

average enrolment 8,626. In my opinion the figures speak for themselves, but I may specially mention Cue with 563 electors, Mt. Magnet with 970, Mt. Margaret with 460, and Menzies with 324. Let hon. members compare Menzies and its 324 electors with Canning, where Mr. Clydesdale represents 14,609 electors. One elector in Menzies has 45 times the power of an elector in Canning. The position is so ludicrous as to call for immediate readjustment. I repeat, that the representation of the metropolitan area is utterly unfair and inequitable. The appointment of the Migration Commission by the Federal Government I regard as a step in the right direction, and I consider that Western Australia is very fortunate in having Mr. Charles Nathan, C.B.E., as its representative. That gentleman's appointment means not only that the interests of Australia will be well guarded, but that the interests of this State will receive fair and equitable representation. Mr. Gray in his speech drew special attention to the Fremantle railway bridge, and I should like to utter just one word of warning. The present Government and previous Governments have had warnings regarding that bridge. The most serious warning has been given to the present Government, but the responsibility falls upon all of us to see that the work of reconstruction is proceeded with as speedily as possible. In that connection I hope special attention and consideration will be given to the growing requirements of the Fremantle harbour. Wherever the new bridges may be placed, they should be so placed as not to hamper the development of the harbour. I thank hon. members for the kindly consideration extended to me. As a member of this House I shall do my utmost to conform with its usages and customs, to work in harmony with all members, and to obey your rulings, Mr. President; and as a citizen of Western Australia I shall do my best to further the prosperity of the great State in which we live.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th August, 1926.

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

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, FRUIT SUPPLIES.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham): 1, Is the policy of providing fruit, at intervals, to patients at the Hospital for the Insane being maintained? 2, Will he indicate the number of cases and value of fruit so provided in each six of the months during the past two years?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM replied: 1, Yes; the arrangement indicated was made in 1922, and purchases confined to periods of glut in the fruit market. The matter of further purchases will receive attention when the next glut may occur. 2, July-December, 1924—51 bags oranges, value £19 2s. 6d.; January-June, 1925—83 bags oranges, value £31 2s. 6d., 2,278lbs. water-melons, value £9 9s. 10d.; July-December, 1925—10 bags oranges, value £3 15s.; January-June, 1926—36 bags oranges, value £13 10s.; 3,162lbs. water-melons, value £13 3s. 6d.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [4.37]: If I should happen to wander in the course of my remarks and refer to matters relating to constituencies other than my own, I ask hon. members to realise that it will be merely to express my appreciation of the actions of the people in the districts I shall refer to in formulating schemes for the advancement not only of those particular centres, but of the State as a whole. I will also take the opportunity to indicate my appreciation of the action of the Government in assisting such schemes. In looking through the Governor's Speech, I notice a reference to the offer made by the Government to assist in the establishment of a central power house on the Golden

Mile. That proposal has been commended widely. It must be realised that the lay-out of the mines along the Golden Mile lends itself to effective operations by means of a central power house and treatment plant. No place in Western Australia, nor yet in Australia, lends itself more to such a scheme than does the Golden Mile. The demand for firewood under existing conditions represents a tremendous drain upon the timber resources in the areas surrounding the goldfields. With the progress of time, the demand will make the task of supplying firewood practically impossible. Under the Government's scheme for the provision of a central power house, supplies would be conserved, thus reducing costs and extending the lives of the various mines. It goes without saying that the companies should have regard to the report and recommendations of Mr. Kingsley Thomas, the Royal Commissioner appointed to inquire into the gold mining industry. His advice was that in order to give the mines a longer life, it was essential that they should participate in the scheme for a central power house and a central treatment plant. Some such provision is a necessity in Kalgoorlie if the mines are to continue operating for a further long period. The Government have indicated their desire to accord the industry liberal assistance in the direction of establishing a power house. Following upon that, the provision of a centralised treatment plant must be made. As indicated by Mr. Kingsley Thomas, the mines, if they are to continue operating, must do away with much of the existing overhead charges. At Kalgoorlie we have seven companies operating within a small radius, with seven separate boards of directors and with enormous treatment plants. Hon. members can realise what the cost of such a system must represent. If the companies were to co-operate by working one large treatment plant, it would revolutionise mining on the goldfields. The mines would have a longer life, and the resultant effect upon Kalgoorlie itself would be most marked. Reference is made in the Governor's Speech to the commencement of diamond drilling at centres adjacent to the Golden Mile. That is a step in the right direction. People who settle down in the mining areas are naturally optimists. They expect decent finds to be disclosed by these operations. The Government in arriving at their decision to put down the bores, have acted wisely. I am also pleased to note that the Collie power scheme is within measurable distance of becoming an accomplished

fact. As the people of Bunbury and Collie are determined to raise their proportion of the necessary capital and the Government are willing to assist on a £ for £ basis, the way is paved for the establishment of the first unit. Thus we will have electric power generated at the pit's mouth and supplying electricity for operating machinery throughout the large area to be covered by the scheme. As time goes on and a greater demand is made for power, other units will be added, and there is nothing to prevent the scheme ultimately extending further afield even up to Perth, the electricity being transmitted by cables to industrial centres. If that be done let hon. members consider what it will mean for the State. No cheaper power than electricity can be obtained, particularly when the power is generated from waste products of the coal mines. Efforts will have to be made to establish factories in the country districts. The general tendency has been to establish factories in the city, and specially low rates have been granted by the Government for the conveyance of raw material to the manufacturing factories. The establishment of the South-West power scheme, however, will mean cheap manufacturing costs for industries established in that part of the State, and should lead to a big increase of population in the districts served by the scheme. This decentralisation must redound to the welfare of the State. The Government have taken a step in the right direction by proclaiming the Miners' Phthisis Act. In all 3,353 miners have been examined. It would have been much better for the State had provision been made for affected miners in the days when the industry was flourishing. Had a levy then been imposed upon the mines and subsidised by the Government, we might have had a system of compensation to diseased miners similar to that operating in South Africa. Through the delay, practically the whole of the cost here has fallen on the Government, who have had to assume responsibility for the whole of the miners affected by fibrosis. When miners are declared to be affected, they will be taken out of the mines and will be paid half the ruling rate of wages applying in the particular district. In addition, the wife will be paid £1 a week, and 8s. will be paid in respect of each child. In the event of a miner dying, the sum of £2 per week will be paid to the widow. The Government, in making this provision, have done better than has been done in any other part of the world. The South African Act provided that when men became "dusty,"

they should be pulled out of the mines and paid compensation on a weekly basis. I have met in this State men who had left the South African mines eight or ten years before and were still drawing compensation from the fund of that country. Men who have long followed the calling of mining and have become affected must be provided for because, when pulled out of the mines, they can follow no other occupation. A man in a mine, once his machine is rigged, is able to go ahead with his work, but put him on the surface and he is quite unable to work. I note with pleasure that another link has been added to the Esperance-Norseman railway, a length of 66½ miles to Salmon Gums. I shall welcome the day when Esperance receives the trade that geographically belongs to it. I hope the time is not far distant when the Esperance line will be linked up with the Eastern Goldfields system and when the trade of the Eastern Goldfields will be conducted through Esperance. Well-equipped ports provide opportunities to establish industries, and the more ports we can open up, the better it will be for the State. I feel sure that Mr. Walter Dwyer, who has been appointed President of the Arbitration Court under the amended Act, will hold the scales of justice fairly between employers and employees. The new president is a man who commands the respect of every section of the community, and I am confident that his decisions—the decisions of the court really rest with the president—will give general satisfaction. I should have liked to see in the Governor's Speech reference to the State Lotteries Bill, which gave rise to so much controversy two sessions ago. We are getting a fair amount of revenue from the amusement tax, but not sufficient to provide for the hospitals throughout the State. A lot of money is being sent away for lotteries in Hobart and Queensland, and we cannot prevent it. If people desire to gamble, all the laws in creation will not prevent them from doing so. The Government should intercept the stream of money leaving this State by providing lotteries in this State. In my district the hospital subsidy has been reduced by £200. Apparently, the more that local people tax themselves and the more money they provide for hospitals, the more their subsidy is cut down. We taxed ourselves and, by special efforts, succeeded in showing a small balance, and then, to our surprise, our subsidy was reduced. That is no incentive for people to work in an honorary capacity for the welfare of their hospitals. I realise the difficulties con-

fronting the Treasurer in his efforts to provide for hospitals and charities, and I consider that legislation on the lines of the Lotteries Bill would result in ample funds being made available for such institutions. In outback parts, where the population is scattered, there is not available the medical attention that people in the city enjoy. It is necessary for country residents to tax themselves in order to get a hospital, and the burden falls much more heavily on people in the sparsely populated parts than on those in the larger centres. If the State Lotteries Bill were again presented to Parliament, I think there would be a good chance of its being passed. We require the money, and we should do our best to prevent its being sent to other States. The people living around Cue raised £699 for the local hospital. That is a heavy tax on a small and diminishing community. When I visited Albany during the fire brigades' demonstration, I availed myself of an invitation to inspect the local woollen mills. I was informed that the mill is one of the best-equipped of its kind in Australia. It is able to supply practically all the wants of the local people in these lines. The manager came from Bradford and is also acquainted with the mills in the other States. He informed me that if the goods manufactured in Bradford and in the other States were compared with those manufactured in Albany, no difference could be detected. He also said that Australia grew the wool, and that in Albany many of the employees had come from Bradford, as he had done. He said it was the same labour and the same class of machinery that were used in the manufacture of woollen goods in Albany, and that the products turned out were equal to any manufactured elsewhere in the world. We hear constant reference to the expenditure of money in the other States in buying goods for Western Australia.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So we should hear it.

Mr. CHESSON: The Albany woollen mills provide an opportunity for the local people to be patriotic, and to patronise them. Everything there is of local production except the dyes. There is nothing to prevent people when they go to their tailors or storekeepers from asking for Albany woollen mill products.

Hon. G. Taylor: I did that 14 months ago, and have had suits of Albany tweed ever since.

Mr. CHESSON: I am also wearing a suit of Albany cloth. People may see a large as-

sortment of these materials at Boan Bros. and other places. There is no difficulty in getting the material. If people want to see the State progress they should demand these products, and go elsewhere if they fail to get them at the first place of call. These are my sentiments and I carry them out. I always endeavour to buy Australian goods, but give the preference to local goods if I can get them. In this case the local goods are well worth the money. If everybody did this, many more people would be employed at the Albany mills.

Hon. G. Taylor: The material is good value, too.

Mr. CHESSON: There is nothing better. The Murchison railway service consists of two trains a week. They are called express trains. On the journey up the train is not usually overloaded, but the return journey is made on a pick up train. Stock is picked up from Meekatharra right down the line, at all the sidings. When the train reaches Mullewa a second engine is put on, and the passengers and stock are drawn by the two engines. It would be better to separate the two classes of rolling stock. One engine could bring on the passengers and goods, and another could bring the stock. This would be better for both, and the passengers would reach Perth earlier. I have no fault to find with the attention that is paid by the members of the railway staff. I have been in every washaway that has occurred during the past few years. Whenever there is a flood the officials patrol the lines day and night, and make every provision for the safety of passengers. I cannot understand the reports that have been published about the Fremantle railway bridge. On the Murchison, in flood time, a truck goes ahead of the train. I cannot credit that during the flood the Fremantle bridge was not patrolled night and day.

The Minister for Railways: Men were working within 100 yards of it.

Mr. CHESSON: A little while ago there was an election in the Central Province for the Legislative Council. Many objections were sent in to numbers of electors. According to the Act anyone lodging 2s. 6d. could object to an elector. Many of these objections were lodged concerning names, that were placed on the roll, of people who were fully qualified to exercise the franchise. The notices were received in Cue on a Saturday. That day is a holiday, and they were not delivered until Monday. The Revision Court was held in Geraldton on the Thurs-

day, and the people against whom objection had been lodged had no chance to attend. This applied to Greenough, Mt. Magnet, Cue, Meekatharra, and many other stations. There is nothing in the Act to say that a revision court shall be held at Geraldton, and not at any of the other places. A justice of the peace could be appointed to hold the court, and much inconvenience and expense would be saved. Why should people be asked to travel to Geraldton? The Act does not say they shall do so. This arose simply because the officer in charge of the chief centre, who conducts the elections and deals with the work of revising the roll, decided to adopt this course. That officer proved himself incompetent in that he did not give a broad interpretation to the Act. If I had anything to do with the matter that officer would be transferred to a place where he could do no harm.

Hon. G. Taylor: Where would you put him?

Mr. CHESSON: He should have given the people concerned an opportunity to appear before the court. His action caused them great inconvenience.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Minister for Railways thinks it was a good place at which to hold the court.

The Minister for Railways: Not at all. That will not happen again.

Mr. Marshall: Residents of Peak Hill received objection papers two days after the hearing in Geraldton.

Mr. CHESSON: The Act should be amended in the direction I have indicated. The best way would be to hold revision courts in the centres where the people concerned live. From the pastoral point of view the Murchison has never looked better. The lambing is good, and I have never seen a better season. Two years ago the pastoralists had a drought to contend with. The Government went to their assistance by allowing the stock to be railed at a freight for one way only. The pastoralists are very thankful to the Government, and give them every credit for what they did. If it had not been for this assistance there would not be nearly as much stock on the Murchison as there is to-day. All stock in Western Australia could now be fed on the Murchison. People are beginning to realise that this is a fine pastoral proposition, and one of the best assets the State has. Pastoralists are going there from the other States. They have been buying properties on the Murchison at big prices, and spending considerable sums of money in subdivisions, and in put-

ting down wells and erecting windmills and troughs. Water is obtained at a shallow depth and a great amount of top feed is available. After a good season the district can stand up to three years of poor seasons. On the Murchison the pastoralists nearly always find one good season in three.

Mr. Lindsay: The carrying capacity of the Murchison country is low, though.

Mr. CHESSON: There is not sufficient stock on the Murchison yet. With the subdivision of holdings into reserves, the carrying capacity has increased. Formerly no such provision was made.

Hon. G. Taylor: In the past that country has been over-stocked.

The Minister for Railways: The stock used to die while travelling to water.

