, if we bring them out here and they go to a training farm for six or twelve months, the hon. member suggested that it would then be discovered whether or not some of the migrants were suitable for a life on the land. That

would not avail much because we would still have them on our hands as additions to the ranks of the employed. The last position would be no better than the first. They might be just as well employed from the start on the group settlement blocks, securing training and doing work of more lasting benefit there than they would do if on a training farm. The solution, I think, lies in having training farms, not at this end but in the Old Country. Even there considerable obstacles have to be overcome.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would take a hundred years to get sufficient numbers out here.

The PREMIER: At any rate, it would be better if the would-be migrants were tried out in the Old Country and only those who felt that the life appealed to them would then come to Western Australia. Something is being done in this direction in England at the Catterick Farm School. That scheme has been started by the Military Department for the benefit of some 40,000 young men who are retired from the army every year. The object is to prevent those men being placed on the labour market without any training or vocation to which they can turn for a living. A large area was purchased at Catterick and the soldiers get six months' training on the farm. It is not necessarily for those who contemplate migrating to Australia or other parts of the Empire, and the men are given tuition in other vocations such as carpentry, bricklaying and so on. By this means it is hoped that they will be able to earn a living, should they come here or go to some other part, instead of being thrown on the unemployment market. We have two groups, the members of which came from this school. They have been settled at Hester.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Very fine groups, too.

The PREMIER: I have been informed by the Minister for Lands and others that those settlers undoubtedly represent the best type of migrant we have received since the scheme was inaugurated.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a good case for you.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are pretty good men if that is so.

The PREMIER: Quite so, because there are good men on the other groups as well. That six months' training must be of great assistance to them. They are taught all kinds of work that they will be called upon to do in the South-West. I refer to dairying, cattle raising, pig raising, poultry farming,

ploughing and cropping. The only difference between the experience they gain at Catterick and their life in the South-West is that they do not gain experience in axe work and clearing. That is all that would be new to men coming from there and taking up blocks in the South-West. While in London I arranged that our future migrants, so far as is possible, would be selected from those who had been through the Catterick school. The men there are mostly non-commissioned officers and the majority have pensions, some small and some large. That would prove an added advantage to them should they come here.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope they have children.

The PREMIER: Their wives go to the farm school for six months with their husbands. If they intend to migrate, the wives are taught the work that women do on dairy and poultry farms. I should say that the six months' experience would be invaluable to them. It would enable men who fancy they have a liking for a life on the land to test themselves. In the Old Country there are many who, after reading pamphlets dealing with the possibilities of a career on the land in Western Australia, really believe they would like that kind of existence. After coming all this distance, however, they find themselves mistaken and awake to a realisation that the life does not suit them. A six months' try-out on a farm such as that at Catterick will enable those people to decide for themselves whether or not they like the life and such a course of training may prevent many who are unsuitable from coming out.

Mr. Taylor: Some of those who went to the goldfields in the early days cleared back as soon as they saw what the goldfields were like.

The PREMIER: I hope that most of our future migrants will go through that school. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that a very high percentage of the men and women we have are a good class. They are inexperienced but we must not forget that Australia was first settled by inexperienced people. The country was settled, too, not only by inexperienced people, but under greater difficulties than such people have to face here.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear; that is so.

The PREMIER: If these people have the will to win through and a desire to succeed and make homes for themselves, there is no reason why they should not do so.

Mr. Teesdale: Those who condemn them were also inexperienced at one time and had to be taught.

The PREMIER: I found in the southern counties of Devon and Cornwall a body of citizens who were remarkably keen on the selection and advice tendered to people in order to help them to decide whether or not they should come to Western Australia. They are anxious that there shall be no considerable percentage of failures. The headquarters of the Devon and Cornwall Association are at Plymouth, and if the members of that association think that a person is unsuitable, they advise him not to come out. Of course, after that preliminary test the would-be applicant has to run the gauntlet of the officers in Australia House. Many of the people from Devon and Cornwall have gone to the groups in the Denmark district. I saw them for a week or so before I left for England and I recognised that they were a fine type. They have the will to succeed, and I have no doubt they will do so.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: They are doing all right.

The PREMIER: I believe so. I will not detain the House any longer. I believe there is a great future ahead of our land settlement policy in the South-West. Some day we shall be in as good a position as any part of Australia. I have some knowledge of the difficulties encountered by the pioneers of land settlement in Victoria. I know the first settlement in the mallee. I refer to the Wimmera district. The settlers there were driven off the land and some of it was considered valueless as a result of failures experienced in the first year or two. To-day that land is worth £10 or £14 an acre.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Not for dairying.

The PREMIER: No, for wheat growing. It would be worth much more than that as dairying country. Dairying lands in Victoria are bringing a very high price indeed. The difficulties we are faced with in the South-West, and the losses we shall have to encounter, are not any greater than the losses and difficulties faced by the pioneer settlers of Gippsland.

Mr. Latham: And you are offering our settlers better conditions.

The PREMIER: Yes, there is a degree of Government assistance available to-day that was not available then. It was rather too much to ask people to put in a life of drudgery and toil for 20 or 30 years with no chance of benefit to themselves, but merely in order that their children and their children's children might have the advantage of their struggles. To-day, rightly, people want a little of the benefit and advantage in their own lifetime; and with the aid of cheap money and Government assistance they should be able to achieve a fair measure of success and prosperity in their own lifetime.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [8.46]: There is little doubt that the Premier, when he chooses, can lift himself above party politics and deliver a speech that makes us all feel that he is not merely the Leader of the Labour Party, but is the Premier of Western Australia. All of us who have heard his address to-night who will read it to-morrow cannot fail to agree that very little criticism can honestly be offered on what he has said. He has undoubtedly been in the highest degree fair. He has attributed the remarkable reduction of the deficit this year, not to the advent to power of the Labour Party, but to plans that were formed and put into execution years before 1924. To use his own words, he has attributed these remarkable results to the fact that this country has borrowed courageously and expended wisely. It follows, of course, that it was not courageous borrowing and wise expenditure during 1924 that caused the deficit to again drop remarkably in that year. But although he did not say so in so many words, every person who heard him realised that in his mind the Premier was paying a tribute to the work done by the gentleman next to whom I have the honour to sit. As the Premier spoke to us in his suave and persuasive way, and most of us felt that we were all his supporters, I thought that perhaps that pleasing style and easy manner might to a certain extent have been attributed to the showers of congratulations that have fallen on the Government during this debate. Personally I have no congratulations to offer to the Government, except congratulations on their having received so many congratulations. It must be a very pleasing experience to find member after

