

fied that the proposed legislation is in the interests of the people. With that condition fulfilled, he should stand behind the Government of the day. If we do that, our united efforts will bring a greater measure of prosperity to the State than would otherwise be possible under the financial conditions at present existing. Until such time as the Government are able to devise some means which will provide a greater step towards full-time employment for many thousands of men now on sustenance, I believe we shall never be able to enjoy any material state of prosperity. Members will surely agree with me in that view. As has been pointed out by previous speakers, the greater volume of prosperity in this or in any other primary producing State is largely in the hands of the elements, but I still believe that as a result of the adoption of a careful and unbiassed attitude on the part of the Government, ably supported as they would be by members of the Opposition, a genuine effort to improve the conditions generally could be made. For my own part I will at all times endeavour to assist in the passage of any legislation which, I am satisfied in my own mind, is in the best interests of Western Australia.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.43 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 18th August, 1937.

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

QUESTION—EDUCATION.

Goldfields High School.

Hon. C. G. ELLIOTT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, In connection with the Goldfields High School, what was the total cost of—(a) buildings, (b) furniture? 2, What provision has been made for a supply of water should an outbreak of fire occur at the school?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) £7,854; (b) £1,522. 2, In addition to the provision of standpipes in the quadrangle and an alarm connected to the Kalgoorlie Fire Station, two street fire hydrants have been installed near the school. The question of further safeguarding the school from damage by fire is now under consideration.

MOTION—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulations.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [4.36]: I move—

That the regulations (Nos. 1 to 9 inclusive) relating to the Natives' Medical Fund made under the Native Administration Act, 1905-1936, published in the "Government Gazette" of 2nd July, 1937, and laid on the table of the House on 10th August, 1937, be and are hereby disallowed.

No alteration has been made in the fees payable in respect of permits, a permit to employ one native costing 5s., and a general permit £2. The regulations now provide, however, that in addition to the above fees the permit holder shall contribute £1 per head per annum in respect of each and every native employed by him under the authority of the permit. The Commissioner may, in the case of wards or trainees of the Aborigines Department, or where a permit is de-

sired for the employment of a native for a period not exceeding one month, accept a lower contribution to the Natives' Medical Fund. I would like the Chief Secretary, in replying, to state how this regulation affects mission natives. I hope it does not apply to them in the same way as to natives employed. Neither the Act nor the regulations define what constitutes employment as regards natives. Under the form of application for a general permit as previously prescribed, the applicant was required to state the average number of aboriginals to be employed. It is understood that no change is contemplated in the form of application for a permit, and consequently the contribution to the medical fund will be payable in accordance with the number of natives inserted in the application. The point there is that on a station where natives are employed, in addition to those actually employed, there may be some old natives who come up to do some sweeping around the homestead or a little work in the garden. It should be made clear how the employer stands in regard to such old natives, whether £1 per head is to be paid by him into the medical fund in respect of them. The old natives are practically kept by the station owner, and are not employees. I do not think that in the past such old natives have been put on the permit. The regulations state that the Commissioner may, as and whenever he shall think fit, use the moneys in the fund to defray the medical and hospital expenses and the maintenance of any native who falls ill or becomes diseased, or who suffers any injury or accident, whether any such native is employed, indigent or not. Where a native who is employed becomes ill or diseased, and the employer has provided medical attention and medicines on the property for the reason that the removal to a hospital was not necessary, the employer is required to bear any expense involved. Where such medical attention and medicines are provided on the property because the patient could not with safety be removed, the fund will bear the expense involved, or reimburse the employer should he have already paid the charges. Where the employer has sent the native to the nearest accessible hospital or to the nearest protector for medical attention and treatment, and, in the opinion of the Commissioner, the condition was not serious and medical attention was practicable at the place of employment, then the Commissioner may recover

from the employer any hospital or doctor's fees which have been incurred in the treatment of the native. Exception is taken there, because it is considered that no station owner would send a native in unless he thought this was necessary for the purpose of treatment. If the station owner sent a native in and it turned out, after the native had been a week or so in the hospital, that the case was trivial—though it might not have appeared so to a station owner some hundreds of miles out—the station owner should not be called upon to bear the cost. If the Commissioner is satisfied that the condition of the native made his removal to the nearest hospital necessary, he "may," from the fund, pay the hospital and doctor's charges, or reimburse the employer if the latter has already paid them. Objection is raised to the word "may" in that regulation. It is considered the regulation should provide that the Commissioner "shall" reimburse the employer. There is not a great deal in it, perhaps, because the regulation says "If the Commissioner is satisfied." If he is not satisfied, he will not pay. However, if he is satisfied, he should undoubtedly refund any payments made by the employer. Where an employed native has suffered an accident or becomes ill or diseased and he is treated on the station because removal is not considered necessary, the employer is required to pay the medical expenses and cost of medicines incurred, but in special cases the Commissioner may, if he thinks fit, reimburse the employer such expenses. That is all right. The regulations provide that medical attention shall include any necessary artificial limbs or other surgical or mechanical instruments ordered by the medical practitioner attending the native. Employers who pay their contributions to the medical fund are relieved of their liability for worker's compensation to an injured native or his dependants under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-34. Although it was apparently the intention of Parliament entirely to exempt contributors to the Natives Medical Fund from any liability under the Workers' Compensation Act in respect of natives in their employ, the provisions of the Act do not in fact extend such exemption to cover native employees suffering from any of the diseases mentioned in the Third Schedule of the Act, amongst which is anthrax. That is evidently a weakness in the Act.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think that was the intention.

The Chief Secretary: How many cases of anthrax have occurred among such natives?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Probably the matter will require an amendment of the Native Administration Act. The regulations take no cognisance of the fact that many native employees are already entitled to free hospital attention by reason of being contributors under the Hospital Fund Act, having paid the required contribution of 1½d. in the pound on their earnings. That is where natives are paid wages. I should say that if a native is paid wages, it is not necessary for the employer to pay the contribution of £1 to the medical fund. The Chief Secretary may be able to clear up that point in replying. The objectionable features of the regulations may be summarised as follows:—(a) The contribution of £1 per head per annum to the medical fund is unduly high, the scale under the Northern Territory regulations being—

Where not more than two aborigines are employed, 16s. per annum.

Where more than two, but less than six aborigines are employed, £1 12s. per annum.

Where more than five, but less than 11 aborigines are employed, £2 8s. per annum.

Where more than 10, but less than 21 aborigines are employed, £4 per annum.

Where more than 20, but less than 41 aborigines are employed, £8 per annum.

Where more than 40, £16 per annum.