Mr. CHESSON: I am glad the Government have provided funds to bore for coal at Eridu. A coal discovery would mean immense things to the port of Geraldton and to the Murchison district. Mines on the Murchison have been handicapped by lack of firewood, and if they could get coal from Geraldton it would mean a huge benefit to them. Moreover, the Railway Department now have to transport coal from the south as far as Meekatharra. This expense, too, would be done away with by a coal discovery at Eridu. Boring has been done there previously. It went to a depth of 150 feet, when the rod was lost; but there was quite sufficient evidence that the country is coal-carrying. With coal there would soon be smelting works in Geraldton for lead ore from Northampton and for copper ore from the Murchison and the North-West. At present this copper ore is sent to the Eastern States for treatment. Another matter affecting the port of Geraldton and the Murchison as a whole is the manganese proposition at Horseshoe which was mentioned by the member for Greenough (Mr. Kennedy). Enormous deposits of manganese exist at Horseshoe, and good progress is being made with the laying of the railway from Meekatharra to Horseshoe. It is anticipated that by Christmas the railway will be operating from Horseshoe to Geraldton, with immense benefit to the whole of the Murchison. A daily service is aimed at, and this would mean a great deal to the pastoralists, and also to those who are endeavouring to open up copper propositions beyond Horseshoe. At one time ore from those propositions was sent to Meekatharra. The new line will cut out 84 miles which formerly had to be done

by camel teams, and thus there will be greater scope for working the copper deposits. In the past the copper would not pay to handle unless it went 25 per cent. With the railway, copper of a much lower grade could be despatched to Geraldton for treatment. In gold mining the Murchison shows a considerable improvement. One of the most important factors towards creating this better state of things has been the assistance for carting given by the Minister for Mines. At present any show within 30 miles of a State battery can have its ore carted to that battery at the carting charge for five miles. This means practically that every prospector so circumstanced finds himself within a radius of five miles of a battery. Thus propositions which formerly could not be handled at all now admit of development. At Tuabiana, beyond Cue, mines were at one time being worked, but the cartage rates for 20 miles into Cue proved prohibitive. That district is again being worked, as also are other districts under similar conditions, thanks to the assistance in carting given by the Mines Department. Around Cue, Lake Austin, Tuckanarra, and Tuabiana there are now many prospectors at work. They have put through the State battery at Cue 819 tons of ore which returned 1,056 ozs. of gold, equal to 1 oz. 5 dwts. per ton, with 9 dwts. in the tailings, or $1\frac{3}{4}$ ozs. in all per ton. That is a good average. The development is due entirely to the assistance given by the Mines Department. At Moyagee there is ore yielding 3 ozs. 10 dwts. per ton, and a crushing of 8 tons went 30 ozs. to the ton. I am not referring to a quantity of 250 ozs. that was dolied from Walker's proposition; I am speaking merely of what has passed through the State batteries. Last session the Minister for Mines definitely promised that he would send diamond drills to the various mining districts. That promise has been carried out in the Murchison, where the drill is now operating. Eventually it will go through the whole district, and I am convinced that good results will accrue. Another start has been made on emerald mining at Poona. Fine emeralds were found there previously, but the trouble is that no matter how much one tries to avoid it, the stones always get into the hands of certain people in Amsterdam, which is the great market for precious stones. If those people say that emeralds are fractured, then they are fractured: there is no appeal. Now a French firm has taken over the emeralds

got at Poona, and may be able to market them advantageously. In the past two or three parcels were sent down from the field to me, and they went through the Mines Department to the Agent General's office with strict instructions that the stones must not pass into the hands of certain people. In spite of the utmost efforts of the Mines Department and the Agent General's office, however, the stones did reach the people in question. I hope the French buyers may have better luck. Turning now to prospecting, it seems that the horse is a thing of the past and that the motor truck has taken its place. The truck can travel over much longer distances, and it does away with the need of carrying water for a horse. With a truck it is only necessary to carry water for prospecting and for domestic purposes. Prospectors using motor trucks have endeavoured to take advantage of the special provision made for them in last year's legislation. In my district there are two or three prospectors who travel some 700 miles in the year by motor truck, and who use only bush tracks—never the main roads. Yet those men have had to pay the road boards in their districts fees of £7 each. They complain about that. It seems as if prospectors are penalised for prospecting over long distances.

Mr. Marshall: Do they travel on the roads or in the bush?

Mr. CHESSON: Always in the bush. As a member of the Prospecting Board I have had brought under my notice inquiries made by promoters in the East, who wish to take advantage of the assistance given here through the prospecting vote. In the past, if a show opened up well and would stand inspection, the promoter took an option over it. Now the contention of these Eastern States promoters is that much the better course would be to allow them to send out well equipped parties of prospectors to see if they cannot locate something. To this end they ask for the same assistance as is given to the ordinary prospector. I think it is worth considering. When we have investors coming over from the Eastern States prepared to spend large sums of money on prospecting in this country, it is up to us to do all we can for them.

Mr. Marshall: Short of spending Government money.

Mr. CHESSON: It would be a splendid thing for the whole of the people of the

State if we could induce the Federal authorities to agree to the proposed gold bonus. Something might be done if only the people would get together and agitate until they brought home to the Federal authorities what Western Australia suffered through the mining industry being compelled to sell gold at pre-war prices. If we could get a £1 per oz. bonus on gold for a period of, say, 10 years, it would mean a big thing to this State, seeing that 75 per cent. of the gold production of the Commonwealth is furnished by Western Australia. We all know what gold has done for this State, and therefore what it deserves at our hands. The payment of a gold bonus would result in the opening up of many of our low grade propositions at present impracticable of working. Also it would result in the setting up of large machinery plants, in consequence of which those low grade propositions would be worked with a minimum of handling and so, when the term of the bonus expired, those mines would be able to stand alone. It is up to the Federal Government to come to the assistance of the industry, having regard to what gold mining has done for the Commonwealth.

Mr. Lutey: The gold bonus would give the State a new birth.

Mr. CHESSON: And it would enable the companies to put up large plants of new machinery and so do away with all handling charges. Certainly it would give a big fillip to the State's progress. Now I come to a little matter concerning my own district. The Mararoa company's mine is fairly well developed. The shaft and a winze are down 200 feet, and there is between 500 and 600 feet of driving. The lode averages 8 feet in width. Over 4,000 tons of stone has been treated for a value of 41s. 9d. The manager estimates that there are 33,000 tons of ore developed, the extractable value of which is 41s. 9d. He considers that with an up to date plant the cost should not exceed 30s. That will mean a profit of over £16,000. I have been through the mine from one end to the other, and I hold that the manager's estimate of ore in sight is a very conservative one. That of course is dealing with the northern end of the property. Possibly there is not so much at the other end. The mine is employing 40 men, and with an up to date treatment plant it would employ at least 100 men, and would be one of the best gold producers in the district. Everybody knows the Mararoa

Gold Mining Company, and has watched their operations in this State. They work a property for all it is worth and, as a result, it soon becomes a well developed show. In the mine alluded to they have gone a few feet into the sulphide zone; if the bore proves that the stone lives down, it will mean a big future for the property. I wish to deal briefly with the operations of the State Prospecting Board for 1925. I am a member of that board, and I can say that the board is always ready to go to the assistance of bona fide prospectors. During the year the board continued to assist prospectors by means of sustenance, explosives, railway fares, freight and the loan of turnouts and equipment for prospecting in approved localities. The report of the board for 1925 is of great interest. It reads as follows:—

From the inception of the Board on 1st September, 1919, to 31st December, 1924, assistance was granted to 711 parties, comprising 1191 men at a cost of £28,252 14s. 10d. During the year 1925, 166 parties representing 266 men were assisted and 112 applications for extension were granted, on the recommendation of the Board, at a cost of £5,818 13s. 1d. This amount was apportioned as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Rations	4,294	0	2
Hire of horses	335	16	10
Hire of camels	102	7	2
Purchase of equipment	212	8	2
Freight	50	19	0
Fares	79	19	11
Explosives	41	16	2
Miscellaneous	338	15	11
Camden Sound Party	362	9	9
	£5,818	13	1

In addition, since 1st September, 1919, £4,131 16s. 2d. has been spent on five prospecting parties controlled by the Board, and consisting in all of 28 men. This makes a total of 882 parties, comprising 1,485 men assisted at a total cost of £38,203 4s. 1d., since the origin of the Board the average expenditure per man assisted being £25 14s. 6d. During the year 41 applications were refused and 12 were withdrawn. In some instances where assistance was refused, it was because the applications were beyond the scope of the Board. During the early part of the year the whole of the goldfields area was suffering from a prolonged drought, and similar conditions prevailed during November and December. For this reason alone the Board was reluctantly compelled to refuse some of the applications made. Many assisted prospectors were successful in finding gold

during the year, and some of the returns are shown hereunder:—

	Tons.	Ozs.
Jones, W.	16	61.56
Martyn, W.	129.75	56.25
Nyborg, A. R.	Dollied	47.56
Nyborg, A. R.	8	24
Allen, W.	Alluvial	90.7
Allen, W.	9	18.6
Sclater, A.	25	68.5
Curtis and Deeble	9	9.6
Rogers and Oliver	25	20
Heffernan and Swanson	20	313.28
Heffernan and Swanson	Dollied	258.23
Bankier and McParlin	Alluvial	63.1
King, J.	12.5	16.75
Phillips and Stone	41	17.3
Stewart, R. J.	50	33.95
Spittka and Waack	24.25	10.59
Riggall and Irwin	61	19
Currie, R. and G.	26	27.16
Graham and Lansdell	17.5	15

In addition to the above, several small crushings were reported by other prospectors. Good prospects have been reported by Messrs. Hollow and Heaton of Glenelg Hills, Heffernan and Swanson at Barrambie, Gessner and Huffa at Kurnalpi, Edwards and Gould at Corboy's Find, and Baumgarten and Party at Pinyeringa Pool 125 miles north-east of Meekatharra. The following refunds were made during the year:—

	£	s.	d.
Allen, Wm.	34	13	4
Nyborg, A. R.	21	2	0
Heffernan and Swanson	162	10	0
Hough, D. E. A.	13	0	0
Asher, J.	8	10	0
Sclater, A.	10	0	0
Steadman and McFarland	11	0	0
Stones, B.	15	0	0
Hewitt and Runge	26	0	0
Total	£301	15	4

Assistance has been granted to prospectors in all parts of the State, although the majority were in the Eastern and Murchison Goldfields. On 31st December, 1925, they were located as follows:—

	Parties.	Men.
North-West	7	13
Murchison	31	41
Northern	5	9
Eastern	29	45
Southern	4	6
	76	114

Of the 76 parties mentioned, two had turnouts only, one had turnout and tools, 14 had turnouts, tools and sustenance, four had sustenance and tools, 10 had tools only, and 45 had sustenance only. Early in the year the Board assisted a party of prospectors by the loan of a boat and equipment, also sustenance for the purpose of prospecting on the Kimberley coast. Owing to a disagreement in the party the Board would not allow them to proceed beyond Roebourne, where the ex-

pedition was abandoned. The cost of this party was £362 9s. 9d., but by the sale of the boat and stores the loss was reduced by £252 10s. In August another party of four men set off in the direction of Warburton Ranges, with camels and full equipment, but when about 100 miles east of Burtville their natives deserted them, and the party with some difficulty returned to Laverton, where the attempt was abandoned. Although prospectors, Messrs. Jones and Harris, who were assisted by the Board during 1924, did not discover anything which has proved to be of value to them, they opened up the district covering Corboy's Find, Gauzelli's Find and Lake Maitland, from which the following crushings were reported during the year:—

		Tons.	Fine ozs.
Corboy's Reward	108	76.80
Corboy's Reward North	100	82.66
Laughing Jack	61	15.65
Wandilla	25	22.11
Toscana	109	424.03
Total	403	621.25

Since the preceding report for the year ending 31st December, 1925, has been compiled the following additional figures are available for the period ending 30th June, 1926:—New applications for assistance totalled 93, embracing 140 men; extensions of periods granted were made in 59 cases; 41 applications were refused and three withdrawn. The expenditure for the six months was £2,766, bringing the total since inception to the 30th June, 1926, up to £40,969. Prospects in the vicinity of the Glenelg Hills continue to hold the attention of a number of parties and the holders of the Reward Claim have about 25 tons of ore bagged, ready for transport by motor lorry to Narembeen, thence by rail to Coolgardie State Battery for treatment. Four or five parties of prospectors who are being assisted by the State Prospecting Board are located in the vicinity, but, although prospects are in some instances encouraging, nothing of outstanding value has yet been unearthed.

The prospecting board dealt with a number of applications during the year, and gave every possible consideration to those who appealed for help. All were of a good type. A good deal of prospecting is being done at the present time right throughout the State, and, seeing that excellent rains have fallen everywhere, I am hopeful that there will be some good finds, and that many of the prospectors will receive that reward to which by their patient labour, they are entitled. It is only by loaming and careful prospecting that alluvial deposits are discovered, but on account of the adverse seasons, it has been a difficult matter for men in the outback country to carry on their operations. The prospecting board, which will shortly cease to

exist, has done valuable work for the State, and it has paved the way for the appointment of a permanent board. The last point to which I wish to refer is that a policy should be laid down by the Government respecting assistance to be given to industries in outback centres. For instance, we find that people are prepared to spend large sums of money in erecting machinery out in the back blocks, but they are hampered in every possible way. Were facilities given for the conveyance of plants to distant centres, where valuable use could be made of them, it would mean providing considerable employment. But instead of assistance being given in this direction, obstacles are placed in the way. We help the agriculturist by conveying superphosphate to his farm at a greatly reduced rate. I do not wish to say anything against that. We also provide cheap freights to the nearest ports, but when it comes to carrying mining machinery, penalties are immediately imposed. It should be the policy of the Government to assist in every possible way to convey machinery to distant parts of the State at the lowest possible rate. If people are prepared to erect big treatment plants, so as to carry on operations on an enlarged scale, we should be prepared to help them in every way. Often it happens that the representative of a mining concern will travel throughout the State to select a suitable plant. Then what happens? A considerable portion of the capital is absorbed by the conveyance of that plant to its destination.

Hon. G. Taylor: Railway freights on machinery have always been heavy.