member getting up and congratulating the Government about something. Perhaps I am going to too far in saying I have nothing upon which to congratulate them, for one might congratulate them on some of the favours shown them by Providence. Shortly after the Government's elevation there was a lengthy dry spell, and I remember the Premier saying he was fearful that perhaps Providence was showing some disfavour with the recent electoral success of the party. However, the dry spell passed, and in the end one of the most bountiful seasons that Providence has bestowed on the State occurred last year, giving us a yield which is not only a record, but so much a record as to cause astonishment to our brothers in the Eastern States. It appears to me that, as the Premier said on a previous occasion this session, it is the function of the Opposition to criticise; and so, although late in the debate, I propose to offer one or two criticisms. Naturally I am of a different political view from the party at present in power, and I suppose it is inevitable that those on this side of the House should find much to criticise in what has been done by the Government, even during their short occupancy of office. I find myself very much in discord with what has been done by the Government. Soon after their coming into power we had the spectacle of the Government granting to employees in the public service a 44-hour week. Many comments have been made on that, some fair and some unfair. My criticism of it is that it was foolish, considering the state of the finances, and that it was in a way a breach of trust; for, after all, the Government are trustees for the money of the people of Western Australia. When trustees are to pay employees, to disburse moneys, it is their duty to do so in the most cautious and careful manner. When trustees are to fix the wages of their employees, the proper rate to fix is the market rate for the time being. That market rate had been fixed by the Arbitration Court, and therefore it was wrong for the Government to have either raised wages or shortened hours. I designate that act as a breach of trust towards the people of the State.

Mr. Sleeman: The electors sanctioned it.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, it may be said that the electors sanctioned it. Certainly there was some talk on the hustings of a proposal to grant a 44-hour week if the Labour Party were returned to power; but that is equiv-

alent to trustees saying, "That is all right, our beneficiaries have consented." That, of course, is not a sufficient excuse. The fact of the matter is that the people, any more than the members of the House, are not competent to judge what is the proper number of hours to be worked on any particular job. We have constituted an Arbitration Court to decide that, and neither the House nor the people are in a position to judge what is a proper week's work.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The workers who have to perform it are not bad judges.

Mr. DAVY: Of course the workers who have to perform it would agree to a 34-hour week or even a 24-hour week if their party proposed it. They look to their party as to their leaders, and if their leaders told them that 24 hours was quite sufficient for a week's work, it would be remarkable to hear the workers disagreeing. Again, we find that at the first opportunity the Government endeavoured to introduce by legislation a 44-hour week for all employees in the State. They wished to take away from the Arbitration Court its function of fixing hours. I do not know why they stopped there and did not attempt to take away from the court its function of fixing wages and everything else, and give the responsibility instead to Parliament—not Parliament after due consideration of evidence and of pros and cons, but on a block vote backed by what is sometimes called a brutal majority. That act is one that I censure. Again, at the first opportunity they proposed a measure providing the possibility of statutory preference to unionists.

Mr. Sleeman: They were only standing up to their promises.

Mr. DAVY: I have always been amazed to find a party expressing itself as the most humanitarian one, as having regard for the weak and the suffering, yet incorporating as part of its policy so brutal a doctrine as that of preference to unionists.

The Minister for Railways: How can you have collective bargaining without unions?

Mr. DAVY: You cannot. But I do not admit that collective bargaining should have as its corollary that those who do not want collective bargaining should be starved to death.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Your own union favours collective bargaining.

Mr. DAVY: My own union has no rules excluding other people. It is not necessary

for a person who wants to enter my union to be elected by a majority or any number of the members of that union. He is admitted on proving qualifications fixed, not by that union, but by this House and another place, and after consideration by the Supreme Court of Western Australia. But my friend's union retains for itself the right to admit or not to admit, or even to expel from membership, any human being; and once expelled, if we were to have preference to unionists as the law of the land, we should have the spectacle of that man being condemned under certain conditions to slow starvation with his wife and children. It is always a matter of astonishment to me that the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) can get up and pipe a tear at the thought of the unemployed being short of a meal, and in the next breath advocate this brutal doctrine of preference to unionists.

Mr. Sleeman: Some professional gentlemen adopt that policy also.

Mr. DAVY: That is to fall back upon the plea that if someone else does wrong we also are justified in doing wrong.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But we may be doing perfectly right.

Mr. DAVY: I say too, that this Government—I do not propose to re-open a debate that occurred some days ago—has exhibited a wrong idea of their duty in regard to preserving law and order. We had a debate recently on the subject of the tearoom strike. Whatever the outcome of that debate, it appeared to me from interjections that some members of the Government have a novel idea of their functions in the enforcement of the law. To my mind the law is written in the statute-book to be obeyed. The Government, from their interjections and actions, appear to claim the right to suspend certain laws of the land chosen by themselves with respect to certain citizens or groups of citizens, also chosen by themselves. There can be little doubt that once a strike occurs, the people who call themselves strikers—without any necessary proof that they are so—are permitted to violate the laws on the statute-book. During that debate attention was called to a section of the Criminal Code—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not open up that debate. That is closed.

Mr. DAVY: I take it I may refer to other matters affecting the question of law and order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not with reference to the debate which is closed.

Mr. DAVY: We find also that the Government indicated by way of interjection that it might be impossible to suppress swees, and that if anyone endeavoured to do so, he would probably find himself at the bottom of the river. That was an interjection by the Minister for Lands. It would be better to find oneself at the bottom of the river rather than fail to enforce the law as it is written. Again, as the law stands, the running of roulette tables and sweat wheels is a criminal offence, according to our code, and yet we find that the Minister for Justice, through his chief executive officer, the Commissioner of Police, apparently is in the practice of issuing permits to people to carry on that form of gambling. An executive capable of thinking it has the right to do such a thing has a wrong conception of its duty.