One of the main objections is that the charge of £1 is too high, and that half of that amount would be reasonable. When a comparison is made with the position in the Northern Territory, it is found that we are paying almost double the amount paid there. Unlike Western Australia, there appears to be no legal obligation under the Northern Territory Ordinance to insure natives under 'the workers' compensation legislation. I take it that that is if we do not pay into the medical fund, but I understand that employers are compelled to pay when the permit is issued. It has been explained to me that the medical fund is to be used for the benefit of all natives, and the Aborigines Department will thereby be relieved of expenditure in respect of hospital and medical attention for unemployed and indigent natives, which expenditure it has been called upon to bear in the past. The onus is placed upon the employer of deciding whether or not the condition of a native who is ill or injured is sufficiently serious to warrant his removal to the nearest accessible hospital, but where he exercises his judg-

ment and removes the native, the Commissioner may determine that such a removal was unnecessary and require the employer to pay any medical and hospital expenses incurred. It is desired that that regulation should be cut out because it is plain that no employer would send a native to hospital unless he seriously thought that it was in the interests of the native that he should have hospital and medical treatment.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.49]: I am afraid I am not rising to congratulate the Government on the progress made during the past few years. In view of the wonderful prices we have received for our gold, wheat and wool, considerably more progress should have been made than has been the case. Furthermore, to my mind matters of administration have not been properly carried out. There has been a certain amount of reflection cast upon this Chamber because Bills brought forward by the Government have not been sanctioned here, and it has been suggested that for that reason the progress of the country has been retarded. Broadly speaking, no individual has been seriously affected by the rejection of any one of those Bills. On the contrary, nearly all the contents of those Bills have been placed before the tribunal which has been set aside by Parliament to decide whether or not the various measures which we were asked to adopt should, in fact, be adopted. I refer particularly to the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act and one or two other Acts with which the Arbitration Court has complete authority to deal. This Chamber has been the subject of a considerable amount of controversy because certain Bills have been rejected. I notice that remarks were made in another place that the Address-in-reply debate was a waste of time. I do not subscribe to that complaint, but I do consider that many of us perhaps talk for a longer period than may be necessary. However, we cannot all be concise and yet clear in what we say, and we cannot make our speeches in as few words as we might

wish to employ. It is a curious fact that the people who criticise us for the length of our speeches on the Address-in-reply are the same people who criticise us for saying so little when we are against a measure, when we have clearly seen what our duty is and there is no need to labour the matter. In such circumstances Bills have been rejected on the second reading without reaching the Committee stage, when it has been quite clear that the Bills could not meet with the approval of the House. There are certain administrative acts of the Government which I consider to be absolutely wrong. A practice has been introduced by the Government which might have far-reaching effect and be to the great detriment of the people at large. I refer particularly to the appearance of a clause in tenders called by the Government to the effect that no tender will be accepted unless unionists are employed by the tenderer. This is another matter which has been before the Arbitration Court from time to time, the body which was set up to decide this particular question. Now the Arbitration Court is over-ridden by the Government saying to the tenderer, "You shall employ unionists." The Arbitration Court does not say so.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is another form of conscription.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: They go further than that and this is what I so strongly object to. They say that unless the employer who is a tenderer sees that the men who assist to make the goods to be supplied to the Government subscribe to the funds of the Labour Party, his tender will not be accepted. It is no use saying it is not so although the tender does not say as much in so many words.

The Chief Secretary: On a point of order I would like to ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement. It is utterly untrue.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I should like to be permitted to explain and if, after my explanation, the Chief Secretary desires me to withdraw, I shall be only too pleased to do so. In fact, I shall be only too pleased to withdraw anything I may say if the Chief Secretary, in his reply, will convince me I am wrong. I sincerely trust, in the interests of the country, that I am wrong in what I am about to say, but I fear I am not. The tender form says that

no tender will be accepted unless financial members of a union are employed. I understand that is correct.

The Chief Secretary: That is an entirely different statement from that made by the hon. member a minute or two ago. I want a withdrawal.

The PRESIDENT: What is the particular statement that the Minister desires withdrawn?

The Chief Secretary: The hon. member stated that the tender forms contained a certain clause and he mentioned words which that clause was supposed to contain. I say it contains nothing of the sort and the hon. member knows it.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: May I ask the Chief Secretary whether I am correct in saying that the tender form sets out that a tender will be accepted only where the tenderer employs union labour and the men are financial members of the union.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is not the statement you made at first.

The Chief Secretary: I am not going to deal with any other question. I am drawing attention to the fact that the hon. member made an untrue statement and I ask him to withdraw it.

Hon. J. Cornell: No member of this House has a right to ask for the withdrawal of the utterances of any member so long as those utterances do not reflect on any member of this House or upon the House.

The PRESIDENT: Does the Chief Secretary regard the remarks of the hon. member as personally offensive?

The Chief Secretary: I do, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: In that case, I think the hon. member might withdraw.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I withdraw any reflections on any particular individual whether it be the Chief Secretary or any other member of the Government, but I again say that the tender form sets out that the men employed by the tenderer must be members of a union, and that no tender will be accepted unless those members of the union are financial. I take it that I am not asked to withdraw that. I only wish the Chief Secretary could ask me to withdraw that.

The PRESIDENT: I understand that the hon. member states that he does not

wish to personally reflect upon the Chief Secretary or any other hon. member?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Most decidedly, and I repeat that I sincerely trust that the Chief Secretary will be able to contradict what I have said that the tender form sets out that the tenderers must employ unionists and that those unionists must be financial. As there is no further remark from the Chief Secretary I now state that it is common knowledge that union funds are used for political purposes. Therefore, if union funds are used for political purposes, the clause in the tender form has exactly the same effect as if it stated that unless the employees of the tenderer subscribed to the party funds of the Labour Government, the employer would not receive the contract.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is the point; that is what the honourable member intended to say.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is what I wished to point out in my earlier remarks.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is correct and they cannot deny it.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I trust that the Chief Secretary will be able to contradict it, and if he can, I hope he will be able to contradict it before he replies to this debate. What will be the position if, whatever party gets into power, the Government turn round and say, "No tender will be accepted by the Government unless the tenderer can show that the men employed by him have contributed to the party funds." Why should not the National Party, if it came into power, say that no tender would be accepted unless the tenderer could produce a receipt to show that he subscribed to the party funds, or that he was a financial member of the Employers Federation? What difference is there? If we countenance that, we shall be reaching a very bad stage indeed in our public life.

Members: Hear hear!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I regret that such a condition should be imposed in a matter in which every citizen has a perfect right to his liberty. Whether he be a worker as an employer or an employee, he has a perfect right to earn his livelihood in an honest way without being bound to pay any taxes other than those imposed by the Legislature.

Hon. T. Moore: Which are many.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: They are quite sufficient, anyhow. Another thing that seems entirely wrong in the administration is that affecting transport. Recently I, with other honourable members, road board members and citizens, waited on the Minister for Railways requesting that a railway siding be put in to serve a certain suburb, as there were excellent building sites in the locality. The land was decidedly inexpensive and was useful for building purposes; in fact, it was one of the best sites in the district. But very few houses are being built there because of transport difficulties.

Hon. T. Moore: Will the people ride in trains nowadays?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If the honourable member will listen, he might be enlightened. The suggestion was that a railway siding be provided. My figures might not be quite accurate, but I believe the approximate cost was £4,000 or £5,000. The Minister replied that the question of transport was in the melting pot, and it was easy to see that conditions of transport during the past 15 or 20 years had entirely and absolutely changed. With that statement everybody must agree. The Minister pointed out that if the siding were put in, there was doubt whether it would ever pay for itself, and, furthermore, money was so tight that it was a matter of some moment for the Government to spend £5,000. Therefore, Cabinet would have to consider what should be done. A suggestion was made, "What about buses?" My recollection is that there was neither yea nor nay to that question. If the Government are not prepared to do something to facilitate the transport of the people, why not let private individuals do it? There are any number of people only too anxious to risk their capital in opening up new avenues of transport with buses, but the policy of the Government is, "No, we are going to have the State controlling all transport." It might be all right if we had the money to provide the necessary transport, but the Government have not the money and will not let anyone else provide it. I blame the Government for building up in this city what will prove to be the future slums. People must have transport. We have only to go to the suburbs to realise that where transport is provided, houses spring up almost like mushrooms. If people cannot get transport, the land remains in its virgin state. Flats are being

erected in hundreds. Is there any more abominable way for people to live than in flats?