Mr. CHESSON: They have been unnecessarily heavy, and it is about time that sympathetic consideration was given to the question. I thank members for their patient hearing.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.55]: I rise with a certain amount of diffidence to speak on the Address-in-reply, for the reason that I am in charge of a department that has been criticised during the course of the present debate more than any other. As agriculture is the State's principal industry, all eyes are focussed on the administration of the department, and its activities are watched more closely than is the case in respect of any other. Everyone realises that the future prosperity of the State depends entirely on land settlement. Just before Parliament was called together, realising the difficulties that have been ex-

perienced for some time past in the direction of providing land for the numerous applicants, I issued instructions that a map should be prepared to show in colours the areas that had been alienated from the Crown. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I have placed that map on the wall of the Chamber. It is up to date to the extent that it is made up to 12 o'clock to-day. Every piece of land that has been taken from the Crown up to noon to-day is shown on the map. On inspecting it, members will realise that there is very little land left for future settlement unless the State embarks upon a policy of railway construction on a big scale.

Mr. Latham: It would be worth it if success is to follow in the manner that the State has already experienced.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The trouble in regard to such a policy is that at the present time we have many people, already on the land, clamouring for railways to take their produce to the market, so as to enable them to make their propositions payable. We realise that the position to-day is very different from what it was a few years ago. The alteration has come about largely by the introduction of motor traction. It is not so necessary to-day as it was some time ago to have railways in comparatively close proximity, and bearing in mind the policy of road construction which my colleague the Minister for Works has in view, we should be extra cautious for the time being in respect of railway construction. I do wish, however, to impress upon members the fact that it is urgently necessary, if the State is to keep on prospering, that railways should be built to those bigger areas where, at the present time, it would be unprofitable to carry on farming successfully. There is at the present time being classified no less an area than approximately 3,000,000 acres of land to the east of the Norseman-Esperance line. What that classification will be I am not in a position to say at this stage, but when the Leader of the Opposition was on the Treasury bench, one of his Ministers informed us of the enormous area that existed there and he described it as a new province. It is, however, impossible to attempt to effect settlement there until a classification has been made, and officers of the department are engaged on the work at the present time. Then again it would be impossible to open up that tract of country without the aid of railways. Then again reference is made in the Governor's Speech to the proposal to construct

a line from Ejanding northwards. We have discovered by means of a classification of land east of Perenjori and through to Rothsay, some 200 square miles of good wheat-growing country. When that line is constructed—the Bill will be presented to Parliament before the end of this session—we shall have a large area that will be thrown open for selection and settlement in the near future. During the last year or two it has become necessary to give greater attention to the areas lying eastwards of the settled areas. It has to be realised that the acreage of land available close to existing railways is so small that unless something is done to direct the attention of people requiring land to where there is land for settlement, we shall have to close down upon those activities for a period. We cannot afford to do that while land is available. I was informed to-day by the Surveyor General that he has discovered a further area south-east of Southern Cross. A further railway will be required to open up that area.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is that the Forestania area?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, but it is in that direction. It is hoped that a large area will be available for selection in that district as well. Hon. members must realise that this all means considerable expenditure in the future. I mention that now so that members may keep in mind that the State cannot afford to stand still. In the future we must open up areas beyond the present railway radius. We must endeavour to authorise further railway construction to enable these millions of acres of land to be settled. It is true that some people who make application for land, complain that it is not available. They have asserted that we have advertised the existence of millions of acres available for settlement. When my attention was drawn to that advertisement, I authorised an alteration and now the reference is to "large areas" instead of to "millions of acres." It is a fact, of course, that we have large areas of land to be opened up but they are not situated at a distance convenient to existing railways, but are too far away to enable anyone to carry on farming operations successfully. No matter what Government may be in power, it will be necessary for Parliament, as well as for the Government, to take into consideration the urgent necessity to proceed with our developmental railways to open up the millions of acres of land lying eastward of the present settled districts. The demand for land

is as keen as ever. Whenever a reserve is thrown open for selection within a reasonable distance of a railway, there are always between 100 and 150 applicants for blocks.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Never again shall we be able to satisfy the demand for land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; we have the land but not the railway communication. While the demand for land is as keen as ever, unfortunately many of the areas thrown open for selection comprise land reserved in years gone by but not now required for the purposes for which the reservations were made. I remember being associated with a Government some years ago, and in the course of a speech I said that the land reserved for the purposes of the Water Supply Department would soon become so extensive that the department would have more land than was controlled by the Lands Department. Since then it was found, owing to the goldfields water supplies and other provisions as well, that a number of reserves could be released for settlement. There has been a heavy demand from people desiring to get these blocks. There is another phase of the question, however, that has to be remembered in connection with applications for land. The fact that the Agricultural Bank grants assistance to settlers within a specified distance of a railway, constitutes the principal reason why many people have applied for blocks. I have said on former occasions that many people apply for land but the reason for the application is more for a bank loan than for the land itself. In other words, the great majority of the people in Western Australia who require land have not the money with which to develop their holdings. They rely entirely upon advances from the Agricultural Bank for clearing and developing their blocks. It is significant that when land is thrown open within the prescribed distance from a railway, thus enabling the Agricultural Bank to make advances, there are always plenty of people desirous of getting hold of the blocks. But when the land is 20 miles or more away from a railway, very few applications are received for the blocks.

Mr. Latham: You will find that there is a lot of first-class land there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have had a return compiled showing what areas of land at present open for selection have not been applied for.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is there much?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It varies in districts. The return disclosed that there

are close upon 4,000 areas on the books of the Lands Department that have been thrown open for selection, but for which no person so far has applied.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you mean 4,000 blocks?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, not acres. Of course much of that land is of inferior quality.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Some of it is very inferior.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But there are areas of good quality land within 20 miles of a railway. The return shows the districts where the blocks are situated. A fair proportion of the blocks are in the south-western division, which is not a wheat growing proposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Does the return represent the balance of the 6,000 blocks we had some years ago?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are about 4,000 now. It is handy on occasions to have a few blocks like these on hand, because there are men who endeavour to get land, but when they discover that they cannot get the blocks on which Agricultural Bank advances may be made, they are able to find money of their own. Thus they take up land further away from the railways. Of course hon. members know that if one application only is received for a block, it has to go to the applicant. Last year the members of the Land Board found it necessary to sit on 93 days. That affords an indication that their time has been fairly well occupied. We have endeavoured to throw open all land possible for selection. The number of applications dealt with by the board during the year was 2,223. That shows conclusively that many people, most of whom are residents of the State, desire to secure holdings. The number of new settlers during the year was 995. That means that close upon 1,000 settlers have been placed on new areas during the last 12 months. That must tend towards the progress and prosperity of the State. There is not the least doubt in my mind from the reports I have obtained from officers generally, that the State has never before been more prosperous from the standpoint of land selection. During the past few weeks since the end of the financial year, there has been the same keenness to secure land. The only difficulty we have is that there are no large areas within a reasonable distance of railways already constructed. During the year several large blocks, principally along the Esperance railway, have

been surveyed. Others lie north of Koorda, east of Pithara and Kalkalling, and north of Westonia. In those areas land round suitable for selection will be thrown open for agricultural purposes. East and north of Salmon Gums a large area of land already surveyed has been inspected. The survey was begun when the Leader of the Opposition was in office, and has been completed since. At the present time we have approximately 350 blocks close to the railway. We propose to use a large number of those blocks in order to place upon them men who have had to leave the mines on account of their health. The Government have arrived at a decision on that point already because, as hon. members are aware, a large number of miners have had to leave the mines. These men have played a big part in the development of the State. They have, perhaps, done more to aid the progress of Western Australia than many more, because the gold mines first attracted population to the State. It was through the goldfields that the worth of our agricultural areas was recognised. Had it not been for the mining industry, it is probable that the State would not have made the progress that is apparent to-day. A large number of miners have developed miners' disease and have come directly under the operations of the Miners' Phthisis Act passed by Parliament a few years ago. The men I refer to are not those who have come directly under that Act, but are those who have been notified by medical officers after examination that it would be in the interests of their health if they left the mines. There are large numbers of men in that position to-day and consequently it became urgently necessary for something to be done for them when they left the mines. It was necessary to place them in suitable and profitable employment. In order to achieve that end, it was thought that no better means could be found than to place them on the land adjoining the railway from Norseman to Salmon Gums. They could not be sent to the group settlements in the South-West because the damp climate would mean that their lives would be very short indeed. It was thought better to place the men on land where the climatic conditions would be practically similar to those of Kalgoorlie, and in an area where the Agricultural Bank could render assistance to them. Many of these men have large families. From what I know of miners—I was born and brought up in a mining community—once they set their hands to work and decide upon something

as being necessary for their advancement, they get to work with a will and make a success of it.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was referring to the miners who have been withdrawn from the mines on account of disease and whom we intend to settle on Esperance lands. It is not the intention of the department to throw open the Esperance land for selection because, if that were done, the land intended for the men suffering from miners' disease would in all probability be granted to men in good health. The decision would rest with the Land Board. Under the Act passed last session we have power to declare a group, and we intend to declare one or more groups there and make the land available for the men from the goldfields. A scheme has been prepared by the Agricultural Bank trustees under which they can render assistance for developing these holdings. The land will be developed as in the wheat areas, under the bank trustees and not under the Group Settlement Advisory Committee. At present we have men in the district clearing roads, and the Water Supply Department have men taking surveys of the contour of the country with a view to providing water supplies. It would be inadvisable to send men to the district unless water was first provided for them; otherwise a considerable portion of their time would be occupied in carting water to their holdings. We hope that in the course of a few weeks, when roads have been prepared and water has been provided, this settlement will be proceeded with. It will take time; it cannot be done hurriedly. We shall do our best to ensure that these men are properly established. Applications for land have continued to be received in large numbers. During the year the total number of applications was 7,567 embracing an area of 11,373,152 acres, inclusive of pastoral lands. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) the other night referred to the inspection of light lands. The work of inspecting the light land has been continued during the year. Mr. Bostock, who has had a good deal of experience, has been travelling in various parts of the State inspecting light land and giving full particulars of each area inspected. We know to-day respecting many such areas the quality of the land, if it has a subsoil and what the subsoil consists of, and how the land may best be settled. We are also aware whether it

carries poison. Any person desirous of taking up land can obtain that information from the department and can judge whether the land is suitable for wheat growing or for sheep farming only. The Press have been very kind throughout in publishing Mr. Bostock's reports. Through the Press making known these reports numerous applications have been received for land that previously attracted no attention. Since Mr. Bostock started his inspection no less than 1,700,000 acres of light land has been taken up for settlement. I am glad this land is being settled, because it will enable people located on the better land to cope with vermin. I would rather see this land given away than permit it to lie idle as it has done. Almost the whole of the areas inspected lie within 12½ miles of a railway. Let me repeat what I said two years ago, that I think the Minister for Lands should have more discretion when dealing with light land.

Mr. Corboy: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At the time I made that remark members interjected that they considered an area of 5,000 acres sufficient for each settler. On the map hanging in the Chamber is shown a large area along the west coast near the Midland Railway Company's line. That land is nearly all sand plain and a 5,000-acre block is no good for wheat growing. It is not a business proposition; consequently no one will take up 5,000 acres.

Mr. Lindsay: It is very sandy country.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When dealing with sand plain on which it is possible to turn sheep for only three or four months in the year, the Minister should have discretion to grant larger areas if considered necessary by the officers of the department. That land is remaining idle and the fact of its being unoccupied makes it detrimental to settlers in the vicinity. After the discussion last session on the motion for supplying wire netting, the Government found it necessary to purchase wire netting for the protection of farmers. Without legislative authority the Government purchased 2,000 miles of wire netting, most of which has been supplied to farmers. The Commonwealth Government in 1923 passed a measure to provide for the supplying of wire netting over a term of 20 years during which the principle moneys only would be repaid. The persons who obtained wire netting under the Commonwealth Act would get it free of interest for 20 years and would repay only the capital cost. The amount allotted to this State was about £46,000. Re-

presentations were made for a larger sum and the amount was increased by £11,000. We were also able to use the amount repaid for wire netting for the purchase of additional netting to be supplied to other farmers on similar terms. Just before the end of the financial year we obtained information from the Commonwealth Government that there was £50,000 in hand that had not been expended by the other States, and it was intended that if any States applied for wire to the extent of the £50,000, the applications would be treated on their merits. In view of our distance from the seat of the Federal Government, I considered that we in Western Australia might be at a disadvantage, so I instructed the Under Secretary to wire the Commonwealth Government requesting them to set aside a sum for Western Australia out of the £50,000. To forward each individual application to the Commonwealth would have involved a delay of at least four days. The Commonwealth refused to grant that request, so by each succeeding mail we forwarded numerous applications already in hand, with the result that we were allotted £20,000 out of the £50,000. Therefore an additional £20,000 worth of wire netting has been supplied under the provisions of the Commonwealth Act of 1923, which means that it will be free of interest for 20 years, the repayments being made every six months. I might add that when the Government ordered 2,000 miles of wire netting, they had no knowledge of the extra money that the other States had not used, but we had been notified that the Commonwealth proposed to assist the farmers in netting their holdings. They set aside for this State a sum of £106,000 per year for six years, subject to the State entering into an agreement to that effect. We, however, could not wait for the agreement, especially as I considered the agreement far from satisfactory because the Commonwealth would not allow the State anything to cover the cost of administration. Under the agreement it was provided that the maximum amount of interest to be charged was 4 per cent., but farmers had to pay also a sinking fund of 2 per cent. and 1 per cent. to a trust fund, the 1 per cent. being for the purpose of purchasing additional wire netting to be supplied on similar terms. We thought the State should be paid something to cover the cost of administration, and we requested the same conditions as applied under the loans of the Agricultural Bank. This request was

refused, but eventually the Commonwealth agreed to allow us administration costs as laid down in their Wire Netting Act of 1923, namely £1 per mile of wire netting applied. For that £1 per mile we have to keep their accounts for a period of 25 years. When we found ourselves confronted with difficulty because the Commonwealth had not passed any legislation to deal with this question. Fortunately we prepared a scheme of our own, and to-day we are supplying netting over a period of 25 years at 8 ls. 2d. per cent., which includes interest and sinking fund. Every person who has had wire netting from the State Government is assured under the mortgage entered into, that if an agreement be entered into with the Commonwealth Government, a reduction will be made in the price according to the Commonwealth terms. We have wired and written to Melbourne asking when it was proposed to introduce a measure to ratify the agreements regarding wire netting. Yesterday we received a reply stating that New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania had not yet agreed to the scheme and consequently more time would have to be given for those States to consider the matter. We then wrote to the Commonwealth Government and asked them to finalise the agreement with this State, because the Commonwealth Government will not meet again until early next year, by which time our Parliament would have progressed. Consequently it would be impossible for the State Parliament to ratify the agreement until the end of next year. What the result will be I cannot say. The State will no doubt have to continue to provide additional netting, and probably it will be necessary next year for the Treasurer to provide additional money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would be an Agricultural Bank matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, a Lands Department matter. The reason why that is so is that under the Commonwealth scheme it is compulsory for the Lands Department to supply the netting. All the papers have to be signed by the Minister for Lands before being sent to the Commonwealth Government for approval. We have made no alteration in the system, because the same staff has been keeping the accounts for wire netting in the past and will do so in the future. I hope the arrangement will be approved so that we shall be able to have our agreement, which has been drawn up but not signed, com-

pleted and sent over, and that this session we shall be able to bring the matter before Parliament for ratification. There have never been so many applications for people to go on the land as is the case now. I wish to refer now to a matter that has constantly been alluded to in the Press, namely that it would be an advantage to the State if it had representatives in Melbourne and Sydney to give people information about our land. There is no necessity for that to be done with regard to Crown lands, for we have no areas of any magnitude available within reasonable distance of a railway. If offices were opened up at the expense of the State, they could deal with private land only. That is not the duty of the Government, but of the private owners. If they have land for sale it is their business to place it before those who may desire to purchase it. The Speech deals with the migration position and compares it with the position for the previous year. The migration agreement that has been entered into has been laid on the table of the House. I suppose every member has a copy. This agreement has been signed and fixed up entirely since last session.