The Minister for Railways: A good job you were not here during last Parliament. You would have had a lot to say.

Mr. DAVY: When I find that wrong is being done I do not hesitate to express my objection. Again the hon. member falls back on the argument that someone else did it as well as he. I may not refer to the failure of the Government to enforce the authority of the Arbitration Court during the recent strike, but the one lesson quite clear from that trouble is the necessity for a proper sanction for the orders contained in the Arbitration Act with regard to strikes. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) suggested that as it had been found impossible to enforce the law against striking and locking out, arbitration had proved a failure and had better be abandoned. I am not of that opinion. I believe that arbitration has not only come to stay, but that it has come to stay for the benefit of the community.

Mr. North: I spoke alternatively; I did not say that was the only course.

Mr. DAVY: Arbitration is an honest attempt and might be made a successful attempt to get rid of the brutal, barbarous, and old-fashioned method of settling disputes by strikes, but I am firmly convinced that unless strikes are forbidden and the

prohibition is enforced, industrial arbitration is a waste of time. At present the offence of striking and locking out is provided for in the Act, but there is no one to police it. At one period in the history of arbitration in this State, it was the practice for the parties concerned to initiate prosecutions, and of course the immediate result was that the prosecution was regarded as a weapon in the hands of one of the parties to the strike to defeat the other party. That was most undesirable. The only possible way to prevent strikes—and this legislature must agree that they should be prevented; otherwise why retain the prohibition of them on the statute-book—is to create an officer whose statutory duty it shall be to prosecute any person or body of persons engaged in a strike or lockout the moment the offence is committed. Until this is done arbitration can never be more than partially effective, and strikes will continue with all the attendant pain, suffering and loss. The Government have not lifted a hand to reduce what I consider is a very wrong principle, namely, State trading. The State is still a maker of bricks, a canner of meats, a manufacturer of ploughs, ploughshares, and harvesters, and even of nails, bolts and screws. It runs hotels; it is a retailer of whisky and beer. That of course is not a bit surprising. The Government stand for that sort of thing, and we may well expect so long as they remain in power that not only will they not reduce such activity, but that they will be likely to extend it. It would be not at all surprising to find any day that we have a State butcher shop and a State fish shop once more.

Mr. Sampson: They have had experience of them.

Mr. DAVY: And perhaps we may have State tea-shops, and the Government might even venture to ice cream at a penny a lick. That is the policy of the party who have put and kept the Government in power, and the people of Western Australia must realise that it is their policy and is likely to be not only preserved but extended.

Mr. Sleeman: They might even have a State lawyer to give advice.

Mr. DAVY: If the hon. member came before the court and could satisfy the court that he had a good case, and had not the money to pay for legal advice, he could get free legal service. A great many people do

not know of that, so I spread the information abroad for the benefit of those to whom it may be useful.

The Minister for Justice: Oh, do not do that.

Mr. DAVY: This line of activity is part of the Government's policy. It is socialism, and because that is their policy, I feel it difficult to have the same confidence in the statement of the Premier on immigration that I should like to have. I am convinced that the Premier and the Minister for Lands are firm believers in the necessity for and wisdom of immigration. They have said so in terms so certain and with an air of conviction so strong that I cannot but believe them. But I have found it always difficult and will always find it difficult to believe that the party that put those two gentlemen in office can ever honestly believe in immigration. Their policy after all is one of socialism, one that has as its objective the spread of the wages system until it includes every citizen in the country, with the paymaster as the State instead of the private individual. That is the objective they have in view—the socialisation of all means of production and distribution, production for use and not for profit. The logical result of that is the extension of the wages system until it becomes all-absorbent. If that is the policy of the Labour Party I suggest to them that the surest way of preventing the realisation of those ideals is to continue an immigration and land settlement policy. Every man successfully settled on a farm represents a brick in the wall of defence against socialism.

Mr. Lutey: Why, they are the greatest socialists of the lot.

The Minister for Railways: The agricultural industry is a State trading concern.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister might as well suggest that if I lend £1,000 to finance a man into a pub and he pays me 5 per cent. interest, I am a pub-keeper. That is about the degree of analogy between the Minister's statement and mine.

Mr. Lutey: You would be getting proceeds from the pub.

Mr. DAVY: But I would not be the pub-keeper. There is no analogy. The Labour Party are out for socialism, and, in my opinion, every man they successfully settle on the land takes them a step further from the realisation of their ideal. Every time

they lend encouragement and help to a co-operative scheme in the country, and I have heard some members on the Government side of the House advocating co-operation strongly, it is an argument in favour of self-help rather than State enterprise. Therefore I find it difficult to believe, not in the honesty of the Premier's belief in immigration or of that of the Minister for Lands, but in the probability of an honest continuity of an immigration policy by the party who have put those gentlemen in the positions they now occupy. I wish I could think otherwise, because I am in entire agreement with my leader and the Premier as to this policy. I am convinced that our sure hope, and in fact our only hope, of success in Western Australia lies in the continuation of the policy.

Mr. Sleeman: We all believe in it.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps the hon. member does, but the people who put him here do not. There are one or two matters to which I referred on a similar occasion last year, and to which I would like to refer again briefly. I pointed out last year what appeared to me to be a certain hurriedness in the drafting of statutes. I said the importance of the matter suggested that the introduction of what takes place in certain other Parliaments of the world might be of great advantage here, namely the appointment of a gentleman who should be Parliamentary Draftsman and nothing else, and who should carry on his operations up here. I am told that in South Australia there is a portion of the floor of the Chamber set aside by the Standing Orders where the Parliamentary Draftsman sits when the House is in session. I urge that it would be of the very greatest value and help to us if we had such an official on the spot here. It constantly occurs that amendments need drafting quickly in the course of debate; and when such amendments are drafted by amateurs like ourselves on the floor of the House, it sometimes occurs that there is some effect which is not immediately apparent, which does not come to light until the amendment has become law. A Parliamentary Draftsman in this Chamber would be a safeguard against that. Moreover, the work of drafting our statutes is of such importance, and demands such skill and care and concentration, that it should be a whole-time job. I urge that on the Minister for Justice.

The Premier: Twenty years ago, when I first came here, we had a Parliamentary Draftsman who used to be here in the afternoon and at night when the House was sitting.