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: To my mind it is most deplorable to see our people housed in flats.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is there any necessity for it?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: There is no necessity for it. We are merely building up slums for the future and they are being built up because of inadequate transport. There is any amount of money available to satisfy all the requirements of transport by means of buses, etc., and why should it concern the Government if I choose to invest thousands of pounds in transport to some of the suburbs? Even if I subsequently lose my money, it is my risk. Why not let me take the risk if, by so doing, my action will benefit others? I quite agree that Government money should not be risked in this enterprise, but if a private individual considers it to be a good investment, and it is for the benefit of the people, why not let him undertake it? The people must live where there is transport in order that they might get to their work.

Hon. G. Fraser: Are not flats being built in districts where there is ample transport?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am sorry if I have not made myself clear. Flats are being built because people have to crowd into areas where transport is provided, though we have vast areas into which the population could spread. It is because transport is provided that flats are being built in city and suburbs. Private enterprise is able to provide the necessary transport. We have had the most striking example of the incompetence of management of transport in Western Australia during the last few weeks. A ferry has been running to South Perth for more than 30 years, and it needed a deputation recently to ask that the ferry and trams be timed to meet each other. Surely any private company would, in its own interests, ensure that the trams met the ferry, or the ferry met the trams. The following advertisement appeared in the "West Australian" a fortnight ago:—

W.A. Government Tramways and Ferries.

South Perth Ferry and Tram Service.

Commencing on Monday, August 9, the service between the boat and tram at South Perth will be co-ordinated.

An extra tram will run from Como to Mends-street, and all boats will be met.

The ferry service between 8.0 and 9.0 a.m., and 5.0 and 6.0 p.m., will be varied approximately two minutes to provide tram connections.

WILLIAM H. TAYLOR,
General Manager.

It has taken all these years to alter the ferry times a matter of two minutes so that the trams would not be pulling out just as the ferry was pulling in.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The present Government have not been in office 30 years.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am referring to all Governments.

Hon. G. Fraser: You were a Minister of one Government.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I was not in office long enough to alter things. I should like the Government to consider the advisability of enlarging the police force. With a larger force much could be done to minimise the number of traffic accidents. All who drive motor cars fully realise that drivers seldom give the signals correctly, and that there is a lot of bad driving, sometimes too slow, sometimes too fast, as well as a lot of negligent driving. A private individual does not feel disposed to report a negligent driver, the man who cuts in, cuts across, fails to give signals, shoots into the main stream of traffic, and so forth.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He would be kept very busy if he attempted to do so.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If we had more police patrol men, not to run motorists in—I do not regard that as the way to control traffic—but to advise and assist traffic, good results would follow. If a patrol man saw a motorist cutting a corner, there would not be any necessity, unless some danger attached to the incident, to bring that man before the court. A greater number of patrol men would be able to advise drivers where they were going wrong, and impress upon them that they must not repeat the offence. If people were instructed and trained on the road to comply with the traffic regulations and the rules of the road, accidents would be fewer and there would not be any greater number of prosecutions. I do not think prosecutions have any beneficial effect. I regret to be so critical to-day, but, as a Western Australian, I feel that the country, not of my adoption but of my birth, is being shown up in a shocking light as in a hopelessly impoverished condition.

I do not believe that that is so. Mr. Piesse quoted figures to show that in fact our condition was not so bad. Yet we have a proposal that I hope will not take form, although the Government appear to have made up their minds upon it, to erect at Fremantle a bridge of a type that early settlers in America adopted, and early settlers in Western Australia without a brass farthing adopted. I refer to the erection of a wooden bridge to last say 30 years. The bridge at Fremantle should be an outstanding engineering work, not a mere rickety, flimsy, wooden structure. Admittedly we grow the finest timber in the world for bridge building, but it will not make a bridge suitable for the purpose. We should have a bridge not costing £80,000 but one which the State could well afford and should afford. If the State cannot afford more than £80,000 for a bridge at Fremantle, we must be in a very parlous condition. The Government have to decide what shall be done. I trust that before Parliament meets for another session plans will have been prepared for a bridge that will be a credit to the State. What a disgraceful thing the Canning Bridge is! Though it is one of the main arteries to the country, it is a structure that we should have expected settlers in 1830 to erect. I feel much ashamed at the thought that, after this country has been settled for a hundred years, we are contemplating the erection of wooden bridges. I do not propose to address myself to the question of State insurance, as that matter will come up for consideration later. At the beginning of last session the Lieut.-Governor's Speech mentioned insurance of third-party risk for motorists. I am sorry that a similar reference was not contained in the Speech this year, and that no mention whatever has been made of it. Compulsory insurance covering third-party risk is long overdue and is certainly a matter which the Government could well afford to bring before us. To my mind also the Licensing Act requires to be re-cast. A good deal of trouble has been caused on the goldfields.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Only because of the single-track mind of some of the people, but we do not bother about them.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am one who believes that the law, once it is passed, should be carried into effect, and if it is no good it should be altered. We know that the Licensing Act has never been enforced to its full extent, and I am not going to say that every

law should be enforced to its fullest extent. But if the licensing law is wrong it should be altered, and not be permitted to remain as it stands, so as to allow one hotel to sell liquor and refuse that right to another. That kind of thing leaves the door open to all sorts of abuses. The Licensing Act should be drastically amended to meet the conditions of the different parts of the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: And brought up to date.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes; it is absurd to think that on a Sunday a person should not be permitted to have a drink except in his own house, or unless he travels a certain distance. Why should a man have to travel to obtain a drink, and why should he only be allowed to have it in his own home on the Sabbath, or after hours? I am not in favour of throwing open hotels altogether, but I cannot see any reason, particularly in the summer months, why a man and his family cannot have a drink, say, on a hotel verandah on Sunday afternoon. Why should he not? What harm is there in it? I would be in favour of providing a severe penalty for drunkenness, but what we want to do is to avoid making a person sneak into the back room of a hotel on Sunday in order to get a drink.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There is nothing of that kind on the goldfields, thank goodness!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not see why our licensing laws should not be more in consonance with modern conditions of living. Regarding the administration of the Act itself, we know, of course, that the Licenses Reduction Board has gone, and it seems to me that there would be a great saving in expense by reverting to something of the nature of the former system of granting licenses. Three gentlemen constitute the licensing bench to-day, and undoubtedly they have made a study of the licensing laws. But is there any occasion for those gentlemen to travel from one end of the State to the other in the performance of their duties? We have an able police force to see that the licensing laws are enforced, and inspectors and police are appointed to see that hotels are properly conducted. Is it necessary, therefore, to incur the great expense of sending the three members of the licensing bench all over the State merely to renew licenses, and occasionally, perhaps, grant a new one? All that could be done quite easily by magistrates. I trust that the progress the country will make in the future will be greater than it has been in the past. Although I do

not know what the intentions of the Government are with regard to emergency legislation generally, I trust that they will not ask the House to renew, among other Acts, the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act, and that if they do so, they will submit it in a considerably altered form. I support the motion.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East)