Mr. Latham: We have only one small portion of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member has all the agreements.

Mr. Latham: They are not printed yet.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are printed. I laid on the Table the Commonwealth agreement with the British authorities, the State agreement with the Commonwealth, and the supplementary agreement entered into between the British Government, the Commonwealth Government, and the State Government, which cancelled the previous arrangement entered into by the member for Northam (Hon. Sir James Mitchell), which document is now referred to as the old agreement.

Mr. Latham: We have only a copy of the supplementary agreement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The agreements have been distributed. A number of people are of opinion that the British Government are finding the money for migration. Such is not the case. All the money that has to be raised for migration must be raised by the Commonwealth Government, and not the British Government. The Commonwealth Government lend the money to the State.

Mr. Latham: How is the new board going to make advances?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not intend to discuss the new board. I may have to go before it, and the less I say the better. Wait until I have been before it.

Mr. Latham: That is a pretty bad position for a Minister of the Crown to be in.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think any State Government would agree to any commission or body of men, appointed by an outside party, coming here and dictating the policy that must be dictated by this Parliament.

Mr. Latham: I hope that will not be done so far as this State is concerned. Such people have no responsibility towards our citizens.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They have no power. Concessions granted under the agreement are allowed entirely on the number of migrants brought into the State. Any amount that is borrowed from the Commonwealth is borrowed pro rata on the number of migrants brought into the State. If the Commonwealth Government dictated the policy* for the State, all we would have to do would be to say, "You want to manage the State instead of allowing our Parliament to do so; we are going to cease migration under the agreement," and that would be the end of it. The agreement provides that for every £750,000 loaned by the Commonwealth for public works, the State undertakes to bring in 10,000 migrants, of which there are to be 750 families of an average of five, without means. The words "without means" I discussed with the Migration Department in Melbourne. They signify that any person accepted in England as a nominated or assisted migrant is considered to be a person without means. No agreement was entered into whereby it will be compulsory for us to continue. The agreement provides that for every farm established there shall be advanced a sum of £1,000 for its development. The persons who are placed on the land must represent in each case a family of five. The agreement differs from the last one in that persons who are established on the land may be divided into one half Australian settlers and one half migrants. Under the old agreement all had to be migrants.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is that the old agreement?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As I have stated, there are the three agreements.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you say the Imperial Government are paying nothing?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I w come to that when I deal with group settlement. The Commonwealth Government a not the Imperial Government have to ra the money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have bring out more people than was necessa under the old agreement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Only few. The State is indebted to a large exte to the ladies' auxiliary in this matter migration. I know of no organisati which does more excellent work in a volu tary manner in endeavouring to make the who become group settlers, and those w are general migrants more contented wi their lot, than does this auxiliary.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And they sti to their job.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They a doing good work, and are continually at. They endeavour to the best of their abili to overcome all difficulties. They supp books and reading matter generall attend to needy cases, and do ma things for the newcomers, although t subsidy from the Government is b a small one. They work silently, ve little being heard of them. I am the mo pleased about the auxiliary because it plac us in this position, that when domestics a rive in the State they are met by membe of that organisation at Albany and Fremantle. These ladies deal with all the cas and, in respect of any complaints that aris they are in a position to answer them a to refute any derogatory statements that a made concerning the reception of migran. They have furnished the Immigrants' Ho at Fremantle, and made it comfortable f the girls. They have improved the sleepi accommodation, and, particularly in the ca of the girls, are doing everything possib to make them comfortable while they rema in Fremantle. I regret I shall have to rep to statements that have been made durin the speeches on the motion before the Houe I must first apologise to members. On the occasions I do not usually indulge in figure which are more generally used on the Est mates; but to-night, because of the stat ments that have been made, I shall be oblig to quote some. I will first refer to the Agr cultural Soc. The member for Katannir (Mr. Thomson) took me to task because would not instruct the trustees of the Agr

gricultural Bank how they were to run their business. I interjected at the time that Parliament had taken the management of the Agricultural Bank entirely out of the hands of the Minister.

Mr. Stubbs: And a good job too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Parliament has vested this in the hands of the trustees of the Bank. The Minister never sees a file unless some member of Parliament makes a complaint. The files are entirely under the supervision of the trustees. They know every case that has to be dealt with, and the position of their clients. If a Minister started to interfere with them the sooner he jumped into the Swan River the better.

Mr. Stubbs: It would be a bad thing for the State if the trustees were interfered with.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Several members have written to me on Agricultural Bank matters, and I have replied referring them to the trustees. They have adopted the suggestion. In other cases this has not been done. I sympathise with members of Parliament, for, after 20 years' experience, I know the difficulties that confront them. It is our duty to tell people on the land that Parliament has placed the control of the bank in the hands of the trustees, and that their business must be done by the trustees and not by the Minister. I merely point this out in order to show what is the duty of members in that respect. Members have interviewed me on such matters time after time, and I am inclined to believe that there are some members who—whether for the purpose of gaining a little political advantage I neither know nor care—when the Agricultural Bank trustees will not advance what is asked or when they take action for the protection of the bank, appeal to the Minister as if he had full control and could alter the decisions of the trustees if he thought fit. The Minister has no such power. The trustees can tell the Minister to go to Halifax if they like. If the Minister attempted to interfere, they would report him to Parliament. I do not know, and do not care, what has been the practice previously, but my practice has been not to interfere with the work of the trustees on behalf of any client whatsoever. Last week a member wrote to me pleading that he only wanted a fair deal for a man on the land, and stating he was convinced that the man was not getting a fair deal. I sent the member's letter on to the trustees, and here is what

I discovered: A certain person took up an abandoned Agricultural Bank property four or five years ago. The indebtedness to the bank, which stood at £800, was written down to £500 when this person went on the property. In the course of about four years he had accumulated a debit of nearly £1,400. He never paid one penny of interest, and never put in any crops. In addition, having been advanced money for the purchase of horses, he sold the horses and bought a tractor, in his wife's name. In that case the bank took action and told the man to get out. That is why he considered he was not treated fairly.

Mr. Stubbs: The trustees should have got him in, not out.

Hon. G. Taylor: I bet he made a few observations at the conference last week.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Almost every case concerning which I have been written to has some similarity to the case I have just cited. In my opinion the Agricultural Bank trustees have dealt fairly and squarely with every one of their clients, subject to a due regard for the interests of the State. I am sorry that the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) is not present, but I must put up the other side of the question. The hon. member asked why the Government should employ experts in fruit-growing and viticulture when the State will not advance money for the purpose of putting lands under vines. He instanced a case in his district—perhaps an interjection from me brought this out—to show that there were large areas suitable for viticulture; and he referred to the fact that the present Opposition Leader decided some years ago to put them under vines. The Opposition Leader, however, mentioned at the time that dried fruits were bringing high prices in the world's markets. The member for Katanning read the letter conveying my refusal. I now wish to say that I referred the matter in the first instance to the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank. Looking through the file I discovered that as far back as the 21st May, 1923, the land in question was examined by Messrs. Robinson, Iles, and Despeissis—Mr. Despeissis being a viticultural expert. Those gentlemen reported—

The present state of the dried fruits market is such that further extensive experiments are inadvisable.

When the present Government took office in 1924, the matter came before me, and I referred it to the Agricultural Bank. The

report I received from the Managing Trustee reads as follows:—

The Hon. the Minister for Lands.—The question of starting viticultural settlements under group conditions, on country adjacent to the G.S.R. and elsewhere, was seriously considered some time ago, and the whole matter was carefully investigated. At that time the outlook for the industry was bright, but shortly afterwards the prices slumped considerably, and the whole matter had to be reviewed. The suitability of the land in the Katanning and Pingelly districts for vine culture was urged, and the officer in charge of fruit industries was instructed to report. Mr. Wickens considered that the land was suitable for the purpose, but pointed out that the return from dried fruits in the G.S.R. area was only about 60 per cent. of that of the Swan area. If this is the case, the advantage held by the Swan settlers will be appreciated. In view of the position existing at the present time, I would hesitate to recommend any extensive settlement based on vine growing alone, but consider that the acquisition of land in the G.S.R. areas for mixed farming, including vine growing, is worthy of serious consideration. I do not agree with the suggestions put forward by the Katanning vigilance committee, as in my opinion the area allocated to each settler is too small, having regard to the class of country, and the capitalisation involved is too high. Land in these areas can be acquired very cheaply, and it would be advisable to allot reasonably sized blocks, say, 350 to 400 acres, to permit of mixed farming being carried on. For economic reasons I strongly favour the settlement of country along existing railway lines, which can be more cheaply handled than our heavier timbered country in the South-West. I attach file dealing with investigations made regarding the possibilities of settlement in the Pingelly area, which is similar to the Katanning country. The trustees agree with me that men embarking in the viticultural industry should have some capital of their own. The holdings do not come into profit for about four years after planting, and the settler must be in a position to carry on during this period. The bank advances should be limited to £625. When considering the position last year, I recommended that holdings should be made available only to applicants who could satisfy the department as to their ability to carry on with limited assistance from the Agricultural Bank. — (Sgd.) E. A. McLarty, General Manager. 4/6/24.

I received from the member for Katanning the letter which he read here the other evening, and this also I referred to the Agricultural Bank trustees, who reported—

The Hon. the Minister for Lands.—Further to correspondence from Mr. A. Thomson, M.L.A. (File 538/26), the trustees, having given most careful consideration to the matter, are unable to make the advance asked

for. As you are aware, serious losses have been incurred by the bank on viticultural propositions, and further risk of this nature cannot be undertaken.—(Sgd.) E. A. McLarty, General Manager. 22/6/26.

The coupon I sent the hon. member the following communication:—

A. Thomson, Esq., M.L.A., Katanning, Dear Sir,—Your letter of the 4th March, in regard to purchase of areas for viticultural propositions, has again been reconsidered by the Agricultural Bank trustees, who have given the matter the most careful consideration. They state that serious losses have been incurred by the bank on viticultural propositions, and further risk of this nature cannot be undertaken.—Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) W. C. Angwin, Minister for Lands.

It will be recognised that the trustees gave every consideration to the suggestion, with due regard for the condition of the markets.

Mr. George: Were you asked to review their decision?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I was asked to purchase the land, and naturally I was not going to purchase it without the trustees' recommendation. I sent a report of the speech made by the member for Katanning on the Address-in-reply to the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank, with a request for his comments on it. Hon. members will understand that it is impossible for me to carry all these matters in my head. The Managing Trustee wrote to me as follows:—

The Hon. the Minister for Lands.—In reply to the complaints of Mr. Thomson, M.L.A., regarding the bank's refusal to finance viticultural settlement in the Katanning district, I attach files which disclose that the fullest possible investigation has been made into the matter. The suitability of the district for vine-growing is recognised, but under present conditions the trustees consider that it would be unwise to encourage settlers to embark in the industry. A large number of returned soldiers were settled on viticultural propositions, and these have involved heavier losses than any other branch of settlement. This is due entirely to the slump in prices of dried fruits, and there does not appear to be much prospect of an improvement in this respect. It has been found necessary to write down the indebtedness of many of the soldier settlement vineyards by 50 per cent., and even now the settlers anticipate some difficulty in meeting their obligations, owing to the unprofitable prices derived from their products. The Katanning vigilance committee advocated the growing of vines for dried fruits and not for wine. Please see my report, pages 24 to 25 on file 338/26, which sets forth the views of the trustees. We still consider that it would be unwise to encourage settlers to pin their faith to vine growing, but it might be under-

taken in conjunction with other farming ones on fair-sized holdings, provided they are not dependent on the bank for the whole of their requirements. The trustees are most anxious to promote the development of our primary industries, but we feel it incumbent on us to satisfy ourselves that any settlement scheme propounded is capable of being developed on commercial lines. In view of our costly experience, we do not feel justified in recommending further expenditure on a large scale in extending viticultural settlement.—(Sgd.) E. A. McLarty, General Manager. 10/8/26.

That report expresses the opinion of the men who have been appointed, under an Act of Parliament, to take full control of State finances as regards land settlement. Would I have been justified in disregarding that report?