Mr. DAVY: I suggest that we be a little reactionary in this respect and revert to the happy state of the past. In making these remarks I do not wish for even a moment to be regarded as criticising the gentlemen doing the work at the present time. They are recognised by my profession as being highly skilled and highly industrious public servants, but they have too much to do and are in the wrong environment for their job. On one matter brought up by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) I find myself in complete agreement with him—the question of a dental clinic. As the hon. member points out, at the present time we have inspectors and nurses going round the schools and discovering that the teeth of our children are not what they should be. The children are then ordered home for treatment, and in many cases the means to supply that treatment are entirely lacking. Why there should be a distinction between treatment of that part of the body which is called teeth, and treatment of any other part of the body, I find it difficult to understand. Possibly we are still lagging behind the march of science, and do not realise that the teeth are one of the most important parts of the body. The time has arrived when our medical services should include, without special mention, the care of the teeth of children. It is done in many parts of the world. I wish to add my word in favour of taking a step to remedy that defect. Another matter I desire to mention may be of some interest to hon. members. There was introduced last session a very important Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act. It was carried in somewhat modified form, but still it contained most important alterations of the law as it existed before last session—alterations which, I think, in the opinion of all members of this House and of another place were urgently needed. One alteration increased the amount of medical expenses recoverable by an injured employee. Before the amendment was made, the amount of medical expenses he could recover was "Not exceeding £1." Obviously, that amount was almost insultingly ridiculous. The amendment raised the amount to

£100. The figures which I propose to quote lead to one of two inferences, or perhaps to both. One inference is that the amendment was in the highest degree necessary and urgent, and the other inference is that some persons in the community have taken advantage of the amendment and that a further burden is falling upon shoulders other than those for which it was intended. I have here particulars of six cases which have occurred since the 1st March this year, when the amendment became law. They are all cases which have occurred in one company, and a company of no great magnitude. In the first case a man suffered the loss of a finger, and under the Second Schedule to the Act his compensation was £150. Including hospital expenses and ambulance, his medical expenses totalled £32 10s. 6d. That, of course, is not a very large sum as compared with £150; but it has to be remembered that the man's loss of time from his work was probably short, because he got that specially high rate of compensation under the Second Schedule. The next case was one of a wound in the hand, and the compensation payable to the man was £16 3s. 9d. The medical expenses, including those other items, were £11 15s. 6d.—a good deal more than half the compensation. The next case was a man with a gunshot wound. His compensation was £7 10s., and his medical expenses came to £37 11s. The next case was that of a fracture of a bone of the knuckle. The compensation was £13 2s. 6d., and the medical expenses were £18 14s.—nearly 50 per cent. above the compensation. The last case was that of an injured thumb, the compensation being £6 and the medical expenses totalling £22 17s. 6d. When we passed the amendment raising the amount of medical expenses, we never for one moment dreamt that such results would accrue. Of course the reason is largely that men who prior to this amendment went to the Perth Hospital or an assisted hospital, and were treated by the medical profession free, are now being put into private hospitals and treated by the same medical men at the usual fees. The net result is going to be a great benefit to the medical profession, and incidentally a certain amount of benefit to the workers, although I think a man who is attended at the Perth Hospital is probably just as well attended as one who goes to a private hospital. An indirect result may be that the problem of keeping our assisted hospitals is going to be largely

solved. If every man who suffers from an injury or an illness that comes under the Workers' Compensation Act is to go to a private hospital instead of the Perth Hospital or an assisted hospital, then there is going to be a reduced strain on the resources of these latter hospitals. The debate has gone on for a long time, and I propose to say only one thing more, if I may be permitted to do so. At the beginning of my second year in this House I wish to say that I have found my year here a wonderful experience. When I came in here I said that I had formed the impression that members of Parliament were not nearly such horrible blackguards as many members of the public pretended to think them. At the end of that year, and in commencing my second session, I would like to say that the opinion which I had formed before I came in has been borne out. Further, I wish to say that I have enjoyed the last session, and have found that the society here has in every possible way an improving and educating effect on those who are lucky enough to be members of this House.

MR. LATHAM (York) [9.26]: I am glad to take this opportunity of congratulating the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) on having been elected to this House. Almost of a certainty, it is the first time in the history of the British Empire that the daughter of a worthy member of a House has been found taking her father's position. I trust that the hon. member will find her stay in this Chamber pleasant to herself and beneficial to her constituents. Of course I would have much preferred to have the hon. member sitting on this side of the House, but we cannot always have what we want. The first lady member elected to this Chamber sat with us, and I would have been glad were the second one doing so. After listening to the Premier's speech I am almost nonplussed.

Mr. Heron: He took the wind out of your sails.

Mr. LATHAM: Undoubtedly. Had the Opposition Leader been occupying a seat on the Ministerial bench, he could not have uttered a speech which I would have endorsed more fully than the Premier's speech of to-night. Doubtless the Premier's trip abroad has been a wonderful education to him. I sincerely trust that the benefit which he has received will be extended to his followers. It is a splendid thing to see the great cities on the continent, particularly in Belgium,

France, and Germany, and also, of course, in our own Homeland. Unquestionably, it is a great benefit for us to come in contact with the civilisation of the Old World. The financial position of Western Australia is to-day a source of pride. The deficit, which not so long ago reached as much as £700,000 in a single year, has been reduced to £59,000 for the last financial year. I venture to say that if the present Opposition Leader had been occupying the Treasury bench, there would have been a surplus of £59,000. The Premier made out an excellent case. He spoke of reduction of taxation. There has, however, been increase of taxation. By way of land tax £42,000 more was paid, from which amount has to be deducted £7,000 credited to the Railway Department. Then there was the surcharge of 7½ per cent. on income tax. That would not be a large amount, possibly £12,000 or £15,000.

The Premier: It was £33,000 last year. Of course I count reduction of railway rates as reduction of taxation.

Mr. LATHAM: Those railway reductions are a maze to me, because, after all, we find the Railway Department making a profit of £190,000. We permit them to reduce freights to the extent of £45,000. I expected to hear from the Premier to-night that the Government intend to reduce freights to such an extent that no profits would be made by the Railway Department. It was never intended that the Railway Department, which is a public utility, should be a profit-making machine.