[5.20]: Like the previous speaker, I am afraid I am going to be somewhat critical with regard to some of the actions of the Government. A considerable number of people appear to be of the belief that the time occupied in debating the Address-in-reply is so much waste of time; but I sincerely hope that private members will hesitate, before they discard a privilege which is now theirs, to speak on the motion for the adoption of the Address, a privilege which enables them to discuss many matters of moment, and which we would be denied the right to refer to, except perhaps on the Estimates. Slowly but surely every Act of Parliament, in effect, tightens up the privileges of the people and makes the position a little more difficult for the individual. Therefore I say we, as members, should preserve the right we now possess to refer to subjects generally when speaking on the Address-in-reply. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Fraser issued a friendly warning to members of this House that it might be possible some of us would be missing in the future if we did not give the industrial legislation submitted by the Government more consideration than we have done in the past. That statement, too, has been made in another place. It certainly is a popular cry that the Legislative Council prevents the will of the people being carried out, and many go so far as to say that the Legislative Council should be abolished. Those people seem to forget the important fact that the Legislative Council was the first form of Parliamentary government we had in Western Australia, and that it was the Legislative Council, in effect, that brought into being the Legislative Assembly. Speaking for myself and other members, I feel sure that any reasonable legislation brought before this House will receive due consideration. The Premier stated that he did not want to make any threats or suggestion of reprisals, but definite threats of reprisals have been made outside the House, and it seems that the threats have influenced members on the Government side to repeat them in the House.

I hope that we shall be able to work amicably and pass legislation which will be of such a character as will benefit the whole of the State. I believe that is the general desire of every member of this House and another place. As regards some legislation in which this House refused to concur, the hon. member who has just resumed his seat referred to the Factories and Shops Bill and the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill. Mr. Fraser, in the course of his remarks, congratulated the Government on the progress they had made in solving the unemployment problem, but he felt that a great deal remained to be done. He also added that he intended to give the Government no peace until we reached the stage when every man who was able to work was given the opportunity to do so. I ask the House and the Government whether every man is being given the right to work. I propose to show that is not the position. Recently there was inserted a clause in tender forms, a clause which, in respect of at least one of our factories, the Albany Woollen Mills, was not fully considered from the point of view of the effect it was likely to have on that industry at Albany. If the Government are going to put into effect this ukase the result will prove serious. The clause reads:—

(9) Every tenderer, when lodging his tender, must state in writing whether or not the servants or employees whom he employs in or in connection with the conduct of his business, and who will be engaged in or in connection with the supply and delivery of the goods by the tenderer, if his tender is accepted, are financial members of a registered industrial union of workers in the industry to which the tenderer's business relates; and if such tenderer's tender be accepted the tenderer must undertake as a condition precedent and going to the root of the contract that only persons who are financial members of a registered industrial union of workers in the industry to which the tenderer's business relates will be employed by the tenderer in or in connection with the supply (including manufacture or preparation where the goods are manufactured or prepared by the tenderer in Western Australia) and delivery of the goods to be supplied by the tenderer pursuant to the acceptance of his tender, unless the Treasurer for Western Australia by writing under his hand approves of other persons being so engaged.

This bears out entirely what was said by Mr. Parker that the Government were imposing conditions they had no right to impose. Let us see what the position is

with regard to the Albany Woollen Mills. If my memory serves me correctly, quite a number of us who desired to assist in the establishment of those works invested our money there, and we did not expect any return for some time. So we are not disappointed. I understand that the mills were advanced by the Government something like £60,000, and incidentally I congratulate Mr. Kenneally, who was then Minister for Industries, on having persuaded the Government to assist the mills to that extent at a time when the money was required. He said, "If you get another £30,000 by way of debentures which is essential to enable you to increase your plant, the Government will take second place, and the new debentures will have first claim in respect of payment." Anyone who has visited the works will realise that there are employed there a number of boys and girls. The Government obtain a considerable portion of their requirements from the mills. What I ask now is whether it is the intention of the Government to say that unless every boy and girl employed at the mills is a financial member of a recognised union, no longer will the Government's needs be obtained from the mills. In effect, that is what they say is to be imposed by the conditions of the contract. If they adhere to their principles, the Government will be compelled to procure their requirements in woollen goods from the Eastern States, where they may not be able to enforce the restriction as effectively as is proposed respecting goods manufactured in Western Australia. That deals with the position from the standpoint of the supplying of goods. I now propose to read to the House a clause that is inserted in a notice sent to all contractors and others who may desire to submit tenders for the erection of Government buildings. It is as follows:—

1. Preference shall be given to financial members of recognised unions.

2. If other than financial members of recognised unions are engaged, such persons shall make application to join the appropriate union within fourteen days of commencing work, and shall complete such application.

In effect, the Government say that if any man submits a tender for a contract to erect a Government building and is successful in securing the work, a Government supervisor will visit the contractor and

ask if all the men on the building are financial members of a recognised union. If a contractor wishes to carry on with Government work, I assume that the same conditions will apply to builders as to the manufacturer of supplies to meet the requirements of the Government Tender Board, and will not be permitted to carry on with Government work unless this particular requirement is strictly adhered to. The Minister may say it is not the intention of the Government to impose any such condition. At any rate I have dealt with two phases of the matter. When I saw these conditions embodied in the contract form, I wrote to the Press protesting against the course that had been adopted, and pointing out that our forefathers had fought for the freedom we now enjoy. If we cast our minds back, we know that our forefathers had to fight strenuously for the privileges we now enjoy, and thereby enabled us to boast of our vaunted freedom. We have said that those who live in Australia have a perfect right to say and think what they like, so long as they conform to the law.

Hon. C. B. Williams: So long as they comply with the wishes of the majority.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And you have not got that behind you.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Instead of enjoying life in a democratic country, we are slowly but surely allowing ourselves to be deprived of those rights, and the privileges we have enjoyed filched from us.

Hon. J. Cornell: It would not be so bad if those who support this line of action were dealing with their own money, but it is public money that is affected.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is so. We are drifting to the stage that in other countries resulted in the rise of dictatorships. I am afraid many workers who so keenly support this method of coercion fail to realise that they are permitting to be filched from the people generally the privileges that our forefathers fought for and gained. They do not realise that such an action will be detrimental to the interests of their children. Shortly after I wrote the letter to the Press, to which I have already referred, I received a communication from a worker in the following terms:—

I read your very good letter in to-day's paper about "this freedom," and this letter is about something you and the general public don't know. I was sent with a party of C

class sustenance workers, mostly sick men and cripples, last November to Gangara, which is seven miles out from Guildford. As soon as we arrived at the Guildford station there was an officer from the Forests Department, and we had to sign a form to let the department take 2s. 6d. a fortnight out of our wages for the A.W.U.—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Did you say he was an officer of the Government?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. The writer says he was an officer of the Forests Department.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Shame!

Hon. A. THOMSON: The letter continues:—

—or else lose our job. The department stops 2s. 6d. every pay, and hands it over to the A.W.U., and the representative at the camp gives us a receipt for the 2s. 6d. at the union's leisure, sometimes two, or three months after—

Hon. C. B. Williams: That alone shows what sort of a liar he is.