Members: Certainly not.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I could not possibly do it. I have read these communications to the House in order to show that there is another side to the question raised by the member for Katanning. Going still further, that hon. member charged the Agricultural Bank trustees with harsh treatment of some settlers. When I said that the trustees were not harsh, he replied, "I have an instance of their harshness in my own district." I challenged the hon. member to produce one case of hardship resulting from the action of the trustees. For my part, I contend that if any charge should be laid by Parliament against the trustees, it should not be on the score of harshness but on the score of leniency. As all business men know, if a debt is owing, a demand for payment should be sent when the time for payment has arrived. That has always been done by the Agricultural Bank. It is necessary for the trustees to do so. If they did not do so, we should want to know the reason why. Only formal notices have, as a matter of fact, been sent out by the bank. The trustees apply pressure only when they think the client is not dealing fairly with the bank's or the State's money. The member for Katanning also mentioned a case in his district of a loan being applied for, and not being granted by the trustees. That was referred to Mr. McLarty, and he finished up his report with a paragraph regarding it, as follows:—

The application that was refused and referred to by Mr. Thomson was that of Messrs. Waller, Bolton & Co. These settlers applied for an advance of £1,000 to discharge liabilities incurred by them since acquiring their holdings. £450 of the amount represented purchase price of the land due to the

vendor, Mr. E. L. Holly. The proposition does not come within the policy of the bank, and so the application was declined.

It would be a new policy if a person could buy a holding, pay nothing for it, and then ask the bank to advance the purchase money. Not all persons are in agreement with the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) in their estimate of the bank, as the following letter, dated the 4th inst., will show:—

The Managing Trustee, Agricultural Bank.
—Sir, I have lately drawn my clearance from the I.A.B. I think it only reasonable of me to write and thank the staff you have in the Kellerberrin district. Whenever I went into the office they seemed very willing to do anything they could for me, and give me the best advice they could. In the office I cannot pick out any individual person as they were all willing to do their best under the guidance of Mr. Buttfield: they are an obliging staff of men. In the field I wish to express my best thanks to Mr. Buttfield and Mr. S. White for their kindness to me, and also their good advice, which I might state encouraged me to go onward and do my best. When I went on the Board I had very little machinery but when I drew my clearance I had quite enough machinery to work a good farm. I might also state that while I was on the Board I bought 200 acres of land, making my 500-acre farm a much more valuable one, and I have also been able to erect a nice five-roomed stone house on same. In my opinion the I.A.B. is a fine institution for the struggling farmers if they only are willing to work hard. In conclusion I wish you to thank all the staff, but especially Mr. Buttfield and Mr. White, for their untiring kindness while I was on the I.A.B.

That shows that not everybody holds the same opinion as the member for Katanning in regard to the bank. Many of the clients of the Industries Assistance Board were almost in a state of bankruptcy when first they turned to the board. The writer of this letter is one of the many who have got out of a difficult position and are appreciative of the assistance rendered. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) charged the Agricultural Bank with not advancing for the development of light lands. Again he was wrong. For some time past the bank has been advancing up to 50 per cent. of the improvements on light land, and that for a distance of 12½ miles on either side of the railway.

Mr. Lindsay: Not light land.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, light land, and in some instances they have gone up to 20 miles.

Mr. Lindsay: Perhaps, but not on light lands.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, on light lands. They are advancing up to 50 per cent. of the improvements, and the managing trustee tells me they have been doing it for some time. However, they say that experience has taught them to be cautious. Here is the report—

But from past experience such settlements have to be handled with caution, as most of the Bank and I.A.B. losses had resulted from placing moneyless and inexperienced men on inadequate areas of second class land.

Where the trustees are satisfied that the State funds are protected and the settler is likely to achieve success, they advance 50 per cent. against improvements on light lands.

Mr. Stubbs: It is news to this side of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Further than that I made inquiries respecting the distance from railways. The trustees have modified their policy in that regard since this Government have been in office, although not as the result of any instructions from us. We do not give them instructions. They say they recognise that the advance of motor traction has altered the position, and that when they are satisfied as to rainfall, they make advances to approved applicants up to 20 miles from a railway, and in some instances even beyond. This information is supplied to me by the managing trustee, and I am sure nobody here has reason to doubt his word. The bank is endeavouring to assist in the development of our areas beyond 12½ miles from a railway.

Mr. Lindsay: I am glad of the information.

Mr. Stubbs: It is excellent news.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: As showing the necessity for caution on the part of the trustees let me quote a few figures. The total advances outstanding on the 30th June last were £3,389,683. The advances made during the year amounted to £427,160 and the losses written off under the Act passed here last year totalled £31,761.

Mr. Lindsay: That is the Industries Assistance Board Act.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, the amending Act of last year. As members are aware, the trustees are also charged with the administration of the soldier settlement scheme. That is to say, the trustees with the addition of Mr. Hugo Throssell, V.C., representing the returned soldiers. I wish to refer to a remark by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) that I can only characterise as altogether uncalled for. For some

reason it does not appear in "Hansard". The hon. member said he was pleased to see by the Governor's Speech that something had been done on the question of reducing the valuation on soldiers' homes, and a Bill introduced for the purpose of ratifying the agreement made by Parliament. Had he stopped there he would have been all right but he added that this should have been done last session.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is that in "Hansard"?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, has been struck out.

The Premier: Then it ought not to have been struck out. No member has a right to strike things like that out of "Hansard."

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: At events this could not have been done last session, for the agreement was not then finalised. Indeed we cannot put it into effect this session. We can ratify the agreement but the Commonwealth Government have not yet introduced their Bill into the Commonwealth Parliament. Two weeks ago I wrote to the Commonwealth Government enclosing a copy of our Bill with the information that it had been read a first time and asking them to take action, so that the valuations could be written down. Up to date we have had no reply.

Mr. Stubbs: But you could do your writing down.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have written down, but we cannot put it into effect. Now in all probability we shall have to wait until next session of the Federal Parliament, unless in the meantime the Federal Government gave us permission to act. It is unnecessary for me to deal with the soldier settlement agreement now, because I shall have that subject before us when we are dealing with the Bill.

Mr. Lindsay: Your appraisements have been made.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are not yet finished. The board has dealt with revaluations of existing holdings to the number of 622, but pending the ratification of the agreement no action can be taken. It is true that since last January the Commonwealth Government have been reducing the interest to the State, but I also say there has been a much more liberal valuation made on account of settlement than could have been expected if the Commonwealth Government had not made that reduction. I was surprised to see published in an Eastern newspaper something from a Western Australian correspondent to the effect that the

was a good deal of concern regarding the effect of this State in view of the fact that the Commonwealth Government had written down the soldiers' advances to the extent of £796,000. That, of course, did not affect the revenue of this State by one sixpence. However, the position to-day is that the valuations of 622 soldier settlers have been written down, but we cannot notify them. If there are any complaints about it, the responsibility cannot be laid upon us, for it would have been useless for us to write down the estates to the full amount, unless we could get assistance from the Commonwealth Government to enable us to meet some of the cost. Up to date all we have from the Commonwealth Government is this: "We are reducing your interest from the 1st January, 1926, conditionally that if the Bill is not ratified you have to repay us." That is the position to-day, so we cannot give effect to the matter. We are anxious to do so, because it will give greater satisfaction to the soldiers on unpayable propositions and will enable them to make better progress. The total amount approved for loans under the soldier settlement scheme has been £6,021,197, and the total advances made £5,569,867. The interest due for payment by clients is £427,976. The total amount immediately due to the bank by civilian and soldier settlers is, principal £483,158, interest £735,503, or a total of £1,218,661. That is due for payment to the bank to-day for soldier settlement.

Mr. Latham: That is to the 30th June.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. It will be seen therefore that it is necessary for the bank to be cautious. In connection with the Industries Assistance Board I was hoping that that institution could be done away with, but I find that a lot of soldiers have been promised assistance, and that it is an impossibility to do away with the board owing to the soldier clients. The number of settlers on the board's books is 1,345, including 907 ex-soldiers. The clearances granted last year numbered 208, which meant that 208 people had derived a benefit from Labour legislation. The total clearances to date is 1,648. For the ensuing season, under orders from the Board 21,025 tons of sugar have been supplied to plant 592,383 acres. The advances made during the year totalled £1,150,119. Borrowers' balances unpaid on 31st March last came to £1,805,468. The net loss on the board's operations for the year, including debts written off and cancelled, came to £128,436. The accumulated loss now stands at £356,156. The debts immediately

due to the Bank came to, principal £483,158 and interest £735,503, and with the Industries Assistance Board balances of £1,756,433, the total thus comes to £2,975,094. I hope members in the wheat area, when they complain about the cost of the development of the south-western portion of the State will remember these figures.

Mr. Lindsay: Does this total apply to the wheat belt?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most of it does. I assure members that so far as group settlement is concerned, the security in the future will be equally as good as the security now offered by the wheatbelt. Members will see that the total amount immediately due for payment in connection with the bank's business outside of group settlement is within a few hundred thousand pounds of the total expenditure on group settlement, not including, of course, public works in those areas. I will now come to my pet subject of group settlement. There has been considerable criticism of the groups, more, in fact, than of any other branch of the Lands Department. I wish to say, however, that that criticism has been levelled by persons who know very little if anything at all about the subject. I am not going to tell members that the group settlement scheme is perfect. It would be impossible to make it perfect. Neither am I going to say that everything is satisfactory because it is almost impossible to make everything satisfactory. All the blame, however, does not rest on one side; some of the blame is attachable to the settlers themselves. There have been agitations that the group scheme should be placed under an independent board of trained men. If we searched Western Australia from one end to the other, it would not be possible to find men of greater ability to undertake this work than the officers who at present constitute the advisory board. I will tell members who they are. We are all aware that there are few men in the service who have a wider knowledge of land settlement than the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank. This officer has won the respect of everybody in the State. Then there is the Director of Agriculture. If he is not fit to advise on group settlement, he is not fit to occupy his position.

The Premier: And they want a practical board!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then we have the dairy expert.

The Premier: Of course he is not practical!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the dairy expert is not a suitable or competent officer, I want to know who is. Then there are the accountant in the Lands Department and secretary. I repeat that it would not be possible to find a more capable board if we searched the State from one end to the other. I was pleased yesterday to receive a letter from one of the groups through my friend the member for Collie. There are a number of associations at the various groups and goodness only knows where they will end. The man signed himself as the secretary of the farmers' and settlers' association. One part of his letter struck me rather forcibly. He said that no doubt, owing to the death of the Controller, the Government would appoint local boards to control the groups. That meant, I suppose, the bringing in of other nabobs and in that way increasing the cost of administration. I informed the writer of the letter that nothing of the kind would be done. Everybody will realise the valuable services rendered to the State by the late Controller.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can honestly say that during the three years' period in which I came into contact with the late Mr. Richardson he was hardly ever out of his motor car. On several occasions I discussed with the chairman of the board the advisableness of giving assistance to the late Mr. Richardson, and only three weeks before his death we decided to adopt that course. Unfortunately the Controller passed away before the arrangements could be finalised. There is now the opportunity to make other arrangements, and we have decided to divide the State into three districts and put an officer in charge of each. We are of opinion from the various complaints we receive from settlers that they do not frequently enough see the officer in charge. Therefore, by appointing three officers it will be possible for the settlers to come into contact with them and to ventilate whatever grievances they may have. One area will include the Peel estate to Denmark and Nornalup; then there will be Hester to Pemberton and Northcliffe, and the third, Ludlow almost down to Augusta. No one man could possibly do the work satisfactorily, and by having three we consider it will be of advantage to the settlements and that many of the difficulties of the past will be removed because the settlers will be able to get into rapid and close touch with the officer of the particular district.

Mr. Latham: Are the Peel and Bateman estates to be separated?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I think the Busselton area will be quite sufficient for one man, and that from Hester to Northcliffe for another. I am hopeful that the Peel Estate will soon be removed from the group settlements altogether. I regret that a good deal of the criticism in respect of the earnings from cows have come from those who have failed to realise that in the south-western part of the State last year there was experienced one of the driest seasons ever known. I was speaking to Mr. Gale of Busselton a little while ago, and he assured me that he had never known a season like the last. Mr. Gale is a very old resident and he spoke with authority. It can readily be understood how the dry season affected the stock. Almost throughout the Busselton area all the grass was burnt out and the Government had to take the cows from the settlers and feed them. That was no fault of the settlers; the failure was due to the season. No one blamed the farmers in the wheat area during 1914-15 when, owing to a very dry season, they failed to produce wheat. The State went to their assistance at once. The Government financed them and put them on their feet. To-day 1,600 of those farmers are clear of the Bank's books. When it comes to the group settlements, however, any stick is good enough for some people to beat a dog with. There are some people in this State anxious to condemn the group settlement scheme and they can see nothing good in it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The same people condemned the wheat belt.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was the position last year.

Mr. Lindsay: It was owing to the dry summer.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Under such conditions cattle could not be expected to give profitable returns, for the feed was not there and many of the animals had to be hand fed. The returns could not be such as would be obtained in a normal season. Despite that, there are those who would condemn the scheme because of the dry season. Next I will deal with a statement made by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay). I do not make this reference for party purposes, or to create any feeling between the parties on the other side of the Chamber; I do so simply on my own account.

Hon. G. Taylor: You cannot cause any friction here! Ask the president of the Primary Producers' Association. He will tell you how solid we are.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: During the course of the Primary Producers' Conference a statement was made to the effect that 28 settlers had been shifted from the groups and that fact endorsed the attitude of the Primary Producers' Association. The attitude of that association for several years past has been one of condemnation of the group settlements, and here, because 28 settlers, or 1.18 per cent., had been shifted, it was claimed that the association's attitude had received endorsement! I say, Mr. Speaker, such an assertion was all bosh.

Mr. Sampson: That result proves that care has been taken.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the Abba River district we had to shift 28 settlers. I did not mind that and would not have replied to Mr. Padbury, had it not been for other references as well regarding the advisory board. He said we should have trained men on the board. I pointed out in my reply that we did have such men on the board, men who understood the position. Because I saw fit to protect myself against the assertions of Mr. Padbury—not merely because of the words I have referred to—that gentleman stated that I had concealed matters until the last moment, when I was forced to make the information public. Every hon. member will know that immediately I returned from Busselton during the dry season, after having seen the position at Abba River, I made a statement to the Press intimating that some of the blocks should be linked up, and I suggested that after the Premier had inspected the area some such steps would be taken. On the following Saturday the Premier, the Minister for Works and I went to Busselton and again inspected the Abba River area. On our return and after consultation with departmental officers, I made a public statement that it would be necessary to link up some of the blocks. I could not at that time say exactly how many would have to be linked up. That was the concealment that Mr. Padbury charged me with! I had a perfect right to protest when such a statement was being made seeing that I knew it to be wrong. On the other hand, the member for Toodyay said I was wrong in replying to Mr. Padbury and that that gentleman's criticism should have been allowed to

stand. Mr. Padbury made an inaccurate statement. I did not conceal anything. On the other hand I made everything public.