The Premier: If you are not going to make any profits on any of the public utilities, how are you going to finance services that are not revenue-earning—police, education, and so on?

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier knows perfectly well that taxation exists for that purpose.

The Premier: You object to taxation, too.

Mr. LATHAM: I object to increased taxation. The taxation we already have is quite sufficient. I certainly object to the increase of income tax and land tax.

The Premier: You are in deep water, get out!

Mr. LATHAM: I am in very shallow water. It is the Premier who is in deep water if he means that he will not give any reduction on railway freights. It was never intended to make such a profit.

The Premier: They have a long way to go to make up the deficiencies in past years.

Mr. LATHAM: I admit that and I hope the Premier will not tax—

The Premier: As soon as the accumulated deficiency of past years has been wiped out, there will be reductions.

Mr. LATHAM: In that case I hope we will have an opportunity to amend them after the next election.

The Premier: That is one of the promises you will be able to make.

Mr. LATHAM: And it will be fulfilled.

The Premier: I will get in ahead and reduce them.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope that will be done by the Premier. During his speech to-night he has enunciated a policy with which we can agree in many respects. With reference to the improved condition of the finances, we certainly did have a huge deficit a few years ago and I wish to pay a tribute to the Leader of the Opposition for the work he did to increase production in many directions. The policy laid down by him when Premier was good and sound. A Government doing the spade work must necessarily increase the deficit. When the spade work is completed and production sets in, the reduction of the deficit follows. Next year I believe the Premier will budget for a surplus. I contend that result has been brought about by a well thought-out policy brought into operation during the last few years. We have in Western Australia a country that the present Leader of the Opposition knew what to do with. He got the right type of people and they have done what the State expected. To-day we can rightly be proud of the achievements of last year. When we realise that 360,000 people produced £26,000,000 worth of wealth, we can realise what a wonderful performance it is. With such a small population and such a vast territory we have many public utilities that have to be found for the production of that wealth.

The Premier: Especially when you have regard to the proportion of adult males we have in this State.

Mr. LATHAM: It has been said that Gibraltar can boast of the greatest number of people per square mile of any part of the world. Western Australia can boast without fear of contradiction that the people produce more wealth per head of population than do those of any other country.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And it means cash, too.

Mr. LATHAM: A lot of the products of the State can be exported and these return to us foreign capital. We have a lot more to do and if the present policy is continued—I believe it will be by the present Administration—in the near future Western Australia will find itself in the happy position of taking the lead among the Australian States. I was struck by the note of warning sounded in the Governor's Speech. Therein it is pointed out that the greatest care must be exercised regarding the finances of the State notwithstanding the appreciable improvement. I hope great care will be exercised so that the present prosperity may continue. Regarding the railways, they represent a public utility that is used more than any other for developmental purposes. We have the largest amount of public money invested in that utility and I am pleased to see that considerable improvements have been made in the financial position of that undertaking. A loss of £400,000 has been transformed into a profit of £190,000 in four years. That is a very creditable result.

Mr. Hughes: And still they carry super on a 25 per cent. reduction.

Mr. LATHAM: And every bag of super carried produces a lot of wealth that increases the earnings of the railways. I wish I could get the hon. member a farm.

Mr. Hughes: I wish you could.

Mr. LATHAM: If I could I would put the hon. member 40 miles away from a railway so that he could not make so much noise. The Railway Department renders very efficient services in the interests of the users of the railways. Right from the rank and file to the Commissioner we get good service because we find that there has not been much increase in the staff in proportion to the augmented traffic handled. Despite that, we get excellent results. I deprecate very much the statement attributed to a Mr. Teasdale at the recent Primary Producers' Conference. A statement is attributed to him that a keg of beer could bring trucks to sidings. I have been associated with railway men in the distribution of trucks, and I can honestly say from experience that every thing humanly possible was done by the railway officers to meet the traffic at the time it was necessary to handle it. That applies particularly to the guards and the running staff with whom I have come in contact. From inquiries I have made in my own and other districts I find that railway officers have rendered most courteous service

and in every way possible have done their best to fulfil requirements. I, therefore, deprecate strongly the statement said to have been made by a vice-president of the Primary Producers' Association the effect of which was that one could practically buy railway trucks with a keg of beer.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: It is a grave reflection on the railway men.

Mr. LATHAM: I can only hope that Mr. Teasdale did not make the statement.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: At any rate, if he did I hope he will withdraw it.

Mr. LATHAM: From my knowledge of the railways officers I say that the statement is by no means correct.

Mr. Brown: It was only a statement made by someone in the hall.

Mr. LATHAM: But it is attributed to Mr. Teasdale and I hope, if he did not make that statement, he will correct it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Perhaps some people may attribute it to the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teasdale).

Mr. LATHAM: The Premier talked about the great benefits derived from the reduction in first, second, and third class freights. There is a reduction of £29,030. The first, second, and third class freights apply to goods brought from storekeepers. The purchasers of those articles do not receive any benefit for it goes wholly to the retail merchant. If the Government desired to do something to assist those who are providing the money for the railways, they could provide reductions in the freights on agricultural machinery, corn sacks and other lines used by the people who pay the freight. I do not see why the Government want to levy a tax on the land and then hand the money over to the railways. I cannot see where the benefit comes in.

The Minister for Railways: It is not handed over to the railways.

Mr. LATHAM: No, it is paid into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The trouble is that the retail merchant does not reduce his prices because of the reduction in freights.

Mr. LATHAM: The retail merchant cannot do so because the difference would be so small on individual articles. Thus it is that the storekeeper gets all the benefit. I was disappointed when I found that no reductions were made during last year. I thought the Premier would have anticipated the increased taxation and made the reduction in

freights apply from the beginning of the year.

The Premier: But the tax was passed practically in the last few days of the year.

Mr. LATHAM: I think the Premier anticipates a lot of legislation that goes through this Chamber.

The Premier: But in this instance I could not do so because of the hostility shown in another place.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, double it next year and make up for it.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope at any rate there will be a reduction on agricultural machinery and the other items I have referred to.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you mean on machinery bought from the State Implement Works?