Hon. A. THOMSON: To continue the letter:—

I have been a unionist all my life, and I don't like this method of collecting union fees.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you mean to say the man would not have been given a receipt the moment he paid his subscription? Why quote from the letter of a liar?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I will not be side-tracked. I shall continue to voice my protest against an action of the Government in doing something they have no right to do. I am not opposed to industrial unionism. I recognise that the unions have performed excellent work in bettering the conditions of the working man. The unions have done that by voluntary effort in the past, and they are strong enough to-day to do it without requiring the Government to compel men to join unions. Those of us who have passed through union ranks know just a little of how the policy of coercion is enforced. I shall quote the position regarding unionism to indicate their membership and their financial resources. In the latest issue of the "Statistical Register" it is disclosed that in 1933 the union membership aggregated 38,300; in 1934 the total number of industrial unionists was 43,557, and in 1935 the number totalled 44,589. The document shows that in 1935 the income enjoyed by the unions totalled £87,756, indicating the funds that were at their disposal. I have no objection to genuine unionism, and I should think that to-day the unions are suffi-

ciently strong to be able to compel any man who has a job on a building or elsewhere, to become a unionist. In plain language they say, "We shall not work with you." We learn that in the Eastern States there is trouble on a mine, and the miners there have refused to work because one man employed is not a recognised unionist. I have before me a copy of the oath that every Minister of the Crown has to take when he accepts his ministerial post. I propose to read it, and I shall claim that Ministers, who promulgated this ukase, should be impeached for breaking the oath that they took. The Hon. H. Millington is the Minister for Works, and as such is the Minister who has to accept direct responsibility for the instructions that have been issued and to which there has been so much reference. We all know that pressure was brought to bear on the Government by Trades Hall, and the representatives of that body waited upon the Minister and insisted upon the application of the policy of preference to unionists. Unfortunately the Government have acquiesced in doing something that in my opinion is absolutely wrong.

Hon. J. Cornell: Canon Moore is on the carpet to-day.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, because he dared to say what I, too, believe.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He favours a policy of scab wages and all the clergy favour that.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Making use of the Minister for Works in relation to the oath, I shall read the complete document in the following terms:—

I, Harold Millington, do swear that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord King George the Sixth, His Heirs and Successors, in the office of Minister for Public Works, and I will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this realm without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.

I ask Ministers if they have been true to the obligations of their oath. In view of the oath Ministers have taken to act "without fear or favour, affection or ill-will," what right have they to say to any citizen of the State that he shall not work on a Government contract of any description unless he is a financial member of a recognised union? In my opinion, Ministers have committed a breach of their solemn obligations, and it is time that some determined effort was made by the public to maintain the rights and privileges for which their forefathers fought so

hard. I definitely contend that Ministers are not carrying out their obligations. Why are Ministers favouring the Trades Hall and the trade unions by compelling people who, owing to dire necessity, unfortunately have to accept sustenance work in various parts of the State, to become unionists? Men have been dismissed because they refused to bow to this dictation. Men are entitled to their principles, and why should they be dismissed from work merely because they refused to join a union? In effect, the Government say to such men, "So far as we are concerned, you and your children shall not live. It does not matter to us. Join our union and we will allow you to continue to live." For my own part I have encountered many difficulties. I know what it is to traverse the hard road of adversity and I can appreciate the difficulties that many of these people have had to face. It is not right for any Government, irrespective of their political creed, to adopt such a line of action, and I would protest just as strongly if a National Government had pursued such a course.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And why do you not protest against the actions of the Federal Government—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member will keep order.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I want the people of Western Australia to be free and to have the right to work untrammelled in this respect. In the words of Disraeli—

Once England was for the few. Now we have made it a land for the many, and we dream and contrive for the days when it shall be a land for all.

That is what one of our greatest statesmen said in the early days when they were fighting for the freedom of the people, and that is one of my dreams, too, for this State. I sincerely trust that the Government of the State will strive to make it a land for all, not only for those contributing to the recognised trades unions. I feel very deeply on this point. I myself have passed up from the rank and file, and in all sincerity I do wish to see my children and their children's children have opportunity of bettering themselves rather than living under the hard conditions in which I once lived. I do hope that the Government will see the error of their ways in this respect and give every man the right to live and work.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The trade unionists will see to that.

Hon. A. THOMSON: They do.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And they will continue to do so.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Then why is it necessary for the Government to introduce all these regulations compelling an employer to become a collector for the union?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Because they will not let the trades unionists into their shops.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The honourable member cannot deceive me in that. I know both sides of the question and in speaking as I do I am only endeavouring—

Hon. C. B. Williams: You perhaps do not know what you are talking about.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member will have an opportunity to speak later.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am always ready to listen to anything reasonable, and I have found the honourable member reasonable at times. Probably just now he thinks I am unreasonable. Yet I say, let us honestly fight for what we believe to be right and correct. That is all I am doing now.

Hon. C. B. Williams: In some shops unionists have no chance.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Now I have registered my protest on that point. Certainly I feel very deeply about it. A man is sent to Parliament to do what he thinks right, and ever since I have been a public man I have endeavoured to place before the people the view I thought to be right. What I am saying to-night may not be popular, but it would be interesting to see if it were not possible to impeach Ministers.

Hon. C. B. Williams: If they do not do what they are required to do, they will be impeached.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Let us now turn to the question of youth employment. The Government were good enough to appoint Mr. Wolff a Royal Commissioner to inquire into this all-important question, and I hope that when Mr. Wolff's report is tabled we shall be able to deal with it fully. According to figures prepared by the Parliamentary officials for the Commonwealth Government there are 20,000 unemployed youths in Australia and it is stated that we have 1,100 of them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What is the date of that report?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have not the date, but it is certainly authentic. Mr. Kenneally had something to say upon the question. I want to congratulate Mr. Kenneally on his

honest endeavour to increase employment in Western Australia, so far as encouragement to local factories is concerned. There was published an interview with him in the course of which he made a statement reported as follows:—

A big question which had to be faced in Australia was the shortage of technicians. This was largely accounted for by the fact that during the depression many youths lost the opportunity of qualifying for various trades, and when the depression began to lift they had grown too old to commence to gain the knowledge. Technical education could be used to overcome this, but it would have to be made more attractive. He had in mind some form of combination between technical education and the cinema, by which, instead of staying away from classes, youths would look forward with pleasure to their studies, and would be training while being entertained. Certainly added money would be needed for this, but when a matter was one of national urgency such as youth employment was, the people of the nation should be prepared to play their part. "These youths have lost their opportunities through the depression, which was no fault of theirs," Mr. Kennelly said. "If they had lost through war I have no doubt that the nation would have risen to the task of restoring to them their lost opportunities."

I entirely concur with that concluding paragraph. As members are aware, the Commonwealth Government allocated to this State £14,000 to provide vocational training for young men without employment. The following is taken from the speech of the Governor General dealing with this subject:—

The Commonwealth Government after conferring with the State Governments has agreed to make a grant of £200,000 for the financial year 1937-38 to assist the State Governments to provide vocational training for those boys and young men now between the ages of 18 and 25 who lost their opportunity for training during the depression. The State Governments have agreed to carry out a survey to ascertain the degree of unemployment in each State in this age group, and will submit their various proposals to the Commonwealth Government for approval. Before the end of that financial year the matter will be again considered in the light of the experience gained.