Mr. Lindsay: I was not aware that you had done so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Almost every move in connection with the group settlements has been made public through the Press. The people knew what was going on in that regard, almost as much as I knew myself. Of course they did not know that any person had made a complaint to me that his plough was out of order, or that another settler had complained that his cow was not giving sufficient milk! They did not know that another settler had complained to me that he wanted the use of a horse to do some ploughing and that he could not get it.

Mr. Lutey: What about the complaint of the settler who said he had no steps to his back door!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was another one. There have been brought under my notice dozens of trifling grievances, that should have been settled on the spot. I am hopeful with the division of the group settlement areas into districts that this will be the result. Yet the member for Toodyay says I was wrong in refuting Mr. Padbury's statement!

Mr. Lindsay: I do not agree that you concealed anything.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We went into the Abba River question thoroughly, and came to the conclusion that some of the holdings were not sufficiently large to be successfully developed. Some of the blocks were upwards of 200 acres in area, but the great majority ranged from 140 to 160 acres. In such sandy soil it was questionable, in the event of another dry season, whether they would be able to carry any extra stock. For that reason it was decided to link up some blocks in order to provide larger areas. At the time I said nothing about the suitability of the land but merely referred to the size of the holdings. Some of the blocks were vacant and we transferred a number of settlers from the Abba River area to other districts. Some went to the Peel Estate, some to other parts of the Busselton district, others to Manjimup, all going elsewhere so that their prospects might be a bit brighter than in the past. That was the whole thing. We must expect such transfers from time to time. In my opinion there will be more of them. I believe there will be a few at the Peel Estate, but certainly there will not be a great number. The committee went there the other day and

inspected the area. Their advice is that when any of the poorer country becomes vacant, it will be advisable to allow it to remain vacant because it may become necessary to link additional land up with some of the blocks so as to make them larger. Then again, hon. members must realise that the group settlement scheme was experimental at the outset. No person could say how it would develop.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Where were these heroes at that time?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We cannot condemn a scheme because a few settlers have had to be transferred. When 1.18 per cent. only have been transferred, such an attitude is quite ridiculous. By making use of such condemnatory references to group settlement work we adversely affect the best interests of the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What does that matter to them?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is statements such as those that are sent to the Old Country. They are forwarded immediately, and printed throughout England, merely for the purpose of condemning the group settlements. I have said enough about this phase and I hope that hon. members will realise I have not spoken through any ill will. I think I was fully justified in replying to Mr. Padbury.

Mr. Lindsay: Yes, I see that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) referred to silos for the groups. I have also had a deputation from the Country Party on that question. In my opinion it is possible at the outset for settlers to make ensilage without silos, but there is no necessity for silos at that stage. The Group Settlement Department could not make any such provision at the outset. In fact the Overseas Committee in England set out that the intention at the outset was merely to give the new settlers a start. We have gone beyond that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You know full well that is not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I got that from Mr. Colbatch. I am referring to the intention of those in England.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not know anything about that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When it was suggested that the groups would cost more than £1,000 per block, the Overseas Committee replied that it was merely intended to give the settlers a start.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That means you would have to make use of your own money in order to get stock.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And not charge for it?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At any rate I will not argue that point. It would cost about £130 to put a silo on a block which would mean the expenditure of another £400,000.

Mr. George: But you can get ensilage without silos.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course. That is the point I wish to make. I have received a letter from a man at Balinup who said—

In Thursday's paper I see where you told Mr. A. Thomson that you were going to see a "silo" on group settlements. I am just making a stock of ensilage, which I claim will be quite as good as any made in a silo. If you could spare the time to come and inspect my methods of making ensilage I would be pleased to give you all the information I can. My object is to help you in the great work you are striving to make a success.

I may mention that the silo I was to inspect was at North Perth; I did not say it was on any group settlement. However, I have asked the Agricultural Bank inspector to visit the writer and to report on the action he took to provide ensilage. I have received a further communication from a dairy farmer. He pointed out that it was necessary to build silos during the early stages of the group settlement. I do not think the House would ask any Minister controlling the group settlements to provide £400,000 for silos during the early stages of the groups. We should wait until they make some progress, and until the settlers are able to stand on their own pins. By that time the settlers will be able to provide silos for themselves or to secure assistance from the Agricultural Bank. It was never the intention that the Group Settlement Department should buy everything for the farmers.

Mr. Teesdale: The settlers will be buying their motor cars soon.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That being the position I do not think it is advisable to advance money for the purpose of erecting silos.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Ensilage was provided by the Bunbury people 35 years ago.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Notwithstanding all this, that matter has been brought before the settlers for the purpose of injuring the Labour Party. It is said that we will not provide silos. That provision is not warranted at the present juncture. Another question I shall deal with refers to security of tenure.

Mr. Teesdale: They have security already.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was sorry to hear the member for Katanning advance his reason why the group settlers should have the security of tenure he desired.

The Premier: Yes, you would think he would be right now and again!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Katanning said that if a group settler used his own money to improve his farm by means of spare time efforts as the result of which he cleared an additional area, the foreman of a group might have some pal there and the result would be that the foreman would desire to place his friend on the block of the settler he referred to. Of course, the member for Katanning suggested the foreman would not dismiss the settler. Incidentally I might mention that that point was one of those raised by the Group Settlement Royal Commission and the Government would not endorse their recommendation. The Commission recommended that the foremen should have power of dismissal but we would not agree to that. On the contrary, the Government considered that a man who had developed his holding had a certain equity in it, and therefore should have the right of appeal. However, the member for Katanning suggested that the foreman would make the position so uncomfortable for the settler who had improved his holding, that he would drive that man off the group, thus making it possible for the foreman to put his friend on the block.

Mr. George: The member for Katanning denied saying that when I spoke.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I regret that the hon. member made that statement, because foremen cannot put men on to a group; they are sent there from the head office. So to shift a man under such conditions is impossible. Regarding the security of tenure, the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson, and some of his colleagues waited on me. I asked them how was it possible for me to issue the Crown grant until the money was paid? I also pointed out that the permit to occupy, issued to the settler, was almost equal to the Crown grant, so long

as he carried out the agreed upon conditions. I showed that the group settlers were in a somewhat similar position as the conditional purchase settlers, in that unless the conditions were complied with the Crown grant could not issue. Further than that, I told the deputationists that if they could show me any method by which I could make the group settler's tenure more secure, I would adopt it.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Did they make a suggestion?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I have not altered any of the forms. I have them here. They are lengthy, so I will not read them, but I will place them on the Table of the House. If the group settler carries out his agreement, it is impossible for anyone to shift him from his holding. When, recently, I was visiting the groups in the Murray-Wellington electorate, a gentleman approached me and, after a little hesitation, said he had a list of matters to bring before me. He explained that he was the local secretary of the Primary Producers' Association, but was actually a Nationalist. I took the list, promising to look into it and reply to the questions seriatim. About a fortnight later he came into my office.

Hon. G. Taylor: What was he then? A Labour supporter?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I didn't ask him. The Under Secretary said to him, "I am just writing to you in answer to those questions you submitted to the Minister." "Oh," said this P.P.A. secretary, "don't bother about them; they were questions put up by the P.P.A. organiser." He would not even wait for the answers. I want members, when they visit the groups, knowing as they do that the security is safe, to tell the settlers it is so. When a member finds a settler labouring under a misapprehension, he ought to put that man on the right track. Then there is the question of spare time effort. Anything that a settler expends on his own land, whether time or money, is not charged for by the department, not entered up by the department. It cannot be done. That information has been published time after time; yet when the leader of the Country Party, dealing with the question the other night, showed that the settlers did not understand, I interjected that he ought to have told them, and he replied, "I had no authority to do so." It should be widely known that every sixpence a man puts into his land comes back to him,

and is not charged for by the State. I hope when members go through the groups they will tell that to all the settlers.

The Premier: Let us circularise all the P.P.A. organisers to that effect.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are 135 groups established. Of that number, 62 are on individual piecework and 70 on group piecework. On the 6th August there were 2,255 settlers and 2,328 group holdings, with a total population on the group holdings of 9,405. There are 1,828 cottages. The area sown is 31,552 acres, and areas to be sown 27,100 acres. Six hospitals have been erected and 68 schools. There are 174 bulls, 7,217 cows and heifers, 500 pigs and 960 horses. As I said just now, the total number of holdings is 2,328. Of those, 28 have been linked up; so the expenditure has been on 2,356 holdings. To the 30th June last the total expenditure on the groups—not public works—was £3,424,579. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) referred to the fact that we were sending out of the State to buy stock. He contended that there was plenty of stock available in the Great Southern. I have here a report, dated 9th November, 1925, dealing with a search for stock in the Great Southern. Let me read the last paragraph, explaining the position, as follows:—

Approximately 764 miles were travelled in making the inspection, and it was only possible to secure 26 head. The expense entailed in making the tour was over £30.

Mr. Brown: Why, one could get 100 head of stock in a week down there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Suitable stock?

Mr. Brown: Yes, certainly.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, this officer is a man of wide experience. He adds—

Few stock freshen during the summer months on the wheat belt and the Great Southern, and therefore no periodic visits are made during this period unless specially warranted. Very few replies from the Great Southern have been received to the recent advertisements asking farmers to advise cattle for sale in September due to calve in that month and October.

So it will be seen that we have endeavoured to purchase all the suitable stock we can get in the State. All stock is handled by the Agricultural Department. Even if it be shown that a cow is not yielding what was expected of her, an officer of the Agricultural Department is sent down to determine the reason why. The Group Settlement Department has nothing whatever to do with stock until it is placed on the groups. Now I come

to a question upon which not only the Country Party, but also some of the United Party, are opposed to me.

Mr. Latham: State insurance?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, the limitation of loans. It has been contended that every settler should be allowed to clear as much land as he can, and the Government should pay him the full cost of the work. The leader of the Country Party said that if, under the sustenance system, land cost £15 per acre to clear, and a settler cleared it for £9, he should be paid the £15. I cannot understand that contention.

Mr. George: I challenged him on it but he said he didn't say it. I found it in "Hansard."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Royal Commission reported on this question in the following terms:—

The sustenance provisions of the scheme have had a demoralising effect on the settlers, and have been the chief cause of the high cost of group work.

The Commission were unanimous upon that. In my opinion the sustenance system first adopted was the very best for group settlers, if only the settlers would work; for under that system a man could be shifted very easily from one job to another. Unfortunately, some of the men did not earn their sustenance, and so the cost became too high, as the Commission reported. We adopted the advice of the Commission and introduced piece-work. Under the old agreement we could not introduce piece-work, unless the settlers first of all signed an agreement approving of it. Under the new agreement we can put them on to piece-work, but we propose to give settlers three months on sustenance before they go on to piece-work. I wish to explain how the £20 10s. per month was arrived at, and it might be well to give some information regarding the deputation from the Country Party that waited upon me. The deputation pointed out that the limitation of the earnings of the men was causing a good deal of discontent. It is rather surprising that that statement should have been made, because at the time there was no limitation of earnings. None of the group settlers had been notified by the department as to what the amount would be.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Perhaps they had inside information.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There was no inside information. I had 26 meetings of the groups at Busselton and told the

people what the effect would be, but the amount was not stated. I would not make an alteration because Mr. McLarty was away on leave, and not one of the letters had reached the supervisors or foremen stating what the amount of limitation of earnings would be.

Hon. G. Taylor: It must have got out some other way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The settlers did not have it; there was no limitation on them at the time, though it came into operation soon after. This matter, like others, will come in for a good deal of criticism, but I must abide by the decision of the advisory committee. I am not a farmer and I must be guided by the advice of experts. It might be better for the group settlers that I am not a farmer. A teetotaler is always more sympathetic towards a man who gets drunk than is a man who drinks.

Hon. G. Taylor: I often wondered why I was so sympathetic.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Group settlement is being carried out on an entirely different basis from the settlement of the wheat areas. We know that the wheat areas have been built up by money advanced by the Agricultural Bank after the land had been cleared. A man going into the wheat belt worked long hours, and when he got a small area under crop, he obtained a further advance from the bank to enable him to clear more land while the crop was growing, and so he proceeded to extend his area under crop. Of the group settlers I would be safe in saying that 98 per cent. of the people are almost penniless. Consequently, all the money they would have to live upon during the time their pastures were growing would be the money advanced to them for additional clearing. Therefore, it would be necessary to extend the period; we could not have all the land cleared at once. If the land were all cleared at once and the pastures put in, there would be nothing for the settlers to do, and they would have no means of earning a livelihood until their pastures had grown sufficiently to carry stock. Further, what guarantee would we have that after a man had cleared his land, he would not walk off his block? If a man did so, we would have to put another man on the block and he would have nothing to live on while the pastures were growing. Therefore it was necessary to impose a limitation so that there might be a certain period during which group settlers would be able to clear their holdings and earn a live-

lihood while their crops were growing. This is how the amount is arrived at:—Bull service, £2 10s.; interest, £14; shoeing, £3; breakages, repairs, etc., £6; care of cows, £5; veterinary expenses, £1; cart license, 15s.; oil, grease, etc., £1; total, £33 5s. per annum. That works out at £2 15s. per month. The £20 10s. is made up as follows:—Sustenance, £13; horse feed, £3 5s.; explosives, £1 10s.; overhead charges, £2 15s. I do not wish to read all the returns I have before me.