Mr. LATHAM: The member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) is always bringing the State Implement Works into it. Let me tell him that on a plough bought from the State Implement Works a man had to pay £5 16s. in freight to get it to his siding. That is a big item.

The Minister for Railways: We reduced the freight on crude oil and said nothing about it.

Mr. LATHAM: It is shown in the returns.

The Minister for Railways: That was done during nine months of the financial year.

Mr. LATHAM: That was on fuel for tractors but the freight is still too heavy on fuel. Perhaps the Minister does not know that the freight on 150 cases of power kerosene sent from Fremantle to Kondinin cost £25.

The Minister for Railways: You know that all sorts of precautions have to be taken because of the inflammable nature of the consignment.

Mr. LATHAM: It is no more dangerous to carry that over the railways than it is to carry chaff. It may be necessary to have the trucks containing the kerosene further from the engine, but it is not more dangerous than chaff. It would appear that all the high freight traffic is being diverted to the roads and unless the Commissioner of Railways caters for that traffic it will all go to the motor lorries. The Minister realises what competition means because he has recently appointed an advertising agent to ask the merchants for their business.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: That was a waste of time.

Mr. LATHAM: But it has been done. It is an extraordinary thing to appoint a man

to ask for this business seeing that the Government have a monopoly. If it is not possible to keep the traffic in those circumstances, something is radically wrong. I suggest to the Minister that he should go into the question of reducing the freights on fuel for tractors and so on.

The Minister for Railways: You have had a reduction this year.

Mr. LATHAM: But give us a decent reduction. We have given the Government an advantage in taxation that they are not entitled to and we should have some return for it. Another thing in regard to the land tax: We have millions of acres of what are called light lands. The Agricultural Bank is not prepared to risk financing settlers on that class of land. If a land tax be imposed on it, then a man having 1,001 acres can get no rebate of tax at all. Yet to-day we find difficulty in getting men with money to take up our land.

The Minister for Railways: What?

The Premier: To take up land!

Mr. LATHAM: I said, "With money." We have the greatest difficulty in getting men with money to take up land. Of course there is no difficulty about getting people with no money to take up land in the expectation of the Government financing them. But people coming here with money are prepared only to purchase improved properties, realising that they are getting a very good bargain.

The Minister for Railways: Our land is so cheap.

Mr. LATHAM: But people with money are shy of taking up Crown lands. In my opinion it is a thoroughly good investment for any man with money to take up 4,000 or 5,000 acres of light land adjoining a railway. If we are to have a land tax on such land, it will tend to deter people from selecting it.

The Premier: It is a very light tax.

Mr. Hughes: It ought to be a good deal heavier.

Mr. LATHAM: If I had my way I would make managing clerks in the legal profession also pay pretty high taxes.

Mr. Hughes: Where is your consistency? Just now you said there was plenty of land available, and next you say there is difficulty in getting a block.

Mr. LATHAM: I can only express myself as intelligently as lies within my power. If I cannot make the hon. member understand what I mean, the fault is his. That

light land alongside railways should be brought into use as quickly as possible. I hope the Premier will take that into consideration when he thinks of increasing the land tax.

Mr. Lutey: What is the unimproved value of this light land?

Mr. LATHAM: The Leader of the Opposition, when Minister for Lands, in order to encourage people to select that land put through an Act reducing the minimum price to 1s. an acre. In time every acre of that land will be used, but just now it is difficult to get people to take it up.

Mr. Hughes: You wouldn't touch it, but it is good enough for others.

Mr. LATHAM: I would touch it fast enough if I had no other land. The trouble is to get people with money to take up that land when they can buy improved property.

The Minister for Railways: How much land tax would have to be paid on such land?

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister can work it out.

The Minister for Railways: I have worked it out. On 3,000 acres it would be about a fiver a year.

Mr. LATHAM: There are many ways of making valuations in this State. The State values first-class Crown land at 15s. per acre, whereas the new valuation made by the taxation officer is £2 5s. per acre. So while the State might say that these light lands were worth 8s. per acre, the Federal people might value them at £1 per acre.

The Minister for Railways: Even so, the tax would be only about £12 per annum.

Mr. LATHAM: Well that, coming on top of his other taxes, would be a deterrent to a selector. To even mention land tax to a man looking for land is sufficient to put him off it.

The Premier: That is not what deters him; it is men like you making a mountain out of a molehill.

Mr. LATHAM: Nothing of the sort. I mention it because people are always telling me about it. A man having 1,000 acres of first-class land might be able to pay land tax, but a man with 1,001 acres of light land cannot do so. Taxation is a very bad expedient.

The Premier: New railways, new roads, but no taxation!

Mr. LATHAM: The Leader of the Opposition gave you a good lead when he said,

"Don't go in for increased taxation, but go in for more production."

Mr. Hughes: The money you people have been making in the country has been buying property in the city and so running up city rents.

Mr. LATHAM: Scarcely a farmer has bought property in the city.

The Premier: Why, I met wheat farmers touring all through Europe!

Mr. LATHAM: And no doubt the Premier was glad to meet them.

The Premier: They were not worrying about this little land tax.

Mr. LATHAM: I have already said that our people are producing more wealth per head of population in this State than are people in any other part of the world. We want to encourage others to go on the land. While I am always anxious to see good, strong migrants coming to this State, I certainly hope that the small areas of wheat lands still unalienated will be reserved for sons of our own people. Western Australians are entitled to that good land, and I hope that the new men coming out here will be put down the South-West, while the wheat lands are reserved for our own children. It was an understood thing that the group settlement scheme was for the development of the South-West.

The Premier: Give our sons the good land, and put these other fellows down the South-West!

Mr. LATHAM: If the Premier infers that the wheat lands are the only good lands, I disagree with him. What is happening today? People who came out here in the full knowledge that they were to go down the South-West are getting out on to the wheat lands.

The Premier: You have forgotten that minority report of yours.

Mr. LATHAM: I repeat that any land left in the agricultural areas should be retained for the sons of our settlers, and that the newcomers should be put down the South-West, where the climate is more congenial to them. I know there is very little forest country left in the agricultural districts, but I understand that down the south coast, from Ravensthorpe across to Esperance, there is a decent belt of country.