It was the intention of the Federal Government to provide money so that those youths could have an opportunity to be trained. Yet we find that on the 16th July Mr. Hawke, the Minister for Employment, stated that he had discussed the matter with the Superintendent of Technical Education, Mr. Lynch, and that Mr. Lynch's proposal was that of the £14,000 allocated to this

State, £9,000 should be for additions to the Perth Technical School; £1,000 for the Technical School at Fremantle; £2,000 for extension of buildings and equipment at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines; £800 for engineering workshop and drawing room and Diesel engines at the Wiluna School of Mines and £1,200 for buildings and equipment at five country centres. As usual, when it comes to the allocation of money, we find that although half the population of Western Australia is scattered throughout the State, concentration takes place and out of £14,000 a paltry £1,200 is going to be allocated to five country centres. I strongly object to this money being utilised in the manner proposed by Mr. Hawke. I say that, as Mr. Kennelly has pointed out, our bounden duty is to do all we can for those youths who lost their opportunity to train owing to the depression. And, as Mr. Kennelly declared, had it been owing to the war, the nation would have made it up to them. Yet here the Government propose to spend the whole of this £14,000 in erecting buildings and providing equipment which will not assist one of those young men between 18 and 25 years of age.

Hon. T. Moore: Out of how much?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Out of £14,000.

Hon. T. Moore: It is a mere flea bite.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Still it remained for the Commonwealth Government to force this State to do something in the matter, because up to date this State has not provided anything for those youths and their training. It is true we had the Jubilee Appeal, but what actually happened? They said, "We will teach these boys a little about Diesel engines." And those are young men between 18 and 25 years of age and whose parents are not in a position to maintain them for 15 weeks while they go along to technical schools to gain a certain amount of technical knowledge.

The Chief Secretary: What is the hon. member's suggestion?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Some effort should be made to establish a system somewhat parallel with that which was in existence after the war when vocational training was given. But to-day we find this difficulty, that a young man of from 18 to 25 years of age may go to a contractor or to a business man and say "I am willing to work for you so long as you give me enough for my food, provided I have also opportunity to learn a trade or profession." And what reply does

that young men get? The employer says, "Much as I should like to afford you that opportunity to learn a trade, the Arbitration Court award will not permit me to do so. A union representative will quickly come along and declare that I must pay you the recognised rate of wage."

Hon. J. Nicholson: The one position nullifies the other.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is the position. Therefore we have the spectacle that there are in this State 1,100 young men between 18 and 25 years who, so far as the Government are concerned, are doomed for all time, and must remain in the unskilled ranks of workers. But I say we have a duty to perform towards those men; the duty to see that they have the same opportunities as I and others have had to learn a trade. I hope that when Mr. Wolff does submit his report it will be found to contain something of a constructive character. I ask the Government is it not time that they recognised their duty to those young men and is it not time that the unions also recognised their duty to those young men by allowing greater elasticity in the union regulations. I admit that in some cases they have to a certain extent looked the other way as it were while some of those young fellows were afforded assistance. Still we find the employers being prosecuted and fined on the plea that they have on their list of employees one or two juniors more than are provided for in the award. What is to be the future of those young men who have not any opportunity to learn a trade but have to go out on pick and shovel work? Is it any wonder that we are breeding Bolsheviks? At the University we train young men in the highest degree and when they have finished their studies they are offered some work in the forests or out on the roads where they can carry on with pick and shovel. This is conditional on their joining a union. I feel very keenly about this. Western Australia owes a duty to these young men. I would like to see some relaxation of the union regulations. I know of firms in my district who have been approached by young men for employment. Recently a young fellow of 24 asked a contractor in Katanning if he might learn the trade, as it was one for which he always had a liking. He asked the contractor to take him on, but the contractor said, "I should like to give you the opportunity you desire, but I dare not do so." It is time something was done for these men.

I admit that the money it is proposed to spend in providing facilities for special technical education will be beneficial to youths who are coming on now, but it will not assist those who under present conditions are desirous of learning a trade. Suppose a boy has spent 15 weeks at the Technical College in St. George's-terrace, and is now possessed of a scrap of paper to say that he has passed the test. That will not help him to get a job driving a Diesel engine, nor any other job. These young men have no hope of getting a job. I know of cases where influence has been brought to bear, but without success. Parents have approached the State Shipping Service and asked that their boys might be taken on as greasers so that they might qualify for better things. Probably the State Shipping Service would be pleased to take them on, but, if they did so, the union would say at once that the positions thus created must be rendered permanent. The service would thus be establishing a precedent, and in future would have to employ one or more additional greasers. There is no doubt that employers and would-be employers are facing many difficulties of this sort. It may be said that the amount available for youth employment is a fleabite so far as the Commonwealth grant is concerned this year, but if it were spent in the desired direction it would represent a good start. The Commonwealth Government have realised their responsibilities, but I regret to say the State has not done so in the past.

Hon. T. Moore: The Commonwealth Government have a bursting Treasury.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The State Government have been able to find money for many other things.

Hon. T. Moore: There is a great deal they are unable to do.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The State Government could provide at least £200,000 a year for this purpose. There was passed through this House a Bill to provide for a financial emergency tax. When it was brought before Parliament, it was stated that it was brought down to help the Government to find work for the unemployed. There is nothing to prevent the Government from allocating £200,000 of that money so that the boys who were debarred from the opportunity to learn a trade because of the depression should be given that opportunity now. I am sure such a move would have

the whole-hearted support of all members. I put that forward as a practical suggestion.

The Chief Secretary: You know that this House refused to recognise that as a tax for the unemployed.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not know that it refused to recognise it as such, but the conditions under which it was introduced are those I have stated.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If the State Government were to earmark for this purpose £200,000 or £300,000 of the financial emergency tax, the State Grants Commission would recognise it as a fair and just thing, and make due allowance when considering further grants to Western Australia. The State Government should certainly take this step. I have been able to place my boys in business only because I had a business into which to place them. Other lads have learnt a trade because their fathers have been doing a certain amount of work. Hundreds of other lads, however, have had no such opportunity. There was a good deal of discussion regarding the delinquency of youth on the goldfields. One parent said, "Give our boys an opportunity to learn a trade." I am fully in accord with that remark. I urge upon the Government to give serious attention to the necessity for doing something definite to help these youths. I know of many boys who have been at home for months. They have tried every avenue but have been unable to get a job of any kind. Mr. Kennelly says they are too old to learn a trade, but I deny that. I hope they will be given the opportunity to try. I should like to quote from a message from Earl Baldwin entitled "A Summons to Youth." He said—

The Christian State proclaims human personality to be supreme; the servile State denies this. Every compromise with the infinite value of the human soul leads straight back to savagery and the jungle. Expel this truth of our religion and what follows? The insolence of dominion and the cruelty of despotism. Denounce religion as the opium of the people and you swiftly proceed to denounce political liberty and civil liberty as opium. Freedom of speech goes, tolerance follows, and justice is no more. The fruits of the free spirit of men do not grow in the garden of tyranny. It has been well said that slavery is a weed that grows in every soil. As long as we have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common

faith, men will turn their faces towards us and draw their breath more freely.