Hon. G. Taylor: Read them out! They are valuable.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In my office I have returns for every individual in the Manjimup, Northcliffe, Denmark, Busselton, and Peel estate areas. The returns I have before me show the numbers of the groups, the number of settlers in each group and the various weeks over which the earnings are spread. Some of them show a very short period because all the groups did not go on to piece work at the same time; some were on sustenance for a while. The periods range from 39½ weeks down to 3½ weeks. For the information of members, I will take the Manjimup area. These figures include no charge for profit obtained from cows. I will give the average earnings and I will then place the returns on the Table so that members can see them for themselves. These are the net weekly earnings after departmental deductions have been made:—

Average	27½ weeks,	£5 11s. 6d.
"	32½ "	£3 17s. 8d.
"	39½ "	£4 11s. 0d.
"	32 "	£5 13s. 8d.
"	26 "	£5 11s. 5d.
"	5½ "	£5 6s. 0d.
"	31 "	£4 4s. 3d.
"	22 "	£5 2s. 8d.
"	8½ "	£3 19s. 7d.
"	5½ "	£4 10s. 4d.
"	20 "	£4 15s. 1d.
"	17½ "	£4 11s. 4d.
"	23 "	£4 4s. 5d.
"	20½ "	£4 14s. 9d.

On group piece-work the average earnings have been—

Average	3½ weeks	£5 12s. 9d.
"	4 "	£4 9s. 0d.
"	20½ "	£3 4s. 6d.
"	3½ "	£4 6s. 7d.

The highest amount earned in that time was £14 10s.

Hon. G. Taylor: You must be giving a big price for the work.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think the explanation is that the men have been working long hours and neglecting spare-time effort. It was found necessary to limit earnings because it became apparent to everyone who visited the groups that the men were not attending to the areas that had already been cleared. The scrub was growing up again and the land was returning to its virgin state. We have a group settler who refused to put down a deep furrow for drainage purposes unless he was paid for doing it. It is all very well for members to make complaints about the groups, but there are two sides to the question. A large number of the men are real, genuine, hard triers, desirous of making a success of their holdings. If we can keep 50 per cent. of the men on the groups, we shall be doing wonderfully well.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes; if you can, it will be a wonderful success.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members in perusing these returns will be able to see for themselves not only the average but the highest and the lowest earnings.

Mr. Lindsay: Are those earnings arrived at after paying for horse feed and explosives?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Generally, they include explosives, but not horse feed. When those returns were made out, circular No. 88 was despatched to the groups. There was some objection to that circular because it made no provision for boys. These group areas are one-man farms; they are not intended for large families. Consequently, the advisory committee could not see their way clear to advance large amounts that would have the effect of materially increasing the capitalisation, which might have to be written down at a later date. There was also some objection with regard to explosives. When the matter was considered, the committee amended the regulation by providing that employment on piece-work would be limited to sons over 16 years of age. Where sons can be economically employed and are wholly employed on the group without outside work, the limit of advance under circular No. 88 may be increased by £3 per month for each son. All vacancies arising near parents' holdings should be filled by sons over 16 if suitable. Generally, we do not put single men on the groups, but we thought it advisable, where sons were growing up, to endeavour to keep the families together, and to this end the sons are permitted to take any vacant holding near to the father's holding. Once a son takes up

such a holding, he is entitled to the £20 10s. the same as his father receives, so long as he continues to develop the holding.

Mr. Stubbs: The son would be on a good wicket.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is advisable to keep the families together, instead of having the sons going away.

Mr. Lindsay: The age of 16 is rather early for a boy to be receiving £20 a month.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Where in heavy timber country, the cost of explosives is high and falls in the early stages of a contract, it may be cancelled in instalments over the whole or such portion of the period of the contract as may be determined by the field supervisor. Where it is necessary to use more than one horse to finish ploughing in season, a subsidy of feed for horses in excess of one may be granted, the amount to be determined by the field supervisor. On disbanded groups where settlers are on individual piece-work, the limitation of advances will apply to individual settlers. Contracts will provide for drawing of limit of advance by one settler only on one holding. Two settlers may not draw the limit on one holding, if they desire to work together, but only the occupier. On group piece-work, where settlers work in gangs until the stipulated development is completed on each block, the limit of advance may be drawn by each settler. I am not going to ask members whether they can see any objection to the conditions under which the men are working at present. The amendment of circular No. 88, which is No. 92 reads—

At the conclusion of the first pay period after 1st July, 1926, the advances to each group settler on piecework will be limited to £20 10s. per month gross payment, from which settler must provide horse feed and explosives. This action is rendered necessary by the heavy capitalisation built up by excessive piecework earnings, and to relieve the settler trying to care properly for existing improvements, which have in many instances been neglected through his devoting his whole time to clearing and other contracts. Settlers are working for themselves, and it is in their best interests that the limitation is introduced, as it only by keeping down capital costs to a minimum that ultimate success can be assured. Contract rates will continue to be fixed on a basis which will enable an average settler working eight hours per day to earn £3 per week net, but the maximum payment for any month will be £20 10s. Any excess value will be treated as spare time effort, and will not be carried over to the ensuing month. Each month will stand by itself, and payments must be made regularly as the settler must be entitled to draw the

all limit for work performed for each calendar month.

The field supervisors are of opinion that there is other work in connection with the groups that settlers might be able to carry out, and so prevent loss of time.

Where cows are carried an additional imitation of payments will operate in cases where two or more cows are held in accordance with the sliding scale hereunder. For the purposes of the sliding scale, cow totals include only cows that are or have been in profit, and also include any horses in excess of two. When the settler reaches the 15 cow stage under the sliding scale, interest charges will be raised on capital expenditure, and title and mortgage will be prepared. Application of sliding scale: No payment for work done may be made when a settler has 15 cows on his holdings. Cows are not included in the count until their first lactation period after delivery. Cows included in the above total shall be either private or departmentally supplied cows. Any settler who has 15 cows but not all departmentally supplied, may apply to be supplied with additional cows to bring his total of departmentally supplied cows to 15. This may be approved provided the senior field staff is satisfied the cows can be properly cared for and carrying capacity is not exceeded. Settlers owning less than 15 cows are permitted to earn under piece work conditions sums proportionate to the number of cows carried on their holdings, sliding scale to be adjusted on the basis of £1 10s. per cow per month.

That does not mean that the cow would earn £1 10s. a month, but that there is also the return from pigs and other side lines that would be run in conjunction.

Carrying capacity of holdings is to be determined by field staff assuming reasonable supplementary cropping. Summer fodder provision on the basis of half an acre per cow must be enforced. Carrying capacity will be based not on the flush of the year, but on the average of the pastures during their available period, with the provision of summer fodder crops at half an acre per cow to carry over the lean months with a minimum purchase of feed. All regulations covering piecework conditions apply in the case of settlers receiving any pecuniary assistance. Cow totals include cows that have been lost, provided same were departmentally supplied, and loss was due to settler's neglect. Dead cows will not count under the sliding scale until 15 cows have been supplied, when each case will be considered on its merits. Strict inquiry must be made into cause of death, and cases of neglect will be met by retirement or other penalty such as cash payment. Replacement of dead cows will be made where circumstances justify it. Existing contracts where a settler has 15 cows are to be automatically cancelled after current month's payments are made. Existing and future contracts shall be continued only to the extent

of the monthly scale payments after current month's payments are made. Where cows have been condemned as unsuitable or diseased, special consideration will be given to replacement. Maximum earnings per month are indicated in the following schedule:—Cows 15; maximum gross payments, Peel Estate groups nil; all groups except Peel Estate nil; 14, £1 10s. and £2 10s. respectively; 13, £3, £4 respectively; 12, £4 10s. and £5 10s. respectively; 11, £6 and £7 respectively; 10, £7 10s. and £8 10s. respectively; 9, £9 and £10 respectively; 8, £10 10s. and £11 10s. respectively; 7, £12 and £13 respectively; 6, £13 10s. and £14 10s. respectively; 5, £15 and £16 respectively; 4, £16 10s. and £17 10s. respectively; 3, £18 and £19 respectively; 2, £19 10s. and £20 10s. respectively. A copy of this circular is to be handed to the group secretary after contents are communicated to all settlers. Original circular SS is cancelled by this circular and should be destroyed. Signed, W. H. McKay, Assistant Under Secretary for Lands.

These are the limitations of the earnings, and in addition to the earnings, with the exception of the payment of interest on their cows and pigs, there is no rent charged, and they pay nothing at present for living in their homes. That will come later, when they are transferred to the Agricultural Bank. Do not members think these settlers have been fairly treated, and more leniently treated than any who are under the Industries Assistance Board in the wheat areas?

Mr. Stubbs: Thirty years ago they had to start off their own bat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is no reason to complain of the assistance that is rendered to these people. We must endeavour as far as possible to keep down the capitalisation to the lowest amounts. It is very easy for me to give them everything they ask for. As I said to some of them during the election for the South-West Province I was in a position to buy every vote, but I did not buy one.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot buy them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I could have offered, and if I desired I could have made available to them, everything they requested, but refrained from doing so, because it would not be in the interests of the State. We have to consider not only the group settlers, but the State as a whole.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is all very well for the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) to say, "You must write this down by a million. The settlers cannot pay it." How does he know? He does not

make these statements after full inquiry. I have never refused him any information he has asked for. Instead of making inquiries, he is under the impression, from information given to him outside, not from the department, that group settlement is costing a lot more money than is the case. It has not been costing that sum. Members will see from the figures that the average group has not as yet cost £1,500. I received rather a surprise the other day as to the actual amount of stock the groups are carrying. I want members and the public to realise that five years ago this area was all bush country. There was scarcely any stock on it except a little that was grazing there. Nothing had been done. To-day there are 1,895 horses on the groups and 756 departmental horses; there are 9,155 cows and heifers—departmental purchases and private purchases—and there are 159 pure pedigreed bulls, 3,248 pigs, 35,408 fowls and 799 ducks. Had it not been for the group settlements in those areas, there would not be any stock there to-day.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the areas would not be carrying the liability either.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. The total expenditure on group settlement is £3,424,579. Not only have the group settlers the advantage of the Margaret River railway between Busselton and Augusta, but the advantage of about £50,000 that has been expended in drainage around Busselton. The total amount spent on roads, railways, and drainage is a little over £500,000. That money was borrowed at one per cent. Under the migration agreement the actual expenditure is only £2,914,848. I have stated that the agreement entered into on the first occasion had been cancelled. The other agreement has been made retrospective. I thought it would start with the groups, but I find that it can only be made retrospective up to the time of the passing of the Empire Settlement Act, 1922. Our agreement is retrospective from February, 1923, to the 1st June, 1922. At that time there were 300 acres under group settlements which never did come under the agreement. That makes the difference in the expenditure between £2,914,848 and £3,424,579. The loans raised under the migration agreement, and which the State has drawn, amount to £2,250,000. If the schemes submitted were approved, the State would be entitled to an amount under the agreement of £2,887,000. If the interest on this amount was averaged, as it would be, at 5½ per cent.—some of the money was borrowed at 6 per cent. and some at 5¼—it would for 10 years amount to £1,587,850.

The amount the State would have to pay for interest would be £423,426, showing a rebate of £1,165,424 towards any losses.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The State has not to face the losses we had to face in the wheat belt.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This will meet any losses. In addition to that, under the agreement upon all stock and equipment up to £300, the State only stands the loss of one-third.

Mr. Lindsay: The settlers are not yet paying interest on the money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, but it is charged up. If the group settlement areas were written down £1,165,424, the State would not lose a penny. That is on what we have already done. Under the agreement the State is entitled to borrow £75 for every migrant under the public works scheme at one per cent. On every farm we start with an average of five in the family, we can borrow £1,000 at one per cent. for five years, and at one-third of the interest for a further five years. If the group settlers lost this amount it would not cost the State one penny. That is the position in which we stand to-day. As I said previously, for the people who go about endeavouring to belittle the group settlement scheme and the development of the South-West, endeavouring to prevent the State from building up a dairy-ing industry and so keeping in the country the considerable sums now sent out of it annually for dairy products, for such people there is no place in the public life of Western Australia.

Mr. Teesdale: They are traitors.

Hon. G. Taylor: They injure the prosperity of the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most of the amount which is immediately due to the Agricultural Bank is owing in the wheat areas. I am not complaining that the money has not yet been paid, but I do make complaint on the score that the very people who have got the benefit of such expenditure are objecting because another part of the State is being opened up under similar conditions.

Mr. Lindsay: The amount due from the wheat areas is money which has accumulated over a number of years. It is not due for one year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It has been done for some time. The I.A.B. started in 1915.

Mr. Lindsay: The wheat belt has produced a tremendous lot of revenue since then.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but the men in the wheat areas who obtained this benefit from the State are objecting to what they are pleased to call the "wasting" of millions upon the development of the South-West. That is not fair. Those men should weigh the position thoroughly before they condemn a scheme which eventually will prove as successful as the scheme for the development of the wheat belt. The Agricultural Bank trustees tell us that the losses incurred in the wheat belt years ago are now wiped off. In this case, however, we get £1,165,000 from the British and Commonwealth Governments—not from the taxpayers of this State. It is paid as a rebate.

Mr. Lindsay: The comparison is hardly fair. The wheat belt has been in existence for 20 years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am looking to the future. What will the group settlement scheme be 20 years' hence? I cannot state the area that has been cleared in the South-West, but I know there are between 60,000 and 70,000 acres ready for pasture. Do not those figures show that some work has been done?

Hon. G. Taylor: You will always have grumblers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We now have the chance of development, and of development at a cheap rate of interest. Let hon. members bear in mind that the greater part of the new money we have asked for under the migration scheme—considerably more than half the money—is for expenditure in the wheat areas. We have the opportunity of development because for five years we are relieved from the payment of 4½ per cent. interest. For five years we get the money at 1 per cent. For another four years we shall be relieved of two-thirds of the interest. Should we not take advantage of such an opportunity?

Mr. Teesdale: Certainly.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Can we do it if condemnation of group settlement is expressed in this State to the injury of the State, and if news of that condemnation is sent to the Old Country, where we are to obtain the money?

Mr. Teesdale: They know all about the croakers there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Under such conditions it is a matter of impos-

sibility to obtain money for development. We must try to make the group settlers contented and successful. We have done and are doing everything we possibly can towards that end. Many a time during the last two years, and particularly during the last 12 months, I have been tempted to throw up my position as Minister for Lands on account of these unjust criticisms.

Hon. G. Taylor: Stick to your position.