The Premier: We have had many inquiries about it from people looking for wheat lands.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope every encouragement will be given to our own young fellows to get that land. Some day I should like to see a Bill introduced, linking up the Esperance railway with the Hopetoun railway. The other night I listened to a member who told us that while the Leader of the Opposition had given a good deal of credit to certain individuals, it was not definite that all of them had received assistance. I admit that not all of those farmers got assistance, but I want to quote from the papers prepared by the State Advisory Committee for submission to the Disabilities Commission. On page 48 of the report we find this—

Total advances to 30th June, 1923:—New South Wales, £15,000,000; Victoria, £31,000,000; Queensland, £5,000,000; South Australia, £16,000,000; Western Australia, £16,000,000; Tasmania, £803,000.

The amounts outstanding on that date were:—New South Wales £9,000,000, Victoria £24,000,000, Queensland £4,000,000, South Australia £10,000,000, Western Australia £9,000,000. It shows that while the other States have made very big advances to their settlers, Western Australia has just about equalled all of them, except Victoria; and we find that the settlers in Western Australia have returned a greater percentage to the State than have the settlers in other States. It proves that this State has been generous, and that the settlers have responded well. There are some astounding figures on page 47 of the papers outlining the State case indicating the progress made in the agricultural and pastoral industries. Between 1901 and 1923 the increase in the area under crop in Western Australia was 1,030 per cent., while the next highest State was New South Wales with 91.795 per cent. The production of wheat in Western Australia increased by 1,688.9 per cent., while the next largest was South Australia with an increase of 207.04 per cent. The production of oats in Western Australia increased by 2,516.8 per cent., while the next highest was South Australia with 359.22 per cent. For barley the percentage for Western Australia was 269, but South Australia was higher with a percentage of 1,651.69. For potatoes Western Australia's increase was 214 per cent., while the next largest was Victoria with 20.49. Cattle in Western Australia increased by 135.8 per cent., and the next largest was Queensland with 85.42 per cent.

Sheep in this State increased by 153.8 per cent., and the next largest was Queensland with 75.87 per cent. The wool production in Western Australia showed an advance of 208.9 per cent. and the next largest was Queensland with 90.44 per cent. Those figures show that while the State has assisted primary producers to a very great extent, the amount of progress made as a result of the assistance has been considerable. I realise that if we want to build up our population we must have secondary industries. We must be self-supporting.

Mr. Sleeman: And we must support secondary industries when we get them.

Mr. LATHAM: I agree with that; it is of no use attempting to build up secondary industries unless we have loyalty amongst our own people. Everybody in this State should use Western Australian made goods, and if the goods cannot be produced here, Australian made goods should receive second preference and Empire made goods should come next. I regret that hundreds of thousands of pounds are being spent in this State on motor cars and that the money is going to America. It is a great pity that we cannot build up an Empire trade and buy cars of British manufacture if they cannot be produced here. It is lamentable that people within the Empire should be out of employment while we are sending our money to America to buy motors that could be just as well produced in Great Britain. The British people turn out a very fine type of car, and yet there are very few British-made cars in this State.

Mr. North: The Ford cars being assembled in this country are from Canada.

Mr. LATHAM: I would prefer to buy Canadian manufactured goods rather than see the money go outside the Empire. Trade within the Empire is a question that will need serious consideration. Great difficulty must be experienced in the Home land to provide work for the people there, and it is certainly up to the overseas dominions to assist the Old Country as much as possible. I congratulate the Government upon having established an agricultural college after many years of discussion. The other night I asked the Premier how much money remained in the Treasury from the compulsory wheat pool for 1921-22. I had in mind that it would be a good idea to provide that amount of capital for the agricultural college. The

money of course is due to wheat growers but it would be a good thing if it were allocated to the agricultural college. No doubt a good deal of State money will be made available for the college.

The Premier: Yes, the college will cost us a good deal more than that.

Mr. LATHAM: I admit that. As the money from the wheat pool does not belong to the Government—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It can be claimed at any time.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course it can, but the wheat grower would probably derive some satisfaction from the knowledge that the money from the pool was being used for research with a view to increasing the production of the country.

The Premier: He can have the satisfaction this year of saying that in the amount we have to find, the £5,000 is included. It will not make any difference to the Treasurer.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The owners of the money can claim it at any time.

The Premier: I shall say that acting on the hon. member's advice part of my vote for the college includes that item.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yet you say you must not be dictated to by every member who speaks here.

Mr. LATHAM: I think the pool was wound up in 1922, and it is not likely that the money will be claimed now. I am sorry that the Minister for Agriculture is not in his seat. I am concerned about the tremendous spread of rabbits in the agricultural districts.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Whose fault is it? The farmers' own fault.

Mr. LATHAM: Because he grows the wheat on which they feed? An awful crime! It is impossible to keep the pest effectively in check owing to the large areas of Crown lands. I asked the Premier the other day whether he was prepared to anticipate legislation in the Federal Parliament by distributing rabbit netting amongst the farmers as quickly as possible. It will be a tremendous calamity if the rabbits continue to increase as they are doing at present.

The Premier: I can assure you we are fully alive to the danger of it.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope every effort will be made to get the Federal Government to move. Mr. Gregory is taking steps to ex-

pedite matters at the Melbourne end, and I am sure the Minister for Agriculture will do his best to get the netting sent to farmers as early as possible. The present is a suitable time to erect the wire, and I am anxious that as much as possible shall be erected this winter.

Mr. Richardson: Someone suggested taking down the fence to permit the rabbits to return to South Australia.

Mr. LATHAM: Some people are brainy enough for anything. They do not know what a great benefit the fence has been to the State, or they would not talk about removing it. I am pleased that at last something is to be done to provide permanent water supplies in the agricultural districts. I hope the Premier will make available some loan funds so that the Minister for Water Supply can hurry on the scheme. Unless we get some very heavy rains, there will be a serious shortage of water in many centres next summer. Through the rains we have had have been beneficial for wheat growing, they have not been sufficient for water conservation purposes.

Mr. Hughes: One would think we had a farmers' Government in power.