In these words the ex-Prime Minister of England is asking youths to play their part for their country's sake. Equally is it the duty of the country to see that they are given the opportunity to do so. I congratulate Mr. Miles upon his excellent speech and his remarks concerning the development of the North-West. I agree with him when he said that the Federal Government probably could and would develop that portion of Western Australia very much better than apparently the State has been able to do. It is very disappointing to learn that we have fewer people in the North to-day than were there years ago. That is not a sign of progress. I strongly resent the propaganda in the Press concerning the development of Yampi Sound. For countless years that iron ore has remained untouched. Now we have the opportunity to put it to good use, and to employ somewhere about 1,000 people in a new industry. As pointed out by Mr. Miles, this would mean opening up and developing deep-water ports in the North. I would say to the Federal Government: "Hands off; let the development of Yampi Sound proceed." I congratulate the Minister for Mines and the Government on their attitude in this matter, and their evident desire to see this portion of Western Australia opened up. It is anticipated that the industry will provide employment for many West Australians. No doubt the work will be hard, but I am sure that most of the men concerned will be pleased to have the work.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And they will get it at no cost to the State.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is so. It is the duty of everyone to encourage the establishment of an industry such as this, and the introduction of foreign capital. I notice that numbers of members of Parliament have advocated the extension of the broad gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. Some of the advocates have been senators of the Federal Parliament. A plan appeared in the Press on the 3rd July last indicating the proposed route to be followed, running parallel to the existing State railway as far as Northam; and then there is the suggestion that it should divert to Toodyay and come through Bullsbrook to Midland Junction. I hope that

those who are urging this extension of the broad gauge will consider the position of the State. If the Commonwealth Government construct a broad gauge line parallel to the State railway it must mean financial disaster for Western Australia. We have the double track to Spencer's Brook, and thereafter it is a single track to Kalgoorlie. This represents 521 miles. According to the Government Statistician, this 521 miles of railway cost £5,932 per mile, representing a capital cost to Western Australia from Loan Funds of £2,090,572. I believe that this section, owing to the prosperous nature of the gold mining industry, is showing a small profit. If the Commonwealth construct a broad gauge line parallel to the present railway, a considerable portion of the capital cost will be lost. I am very keen to see this extension built from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, but I hope that serious consideration will be given to the route to be followed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the line coming through Brookton?

Hon. A. THOMSON: For many years I have advocated a line through Corrigin and Brookton to take the place of the proposed route from Brookton to Armadale. That would open up new country, would provide transport for the area concerned, and would not create as keen competition with our existing railway as would be the case if the broad gauge followed the existing route.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Before tea I was suggesting that people should seriously consider rejecting the proposal for the construction of a trancontinental line parallel with the existing railway. I hope our Government will not agree to such a proposal. On one point I agree with Mr. Fraser, and that is his advocacy of the covering of third-party risk in connection with motors. No motor vehicle should be licensed to travel until the third-party risk has been covered. In fact, that feature should be part and parcel of the license, as is the case in South Australia. I do not, however, agree with Mr. Fraser that this business should become part and parcel of State insurance. Western Australia should retain the same privilege and liberty as exist in South Australia with regard to insuring risks. I may have an

opportunity later of dealing with State insurance, and so I shall not traverse that aspect now. I hope the Government will give serious consideration to legislation for covering the third-party risk in the case of motor vehicles. As has been pointed out, accidents happen, and frequently the breadwinner is taken away, while the person responsible for the accident is not in a position to pay any compensation whatever.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I am not sure whether in South Australia rights are given to hospitals and others attending to the injured.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That is all provided for in the South Australian Act. However, to deal with that matter in detail now would take too long. As regards the Agricultural Bank, with other members I regret the demise of Mr. McCallum. We also regret that Mr. Berkeley unfortunately has had to leave his position, though only temporarily. I hope that the Government, when making new appointments, will select what I may term men of agricultural development mind. We want to get away from the idea that the Agricultural Bank exists only to raise funds and collect repayments. The institution has performed a most useful task in connection with the opening-up and development of the country. I am pleased that the Agricultural Bank has entrusted to Goldshrough, Mort and Co. the sale of the various properties which the institution has on its hands. I strongly resent the letters which have been sent to the Eastern States decrying the value and productivity of Western Australian land. Mr. Piesse has quoted facts and figures dealing with the average wheat yield of the land available here. It affords wonderful opportunities for men with capital to take up partly-developed areas. In my opinion, the group settlement blocks which are available to-day for those desirous of taking up that calling offer more than is offered in any other part of the world. The prices at which vacant holdings are offered are extremely reasonable. Provided a man has a certain amount of capital enabling him to carry on without looking to the Agricultural Bank, there are great opportunities awaiting him here. Considerable discussion has taken place with regard to foreigners taking up those areas. If our own people will not take them up, then foreigners who are astute enough to seize the opportunity should be permitted to do so, because we cannot afford to let those areas go back to the virgin state. The present group settlers have no capital;

they have expended the little they possessed, and special consideration should be extended to them so that they may remain on their blocks. Unfortunately there is a policy, if not of deliberately evicting settlers, yet of making the position intolerable and thus compelling them to go off. I support the recommendation put up by the Primary Producers' Association that only a small rate of interest should be paid by the settlers. Many of them have put in years of their lives on those blocks, and are entitled to consideration. At the present time they are hamstrung by lack of capital. The Agricultural Bank occasionally sends an unfortunate settler a cheque for something like 4s. 6d. on which he is to live for a month. The position is tragic and absurd. I hope the new Commissioners, whoever may be appointed, will show themselves sympathetic in that respect. As a suggestion helpful to Agricultural Bank clients and farmers generally, I urge the Government to consider the appointment of a veterinary surgeon in the Great Southern district or, failing that, the subsidising of a surgeon to establish himself there. After all, stock is valuable; and the expenditure involved in securing the services of a veterinary surgeon would be wise expenditure.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A permanent man would be required at each centre.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If a veterinary surgeon were stationed at a suitable centre, he could proceed by motor car in response to telephone calls from other centres. I support the remarks of Mr. Piesse in regard to Mr. Vaughan, who for many years was a Government fruit inspector. He was prominent in the life of the Albany and Mt. Barker districts, where he was very highly regarded. Through the age limit he is called upon to retire. I wish to assure the Government that there is no man in the service whose abilities are more highly valued by the settlers in respect of establishing the growth of clovers, and I suggest that the State should continue to avail itself of his skill and knowledge. Now let me deal briefly with the position as regards expenditure. Mr. Baxter pointed out that the major proportion of the expenditure has been in the metropolitan area. I suggest that a certain proportion of the money available should be set aside for country districts. I ask the Chief Secretary to urge upon the Minister for Works that consideration should be given to the reclamation scheme in connection with