Mr. Teesdale: You are doing good work.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is the duty of every member of this Parliament, I care not whether he sits on the Government side of the House or on the cross benches or in direct opposition, to put his shoulder to the wheel and assist in the building up of this great scheme, the like of which is not to be found in any other part of the world. That is what members should do instead of going to the group areas endeavouring to create discontent among the settlers because the Government are not giving them this or that, or not paying them this or that, or not advancing them sufficient. The funds of the State must be protected, and the Government will see that they are protected. I yield to no man as regards trying to make the group settlements a success. I can claim to have co-operated with the present Leader of the Opposition in the establishment of one of the first group settlements in this State. I yield to no man in the desire, with my colleagues, to make every farmer in the State successful. We are the farmers' party. We are the party that passed all the legislation in favour of the farmers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Oh, no!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In times of hardship and distress the Labour Party are there to help the farmers. I remember being at a meeting at Narrogin with the Leader of the Opposition, when a member of the audience related how an old settler had said to him, "For some years we had a bit of kangaroo, but they are almost all gone, and we were wondering what we could do in the future. But fortunately for us the mallet bark industry came along, and we managed to live on the money we got from that. Then I again wondered what we would do for the future, when the mallet bark was cut out. I felt confident that Providence would send us something else as a substitute for the mallet bark. Providence did send a substitute—the Labour Government and the I.A.B." I know for a fact that some members in travelling about the country have

discovered that the present Government are getting into favour throughout the length and breadth of the land. It has been said, and particularly in the farming districts, that this is one of the best Governments there has ever been for the farmers.

Hon. G. Taylor: Your leg was being pulled.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. This has come from some of the members to whom I allude. Those members think, "That feeling is gaining ground, and it must be stopped by hook or by crook. It does not matter a hang what we say of the State Government so long as we kill that popular feeling in their favour." During the next few months it will take the Leader of the Opposition all his time to answer misrepresentations and misstatements as to his Government. I am one of the oldest men in the House, as regards both age and length of membership—with the exception of the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) I have spent more years here than any other member—and I may not be here many years more, but I am as confident as that I stand here to-night, in spite of all the efforts of the member for Katanning to become Premier next session, that Mr. Collier will be Premier after the next general election.

MR. BARNARD (Sussex) [9.56]: I have a few remarks to offer on one or two items in the Governor's Speech. It is indeed pleasing to learn that the Government consider it essential to develop this country by a migration policy. Land settlement, as the Minister has told us, is steadily increasing, and the demand for land is still active. On road construction a considerable amount of money has been expended, particularly in the group areas; but a good deal more expenditure will be needed for the development of those areas. The Governor's Speech mentions that "steady progress has been made with the harbour works at Geraldton." That is quite right, and the development of the Fremantle harbour is also necessary. According to the Speech, dredging operations are being continued at Bunbury. However, more than dredging is needed there, seeing that Bunbury is one of the principal ports of the South-West and that the grain trade calls for increased harbour facilities. Unfortunately the Speech makes no mention of the Busselton harbour and the jetty that is required there. My district has had railway extensions, and is fairly well supplied in that respect. Jetty accommodation at Busselton, however, is utterly deficient.

Mr. Withers: You cannot have railways and jetties too in one session.

MR. BARNARD: The want of jetty facilities means that timber produced in my district goes to other ports for shipment. That is not fair, because there are 60 or 70 lumpers in my electorate dependent upon work on the jetty for their livelihood. I have had repeated interviews with the Minister for Works on the subject, but he always tells me that he has not the money for the jetty. A deputation which I introduced to the Premier comprised a man interested in the timber trade, members of the Busselton council, and representatives of the lumpers; and the reply the Premier gave to this deputation was that he would endeavour to find the money for building a jetty. I do hope that the hon. gentleman has made the endeavour, and that it has been successful, and that the necessary amount will appear on the Estimates.

The Premier: It depends on how the Busselton people look like behaving.

MR. BARNARD: They will behave themselves. I believe the Railway Department have the necessary plans and particulars available, so that all that is needed for the commencement and completion of the jetty is that the Premier should find the money. Some hon. members are putting forward requests for new railways, but in the South-West we have to ask for certain improvements to public buildings that have been standing for many years. The Donnybrook railway station is a small one, and was constructed when the line was first put through. The departmental officials realise that a new station is necessary and three years ago new plans were got out with that object in view. Nothing has been done up to the present. At Busselton, the business is increasing and three stationmasters are required to cope with the work. When a train arrives there is no room to turn round in the parcels office. The station building itself is hardly large enough in which to swing a cat. We have heard a great deal from the Minister for Lands this evening regarding group settlements, and while it may not be an opportune time, in view of his references to the subject, to go into group settlement matters at any great length, I cannot let the occasion pass without some mention of problems of settlers in the group areas. No member of the House is more keenly interested in the success of the group settlement scheme than is the Minister for Lands. I am satisfied he is doing his best to make the settlers happy and contented and to make

the scheme successful. Although some hon. members seem to take offence at it, it is gratifying to me to note that members of the Country Party are at last taking a keen interest in the group settlements. I am delighted to know that the members of that Party are taking such a sympathetic interest in the scheme and are evincing a desire to make it a success. Thus when we find all members of the House of the same opinion regarding group settlements, we realise that they must become successful, if the scheme is administered properly. Although the Minister for Lands has pointed out what is being done for the group settlers, I feel that some of them are not getting quite the fair deal they should receive. I am referring to genuine settlers who are attempting to carve out homes for themselves and their children. There are certain obstacles in the way, and although the Minister mentioned a number of concessions and set out at length what was being done for the men, I am of the opinion that some of the implements provided for developing the holdings are absolutely useless. Despite that, the settlers will be expected to pay for them. Ploughs have been supplied that cannot be used, and they are lying about the holdings deteriorating in value. Those who can afford to do so have purchased their own ploughs rather than use the so-called one-horse ploughs that have been provided, and which require two horses to pull them. Some of the harrows are practically useless and fall to pieces after being used for one day.

Mr. North: Where were they made?

Mr. BARNARD: In the State somewhere. As to the horses supplied to settlers, it has been a matter of wonderment to me that more accidents have not been reported. Many of the men who have come out from the Old Country have never handled horses before and yet they are provided with horses that I do not think have ever been in harness. It is not fair to ask inexperienced men to handle and break in young horses. That matter should be seriously considered by those responsible for purchasing the animals. The Minister has been very loyal to his board and intimated that the members were men upon whom he could rely. The Minister admitted that he was not a farmer and did not know much about farming. I am satisfied that some of his advisers know less than the Minister does, for I am convinced that their actions in some instances have indicated that they do not know their job. The Minister blames the dry season for the difficulty regarding

the cows, in the South-West. The dry season was not altogether to blame; some-one was at fault as well. According to the report of the Group Settlement Commission, the area where the cows were supplied was the worst under the scheme. The group settlers last year were told that they would have to take ten cows. It was impossible to feed ten cows on pastures put in only the year before. Consequently the Government had to go to the assistance of the settlers and take the cattle away to be fed elsewhere. That represented a certain amount of loss because the group settler is expected to make 30s. a month from his cows. Much has been heard about circular No. 88. I am glad that that circular has been modified and a new one issued. I consider further alterations are necessary. The limitation of earnings or advances is possibly right. The group settlers themselves realise that the time has arrived when a limitation is necessary, but I do not think there should be a limit on the earnings. The group settlers should be encouraged to work their land and milk their cows so that eventually they may work up to the point where they can earn their own living. The object of the group settlement scheme was to develop dairy farmers and not land clearers, as they have been up to the present. No attempt has been made to make them farmers at all. If the limitation upon advances for clearing be insisted upon, the group settlers, with their boys, should be allowed to earn whatever they can make from their lands and from their cows, without any deductions being made. If a settler works his land properly and grows fodder for the cattle, to which he has to attend as well, he will not be able to spend much time in clearing, so that his advance will not be up to £20 10s. as provided. The settlers complain that they were encouraged to bring their families out and now the Group Settlement Department is trying to drive them away by not granting allowances. The Minister pointed out that a boy of 16 could get a block for himself, but boys of that age should be allowed to help on the father's property, thus swelling the family earnings. After 18 months or so he would have gained additional experience that would be of advantage to him on his own holding. The circular I refer to was not quite understood when it was first issued, and the deductions on account of dead cows represented a sore point. The loss of a cow is sufficient without having a deduction of 30s. in respect of the dead cow on top of the actual loss of the animal.

The new circular provides for a sliding scale, and the dead cows have been cut out. The settlers are expected to make 30s. per month from their cows, but that seems to be pretty high. The Minister suggests that other things have to be taken into consideration apart from the cows. On the other hand, there will not be much earned from five or six cows, and very little from calves. A calf will not be of much value to the settler until it is three years old, and in the meantime it has to be kept and fed. Thus for the first year or two the group settler will find it hard to get along under the sliding scale. When we consider the position in other countries, we find that in South Australia, where the industry has been established for a long time, the average from a cow per year is £13 6s., so that it works out at a little over £1 1s. per month. The group settlers are expected to secure a return slightly above that figure. It has been stated that the cattle supplied to the group settlers have been of average quality. I am satisfied that some were very inferior. It could not be expected that first-class cattle only could be purchased straight away, and it will take a year or two before they are up to the mark. As to dairying generally, I hope that in the near future the South-West will be able to supply all the butter necessary for Western Australian requirements. At present it is difficult for farmers to make a living at dairying. A man working on the road will earn at least £4 10s. a week for 44 hours, but if a dairymen is to earn a similar wage, it will be necessary for him to produce 3,120lbs. of butter per year, the price for the commodity being 1s. 6d. per lb. The average for Western Australia is well under 150lbs. of butter fat per cow. So it would take at least 21 cows to produce that revenue. That number of cows would be quite enough for one man to look after; indeed it would be impossible for him to do it in a 44 hour week. Of course it will be said that he has the progeny. But he has to hold them for three years before he can sell them, and even then the butcher wants pretty well 100 per cent. of their value, because of the high wages that he has to pay. It will be argued that the Government cannot give a bonus on butter fat. But if the Minister for Agriculture were as sympathetic with the worker on the land as is the Minister for Railways with the railway employees, he might be able to induce the Commonwealth Government to give a bonus to the dairy farmers. If the average price of fat could be main-

tained at 2s. per lb. all the year round instead of reducing to 1s. 6d., it would encourage the old dairy farmers as well as the group settlers, and would give them all something to work upon for top dressing their pastures and growing feed for their cows. During the year something like £100,000 was paid to the railway employees in increased wages. That amount would furnish a bonus of 3d. per lb. on 1,000,000 or 1,500,000lbs. of butter. Although that quantity is not yet being made in this State, such a bonus would encourage the settlers in the right direction. If, as the Minister has said, he wishes to assist the group settlers I hope he will review the last circular, and that something further will be done for the settlers, so that they may keep on their farms with them such of their boys as cannot get blocks of land for themselves. The Minister's action in cutting up the area into three divisions and appointing an officer to look after each is a step in the right direction and should prove eminently successful. The board will not agree that £20 10s. of earnings for a month shall be on the basis of tri-monthly payments. The settlers consider that during the wet season there will be so much lost time that it would be impossible for them to make up the amount to £20 10s. If it were extended over the three months they would be able to make up the balance in the next month, and so maintain the average. It would materially help the settlers. They point out that there is other work they can do, but that in the wet season it is almost impossible to do anything until the drainage scheme is complete. In such a season it is impossible to dig post holes and equally impossible to grub trees or burn off, or anything of the sort. When there is three or four days of continuous rain, it is impossible for the settlers to work outside, and there is no work under shelter that they can do. If the board would only give the settlers that concession, it would help them materially. As to the group settlements around the Margaret River, I would draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the hospital accommodation should be extended. Most of the cases are maternity cases, and it is essential that proper provision should be made for them. The Minister said that 68 schools have been erected on the group settlements. Certainly the department has done well with the building of new schools. However, they have somewhat neglected the older settlements. In Busselton the number of children have increased considerably and in consequence a hall has to be rented for the in-

fant class. In the summer it is very hot, being 16 degrees above the temperature of the ordinary school room, while in winter it is very cold and, there being no fireplace, the children have to sit with wet feet all day. Last year the department built a manual room which is used only once a week and at most by a dozen pupils. Yet the department will not build a class room. In my view, the classroom is more necessary than the new manual room, since they had a manual room there as it was. I approached the Minister for Education on this subject, but could not get any satisfaction. I hope that when the Estimates are being prepared this year the Premier will be sufficiently liberal to agree to this work being carried out.

On motion by Mr. Lamond debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 18th August, 1926.

Address-in-reply, Eighth day PA06 323

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.38]: I desire to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your accession to the office of President, and also briefly to express regret at the absence of former colleagues and to welcome new members. At this stage it would be seemly to express sympathy with the victims of the sad accident at the Ivanhoe mine. I have been closely associated with the mining industry and have been an official on a mine where a similar regrettable

accident occurred. Such disasters cast a feeling of gloom and depression over the whole community. Judging from the brief report in the Press this morning, I gather that this accident, as have many others, occurred without warning. Try as inspectors and foremen may, it seems impossible to prevent such calamities occasionally. I congratulate Mr. Gray upon his remarks in moving the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, but he made certain statements on which I cannot see eye to eye with him. I cannot subscribe to his statement that the greatest curse of the country at present is the unsatisfactory state of affairs amongst the workers in the farming industry. Mr. Gray and those associated with him are making every effort to bring the people employed in the agricultural industry under the Arbitration Court, in order to secure an improvement in their conditions. Mr. Gray, having worked in the agricultural industry, knows the conditions well, and I fear that if what he desires is brought about, it will interfere considerably with the development of the country. His remarks are calculated to cause a growth of ill-feeling between employers and employees who have worked amicably together, and as a result of whose work the development of the State has proceeded satisfactorily.

Hon. J. R. Brown: That would not be a new departure, would it?

Hon. H. STEWART: No, a certain section of the community are always endeavouring to stir up strife. I desire to show the other side of the picture, without stirring up strife outside or even wordy strife within this Chamber. During the last 12 months two efforts have been made to bring the rural workers under the Arbitration Court, namely, through the chaffcutters' award, a State matter, and the A.W.U. shearing claim, a Federal matter. In both instances the court decided that the very thing Mr. Gray desires should not be granted. In the proceedings for the chaffcutters' award, the chaff merchants, in an unholy alliance with the men employed in the industry, sought to compel every small farmer to come under the award.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Not the chaff merchants.

Hon. H. STEWART: There were some who did not subscribe to that but, in the court, the representatives of the masters sought to bring within the scope of the award every