Mr. LATHAM: If the hon. member were out of it I would, but not while he is there. During the coming summer the railways will be required to cart a tremendous quantity of water. I was pleased to hear the Premier say he is thinking of introducing legislation to permit of the handing over of local utilities to the people who use them. That is one of the finest things I have heard for a long time. I have always advocated it, and the Premier will certainly have my support in any steps he contemplates to hand over the water supply, sewerage, tramway, and other utilities, whether they are making a profit or not.

The Minister for Railways: It will be difficult to hand them over if they are not profitable.

Mr. LATHAM: Perhaps the Minister will be able to show a profit in the year prior to handing them over.

Mr. Richardson: What about the goldfields water supply?

Mr. LATHAM: That has become a national undertaking, because it serves not only the goldfields but the agricultural areas. It would be difficult to control such an undertaking by means of a board. I am

pleased that legislation is to be introduced to deal with electoral matters. I presume this relates to a redistribution of seats Bill.

Mr. Richardson: I think you are optimistic.

Mr. LATHAM: I certainly hope there will be a redistribution of seats Bill. The member for Canning is representing 13,000 electors.

The Premier: There ought to be three members for that number.

Mr. LATHAM: And possibly they would be on this side of the House.

Mr. Hughes: There is no danger of that.

Mr. LATHAM: We would not want to force an election too soon, or the hon. member might find his successor on this side of the House.

Mr. Hughes: I should like to have a go at you.

Mr. LATHAM: I would not take on anything so risky as that. I would prefer someone who would give the hon. member a much better run.

Mr. Hughes: Come yourself.

Mr. LATHAM: It is too risky. I was pleased to hear the Premier's tone of optimism about group settlement. I do not propose to discuss the question at this stage. I have heard quite a lot about it during the last few months. As regards the personnel of the commission I believe the members did their best. I think the chairman in particular did considerably more work than was ever expected of him. I have been associated with a few commissions and committees, and have never come into contact with a more energetic chairman than the gentleman who presided over the Group Settlement Commission. Immigration of course is the lifeblood of development in this State, and I know the Premier is aware of that fact. I regret that in the Old Country every care is not exercised when selecting people to come out to this State. When people at Home are nominated to come here, they sell up their homes and are then passed by a doctor. Possibly when they are just about to embark, one member of the family is found to be physically unfit to leave, and frequently the doctor grants a pass rather than detain people who have sold up their homes. An easier method would be to have officials and a medical officer going through the rural areas, so that people would hold the medical certificate before they sold

up their homes. The intending migrants, too, would be seen under local conditions, and the officials would be able to judge whether they would be likely to make successful settlers.

The Premier: That is done now.

Mr. LATHAM: It was stated a while ago that migrants were not seen by a medical officer until they boarded the ship. That is a serious state of affairs. It is a pity that people should be declared physically unfit after having sold up their homes.

The Premier: That is not the system now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It has not been the system. The certificates are on the file.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad to learn that that sort of thing is not happening. I hope due consideration will be given to bringing out a fair number of females to Australia, too.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you want them at York?

Mr. LATHAM: If the hon. member interjecting will look up the statistics, he will learn that in this State we have 27,000 more males than females. From a public point of view that is a very serious matter. To-day if we get the right type of girl, she will always be able to command a husband who will be able to maintain her, whereas at Home she will have to pass her time in spinsterhood. Some members may treat the matter lightly, but from a public point of view it is very serious. In Great Britain there are two million surplus women, and in Western Australia we are 27,000 women short on a population of 360,000. The problem is one that ought to be considered by the Government. We are continually bringing out young fellows, who nominate themselves, or are nominated by relatives, and so we are building up a very large male population. The proportion of sexes ought to be more equal. Generally as regards migrants to this State, I do not think we need worry much about the small percentage who prove unsatisfactory. The greatest number of the migrants will make good citizens. It is a certainty that their children will be true Australians: after a few years' residence here it will be very hard to tell whether they ever saw the Homeland or not. I do not care very much about remarks made by members of the public, and sometimes by members of Parliament, though not antagonistically, about migrants having received a dole at Home. Anyone who has followed up the history of Great Britain knows that after the

war very many of her people were thrown out of employment. No country can afford to let its poor people starve. In Western Australia we have a system of doles; and who would say that we should not give unfortunate people sufficient to maintain them?

The Premier: "Dole" is the term used in England.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not objecting to the term. What I am objecting to is the statement that people who received the dole at Home are unsatisfactory citizens here.

The Premier: That is not right. Some of the finest and most skilled tradesmen and mechanics in England have compulsorily been receiving relief for years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And through no fault of their own.

The Premier: No fault whatever of their own. Some of the best people in England have been on the dole.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes; some excellent textile workers.

The Premier: Yes, and shipwrights and engineers.

Mr. LATHAM: Let us give these people an opportunity in Western Australia as the Premier has outlined. Let them have an opportunity to develop our lands. The South-West offers wonderful opportunities to these people. We want to give them a word of encouragement, and help them. For Heaven's sake, let us not tell these people that they have no earthly hope of making good, thus breaking their hearts when they come to the first trouble. These children of our forebears have not deteriorated. It is the duty of every true Western Australian to help the people who have come out here to settle on our lands and become good citizens of this State.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

House adjourned at 10.21 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 25th August, 1925.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAY, ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS.

Taking-over by Commissioner.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Are the Government aware that the District Settlers' Associations in the Norseman-Esperance locality are keenly desirous of hastening the taking over by the Commissioner of Railways of the Esperance-Northwards railway, so as to relieve the community of the inconvenience caused by the erratic nature of the existing railway service between Esperance and Salmon Gums? 2, Can a more definite date than "within a month or two," as stated in the Governor's Speech, be given for the railway to be handed over for traffic?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes, although it is not admitted that the traffic has been run in an erratic manner. 2, It has already been arranged that the line will be taken over by the Railway Department on the 1st proximo.

QUESTION—RAILWAY TRUCKS.

Mileages loaded and empty.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS (for Hon. H. Seddon) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What was the average truck mileage, (a) loaded and (b) empty, per day during each of the past five years? 2, What was the truck mileage per day for "Xa" trucks over the same period? 3, What was the truck mileage, (a) loaded and (b) empty, during the last wheat season for trucks used in that traffic?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The average truck mileage of both loaded and empty trucks per day for the past five years was:—1921, 20.56 miles; 1922, 20.04