the Albany harbour. We are anxious to have bulk handling facilities and superphosphate works established there. Thanks to Government assistance, we have seen the establishment of what we believe will prove a huge industry in the Great Southern district, namely, the export of fat lambs. I trust the Government will cause to be prepared a concrete scheme for reclaiming land at Albany and building wharves on it, thus enabling bulk handling facilities and superphosphate works to operate right on the sea front. This would mean a reduction in the cost of loading and unloading ships. I trust this suggestion will be noted and a survey made. The time has arrived for the establishment of a general authority for ports, something like the body existing in South Australia for the administration of ports generally. At present Fremantle gets the bulk of the expenditure. The Country Party stand for every port receiving the trade which naturally belongs to it. Now I wish to touch briefly on finance. I am alarmed at the increase in our public debt. In 1932, prior to the present Government coming into power, our debt per head stood at £180.182. In 1936, five years later, it stood at £392 per head. In 1932 our population totalled 436,798. In 1936 it totalled 451,057, an increase of only 14,259. With that small addition to population, our indebtedness increased by £11,375,824. In another place and in this Chamber I have for many years urged that we should have a finance committee or committee of accounts, and also a public works committee. I cast no reflection whatever on the present Administration; but the position is that if a Cabinet Minister decides to launch out on expenditure, there is no check. When the Estimates come down, the money has been spent and it is too late to raise objections. As members of Parliament we should be in a position to scrutinise schemes before money is expended on them. I strongly recommend the Government to give consideration to my suggestion. Its adoption would relieve them of a great deal of responsibility. In all earnestness and sincerity, if we had a public works committee or a finance committee in existence, we should not be discussing with the warmth that has been shown to-night the policy of preference to unionists. However, what I say applies to all Governments. Though to a certain extent we are out of the depression, we are still borrowing money just as

fast as previously. It should be the aim of every Western Australian Government, and of the present Government in particular, to do their utmost to encourage private enterprise. In the matter of the trolley buses, a union secretary was delighted to find that the Midland workshops were the lowest tenderers for the construction of the bodies. It means that more men will be employed by the Government instead of by private employers. I would point out to those people who are so keen on everything being done by the Government that the private employer has to pay rates and taxes. He has to pay income tax and land tax, and if the people are going to have everything constructed by the Government, I want to know where the money is coming from to pay for all these things. It is in the interests of the people of Australia, including the workers themselves, that these works should be carried out by private enterprise. If a man is working as a railway employee and is dissatisfied with his position, it is not much use his complaining, because there is no other employer in a position in Western Australia to engage him in similar work. The same thing applies to the body builders. On the other hand, if a man is working for a private firm and is dissatisfied with his position, there are other employers to whom he may turn in order to better his position. I therefore urge upon the Government that it is not in the interests of the workers as a whole that these undertakings should be carried out always by the Government. It should be the duty of the Government to foster the introduction of new capital and do their utmost to reduce Government expenditure so far as loan moneys are concerned. I have received, probably in common with other hon. members, a letter from the Road Board Association suggesting that the railway authorities should be compelled to pay rates and taxes on properties from which they are deriving rent. I think they should. It is not right that in a place like Merredin, where the Railway Department constructed houses on their own property, the local authorities should have to provide all conveniences, and yet be unable to collect rates.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That matter has been put forward several times.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am strongly in favour of their having to pay rates. It is up to the Government to see that that is done.

Hon. J. Cornell: Often the Railway Department charge more for rent for these houses than do private landlords.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. We have heard a great deal about the enormous reductions of freight in respect of wheat and other commodities. Reference to the Railway Department's report shows that 66,000 tons less wheat has been carted this year by the department, and speaking from memory, I think that represents a loss of £53,526 in railway freight. This indicates that upon the success of the farming community depends the success of the Railway Department, and, indeed, of the city as well. I desire to read a letter dealing with the Railway Department. It is common knowledge that in the metropolitan and suburban area, omnibuses, tramways and railways carry perambulators and go-carts free of cost, and rightly so, but I have had a letter from a friend of mine in the country showing that a different state of affairs exists there. It was pointed out that a woman who had pushed a youngster in a pram for two miles to get to a train, travelling over rough road on the journey, had to pay 10d. for her own fare, 5d. for the carriage of her pram to her destination, and 5d. for the return trip. At the same time a man who was a worker dropped his bundle of tools in the train, and they were carried free, and rightly so. The lady considered that her pram had as much right to be carried free of charge as the man's tools. I wrote to the Railway Department to ascertain if the same privilege could be granted to mothers in the country, namely, that when visiting their market towns they should be able to have their perambulators carried free. I propose to read the reply I received, and which shows that as far as the railways are concerned, and generally as far as the Government are concerned, there is one law for the city and one law for the country, and generally to the disadvantage of the country.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There is no difference in the city with regard to the carriage of perambulators.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes there is.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Not on the railways.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, prams are carried free in the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is something new to me.

Hon. A. THOMSON: This is the letter I received from the Railway Department—

In reply to your letter of the 3rd inst., relative to the freight on prams in country dis-

tricts, I am directed to inform you that the carriage of go-carts on country trains is a different matter from their conveyance in the metropolitan area, where stations are equipped with platforms and staff is available to assist guards in the handling of the prams to and from the vans. Moreover, suburban brakevan compartments invariably have space to spare, and their accommodation presents no difficulty.

2. In the country areas, however, platforms and staff are not at all points available, and the handling of prams in brakevans taxed to capacity with perishable or other goods often presents quite a problem. The position would doubtless be aggravated on many lines, and probably involve the department in additional expense were free carriage to be agreed to, and in the circumstances the Commissioner regrets that he cannot see his way to alter the existing practice. At the same time, he desires me to point out that the rate on prams is very low, and it can hardly be contended that the freight imposes an undue burden on country residents.

Hon. V. Hamersley: We have not a country-minded Government.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That shows the attitude adopted. Here is the case of a woman who pushed a pram along two miles of rough road. Women in the metropolitan area have not to push their prams very far, and they are accorded the privilege of free carriage. The woman in the country, who should receive more consideration than she gets, may still push her pram two miles over rough country, and then pay freight on the train in and out. I regret that the Railway Department have adopted that attitude, but they have the authority to say what shall be. I have hurried over these matters, because I do not want to spoil the evening for hon. members, but I would say in conclusion that it is my intention at a later stage to introduce a Bill to amend the Transport Act in a manner similar to that which I previously suggested, and I will deal with that matter more fully when I submit the Bill.

On motion by Hon. T. Moore, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.54 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th August, 1937.

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

QUESTION—HOSPITAL TAX, EXPENDITURE.

Mr. BOYLE asked the Minister for Health: 1, What was the amount realised under the Hospital Tax Act for the year ended the 30th June, 1937? 2, Of such amounts, how much was spent in the same period on hospital buildings in (a) the metropolitan area; (b) in country district? 3, How much of the money raised by the tax in the same period was spent on maintenance of hospitals in (a) the metropolitan area; (b) in country districts?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, £234,599 3s. 5d. 2 (a), £3,171 0s. 4d.; (b) £17,034 16s. 9d.; total £20,205 17s. 1d. 3 (a) £110,514 1s. 2d.; (b) £85,326 18s. 8d.; total £195,840 19s. 10d.

QUESTION—RURAL RELIEF.

Mr. BOYLE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What total amounts have been made available for the adjustment of farmer's debts under the Rural Relief Act, 1935, by (a) the Commonwealth Government. (b) the State Government? 2, What was the number of applications received under the Rural Relief Act, 1935? 3, How many applications were adjusted? 4, How many are awaiting adjustment? 5, Up to what date of application by farmers have applications been adjusted? 6, Is it the intention of the Government to give effect to the district debt adjustment provisions of Section 9 of the Rural Relief Act? 7, What was the cost to the 30th June, 1937, of the administration of the Rural Relief Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Advanced—(a) by Commonwealth Gov-